

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Stigma has been considered as one of the social phenomena that occur in society for a long time. According to Link & Phelan (2001:368), at the onset of the phenomenon, stigma started to operate as psychological and sociological research. As it encompasses behaviors involving multiple individuals and the psychological condition of the person being stigmatized. Goffman (1963:3) defines stigma as an “attribute that is deeply discrediting”. Thus, any factor leading to discrediting can be classified as a stigma, including instances where certain individuals discredit others within society.

The history of HIV in the United States is intertwined with the stigma and discrimination associated with this virus. In the early 1980s, a mysterious illness emerged, primarily affecting gay men in cities like New York and San Francisco. This condition, initially termed "gay cancer" or GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency), carried with it a stigmatization that erroneously linked the disease to a specific community.

In the present day, numerous organizations, healthcare providers, and advocates tirelessly work to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Educational campaigns focus on disseminating accurate information about HIV transmission and prevention. Legal measures have been enacted to safeguard the rights of individuals living with HIV and to combat discrimination.

In this study, the writer decided to choose what is considered to be one human behavior that occurs in society, namely stigma. Stigma is considered as a process that is based on social construction of identity (Goffman, 1997:133), differentiating individuals from others in society. This process has always existed in the social environment, manifesting in various forms such as assumptions and discriminations based on physical differences, race, nation, culture, or religion.

This study deals with the problems of stigmatizing and social treatments as a discussion based on the movie “The Normal Heart”. The writer directs this social problem on the stigma theory and four mechanisms of stigma. Assessing the reaction of American society against HIV/AIDS in the 80’s. This manner puts individuals with HIV/AIDS as a group that is being stigmatized. This study is conducted to explain the beginning of the phenomenon and describe how the disease is reacted and treated by American. Patients and activists are struggling in bringing awareness of HIV/AIDS yet many are unappreciated and always discredited on the surface of society.

1.2. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the writer draws the research problem in forms of questions, as follows:

1. What are the factors that create a stigma of HIV/AIDS in American society reflected in the movie?
2. How is the American society's perspective towards HIV patients in the movie?

3. How are the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects depicted in the movie *The Normal Heart*?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to perceive the phenomena of stigmatization in American society towards HIV/AIDS in the 80's and explain the background process of stigma and discrimination reflected in the movie *The Normal Heart* based on Goffman's theory and four stigma mechanisms by Major & Brien (2005:396). The goal is to achieve by answering the two problems that have been formulated above.

1. To find out how the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the movie are depicted.
2. To examine the factors that created a stigma of HIV/AIDS in America in the 80's.
3. To describe the way American society reacts and also gives treatment towards the disease and patients related to it.

1.4. Previous Studies

The writer has found several previous studies that related to this research. The following are some of the results of previous studies that the writer found:

According to Longmore (2009) HIV and AIDS is now considered a disability because it includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may obstruct their effective participation in society on an equal premise with others. He stated the history of disability is a part of American society.

HIV/AIDS patients which most likely come from homosexuals created a negative stigma and reactions in society. As concluded by Charles Negy (2005), there was a comparative study involving 70 African-American university students with 140 White students on their affective (homophobia) and attitudinal (homonegativity) reactions to lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. The results suggested that African-Americans had higher homophobia and homonegativity results than Whites. Gregory Herek (1993) also measured the pervasiveness of stigmatizing attitudes and beliefs concerning AIDS among the American public as the epidemic's second decade began.

In contrast, as HIV/AIDS disease spreads across the world, Shannon Fast (2015) used a novel approach that accounts for the price of social disruptions caused by the spread of disease. These disruptions, which we call social response, can include heightened anxiety, strain on healthcare infrastructure, economic losses, or violence which exacerbate the current stigma.

Pamela Foster (2007) reviewed some of the socio-cultural barriers in HIV/AIDS prevention and presented a new approach or framework for addressing these barriers. This framework highlights Stigma, Denial, and Fear as barriers in interventions for HIV/AIDS with a target of African-Americans living in the country of Alabama. The framework uses a community-based approach.

Su-chen Chang (2017) conducted a study which examined the playwright's attempt to demystify a socio-cultural metaphor of AIDS through the movie "*The Normal Heart*". This study discusses how the playwright challenges the dominant AIDS discourse. The writer also demonstrates that the play

functions to help eliminate the prejudice against persons with AIDS and empower the gendered others against the stigmatization of AIDS and its metaphors.

Most of the previous studies above mainly examined social disruption and discrimination of HIV. However, this research differs from the other previous studies because it describes how American society reacted to HIV and AIDS reflected in the movie "*The Normal Heart*" which depicts HIV disease in America in the 80s as an uncommon deadly disease that appeared as a threat for most people in America including the government. This article also shows how HIV became a phenomenon in America and became a part of American culture that shows how HIV patients struggle for their rights and equality in society.

1.5. Scopes of the study

This study uses a concept of stigma and discrimination theory in order to answer questions that have been drawn. The approach used to analyze the existence of stigma that occurred in America, particularly in the New York city, in the 80's towards HIV/AIDS based on Goffman's stigma theory and Major's four mechanisms of stigma.

The study contains wide branches, thus the study limited the stigma approach into four parts of mechanisms. The writer uses this approach along with narrative and cinematography analysis to see how these parts reflect American society's treatment towards HIV/AIDS in the 80's based on the events in the movie "The Normal Heart".

1.6. Method of the Study

1.6.1. Method of Research

This research applied library research which is a method used to gather information. This method can be considered as a structured inquiry with certain techniques, tools, and regulations (George, M. W, 2008:1). This method is gathered information by collecting the data from different kinds of reliable sources such as movie scripts, books, journals and articles related to this research along with the writer's role for identifying the movie as its technique. The primary resource is originally from the movie *The Normal Heart*, supported with the movie script, several reliable journal articles and books.

1.6.2. Method of Approach

In this research, the writer uses the objective criticism approach by Abrams as defining a movie as “a work of literature as something which stands free from what is often called ‘extrinsic’ relations to the poet, or to the audience, or to the environing world” (1999:52). Moreover, the writer also applied the stigma theory approach by Erving Goffman and four mechanisms of stigma by Major which are closely related to sociological approach to analyze and convey American society's perception towards HIV in the movie. The writer chooses the stigma approach because the theory states that stigma is considered as behavior that causes individuals to be judged by other individuals (Goffman E, 1997:134), which is closely related to assumptions coming from society. Furthermore, the writer also analyzes the cinematography elements including lighting and camera angle in order to identify several meanings from the scenes.

1.7. Organization of the Writing

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, previous studies and method of the study.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the theories used to analyze the movie *The Normal Heart* for the data of this research.

CHAPTER III RESULT & DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the writer presents the result of the analysis in the data. Those analyses include general description, analysis theme, character, settings, conflicts, plot, cinematography, and the result of analysis using the stigma theory.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter is about the conclusion and the suggestion from the writer.

REFERENCES