

Homophobia in *Prayers for Bobby* Movie Script through Mary Griffith

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Abstract

The thesis writer focuses on Mary Griffith's character as homophobia person when she knows Bobby's secret from Bobby's brother. Later, she also realizes homophobia to all homosexual. This article has purpose to answer the question of why Mary Griffith has homophobic understanding towards Bobby Griffith in *Prayers for Bobby* Movie Script and it was done through qualitative method and close reading technique, the dialogues uttered by Mary Griffiths regarding homophobia. The classifications are based on the indicators of pathological dread of the same-sex love, the discriminations built into a culture's laws, and customs against homosexual based on patriarchal system. The reasons of Mary's homophobia are Biblical Verses and Religious Understandings, Social and Psychological Justifications against Homosexuality, and Blaming Action Related to Homosexual Indications. In conclusion, Mary tends to be homophobic since she knows that it is not natural at all. Therefore, she keeps quoting Biblical verses, justifying her actions, and blaming others to keep her family out of homosexual issues.

Keywords: Homophobia, Mary Griffith, Prayers for Bobby

A. INTRODUCTION

Tradition, morality and religion are used to 'prove' that same-sex relationships and transgender practices are something foreign in Indonesia. Various phenomena of discrimination also occur in Indonesia against gays and lesbians. This happens because state officials often commit acts of violence precisely because of this differences in the sexual orientation of these groups (Diefendorf and Bridges, 2020). One of events carried out by status apparatus occurred in Surabaya in 2010. International 3 Lesbian, Gay, The bisexual, Trans and intersex Association (ILGA) organizes LGBT conferences in collaboration with Gaya Nusantara but this conference was attacked by the police without any clear reason (Liang, 2010).

Homophobia is defined as a range of behaviors, feelings, negative toward sexual variations and people identified or perceived as LGBTQ (Herek, 2004). Homophobia can express itself in many different ways in individuals and communities, and across different stages of life. It can be very such as negative self-talk about hating one's same sex sexual desire, and very implicit, such as judging or disliking LGBTQ people without acknowledging or accepting one's own same-sex attraction (Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). Homophobia comes from

the term 'homo' which in this context is homosexuals and 'phobia' which means fear (Raharjo, 2007). The term indeed indicates matter of hatred towards those who have interest in the same sex of partner. Homophobia is consequently a term to describe fear and dislike of forms of homosexuality (Byrne, 2005).

Homophobia is defined as a range of behaviors, feelings, negative toward sexual variations and people identified or perceived as LGBTQ. Homophobia is sustained by negative attitudes, emotions as well as religious, political and cultural values and beliefs (Plummer, 2016). Homophobia is also defined as an affective or emotional response which also included fear, anxiety, anger, discomfort, and aversion that is felt by individuals when interacting with a gay person, either involving or does not involve a cognitive component (Adams, Wright, and Lohr, 1996).

From those events above, homophobia seems to be a problem that accompanies perspective of homosexuality (Adams, et al. 1996). This idea is also reflected in literary works, especially movie scripts. The movie itself is such reflection of everyday reality that actualizes representations of identities. One of movie that shows homophobia attitude is *Prayers for Bobby*. Mary as the main character shows homophobia against her own son, Bobby, that later pushes him to do suicide in order to resist the decision of the mother. Then, this paper would like to answer the question of why does Mary Griffith have homophobic understanding towards Bobby Griffith in *Prayers for Bobby* Movie Script? Through qualitative method, content analysis is used to underline the data from Katie Ford's movie script entitled *Prayers for Bobby* and describe the result of the research by reading and understanding the movie script.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

By qualitative method, the researchers use journals, articles, watch films, and read the movie script to classify the data collected in the movie script of *Prayers for Bobby*. This study focuses on Mary Griffith as a motherly role in film of *Prayers for Bobby*. Qualitative descriptive study and close reading technique is used to analyze the homophobia uttered by Mary Griffith in the film. The data is taken from *Prayers for Bobby* movie script by Katie Ford.

The researcher of this study collects data from the film and other source using content analysis. Content analysis can be used to analyze all forms of communication whether it is newspaper, radio news, television advertisement or all the documentary materials (Bogdan and Steven, 1975). By indicating content analysis, the idea in the movie script is the main conception needs to be underlined further in this research. Because this research is descriptive,

the writer is being adopted the descriptive by analysis documentation technique. It is necessary to look at the data from Katie Ford's movie script entitled *Prayers for Bobby*.

Then, the researcher analyzes the movie script and the film by reading and comparing both of them. There are several steps of data collection technique that the writers carry out in this study (Bogdan and Steven, 1975). First, it is very important to watch the film and read the movie script three times or more. Second, identification of the data related to the research. Third, the selected data is summarized into classifications ready to be analyzed.

C. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Mary's Utterances on Homophobia in Prayers for Bobby Movie Script

In this data, Mary says,

"O Ed stop it. It's disgusting" (Ford, 2009).

Mary comments this because Bobby's brother shows himself like a woman carrying a purse and she thinks that Ed really should not do that. She thinks it was too disgusting to show to a man and this is only done for women because it would be strange if a man carried out an action that made himself look like a woman. It is an unnatural thing to do for anyone who identifies as a man because it is a bad look when they do that behavior and it is not good to do it (Adams, et al. 1996).

In another data, Mary says that,

"In order for all of us to be together in the kingdom of heaven, we cannot stray" (Ford, 2009).

Mary said that she did not want her family to fall into a sin that was undesirable in her religion. It was a very big sin and that sin would not be forgiven by God. She also said this because homosexuality is a terrible sin that is stated in the Bible. When Mary said this, it was also because she did not want her family to be lost in sin which would have a bad impact on her family and she also would not have a homosexual family in her house. He did not accept it at all because his family adheres to religion and stays away from all the prohibitions that have been ordered. The family remains obedient to its obligations as servants of God and is really serious about carrying out the teachings of their religion (Diefendorf and Bridges, 2020). It will not be affected by sins that will make their family one of those people who are full of with very big sins and of course God will not forgive them.

In another data, When Mary says,

“Some people wouldn't understand. And I told you time after time not to do that thing with your arm. Makes you look like a girl and you continue to do it” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because she did not want her friends to know what Bobby was wearing and she hated Bobby's attitude of behaving like an abnormal woman or man. She also does not want Bobby to wear jeans that made him look gay and that made him feel strange about being seen by his friends. Therefore, she would not let her friends think Bobby was gay so he made Bobby feel uncomfortable when he avoided answering Bobby's questions. She would feel embarrassed by Bobby's attitude of still acting gay in front of her (Adams, et al. 1996; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Mary was also trying to help him so he could get away with it. The homosexual sin she experienced continues to make her afraid of Bobby who has not been able to change or has not tried to escape from the sin.

In another data, Mary says,

“No, you haven't. It's gotten worse. Why you're doing this? What's wrong with you? Stop that!” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because Bobby does not want to listen to what Mary says and still does not want to follow her wishes. Bobby wants to remain who he is and be able to make the people around him accept him, but Mary still asks why Bobby keeps doing things like that strangely in front of her. It makes her uncomfortable with the behavior carried out by Bobby (Borillo, 2010; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). This also makes Mary confused about Bobby who can say things that he should not say to her because she thinks it is wrong behavior and it is not appropriate for Bobby to do it at all if he is part of the homosexual group.

In another data, Mary says,

“We can't sin like that. That is a terrible sin. The bible calls it an abomination.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because she did not want her family to commit a sin that according to the Bible is an abomination. She thinks that she does not want his family to experience or commit homosexual acts and so on because it is a very big commitment. What is written in the Bible must exist, otherwise sin will be carried over to the afterlife (Borillo, 2010; Pujimahanani, et al., 2022). This is a crucial part where Mary really hates homosexuals because according to her, these people do not deserve to live. They do not become followers of God's servants and homosexuals will receive appropriate punishment because they have violated what God has created.

In another data, Mary says,

“Bobby! You know it's enough you go God knows where at night. But now you're bringing these deviants into my house. They're gay, aren't they? I thought you were getting better. Don't say that. The bible also says a person can change. Why do you keep choosing this? No we love you. Can't you see that's why we're doing this?” (Ford, 2009).

Mary comments about Bobby having a gay friend when she came to pick Bobby up to go to the Halloween party. When she found out that Bobby had gay friend, she told Bobby not to hang out with them because it would make him even more lost and unable to recover (Diefendorf and Bridges, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2022). She also said that Bobby was so brave by bringing someone like that into her house. She also thinks that Bobby will not recover if he is still influenced by homosexual people.

In another data, Mary says, *“I do not wanna know. We always start at the beginning every time and if we're not getting any more different let's just not go there. Stop. I mean it. I don't wanna hear it”* (Ford, 2009). Mary said this because she did not want to hear about Bobby's relationship with his girlfriend while Bobby was in Portland and Mary did not want to discuss it either. She said this because she thought what Bobby did was really wrong because she thought that every time they talked about it would definitely end in a fight. So she will not listen to any word Bobby says or make him understand because she will not change her mind to understand Bobby's situation (Borillo, 2010; Ibrahim, et al., 2022). She also will not agree to a relationship that is wrong in his eyes because it is a big mistake and she thinks that she still has an opinion about what she knows.

In another data, Mary says,

you weren't with homosexual, were you? this is not you temptation working it ways” (Ford, 2009).

Mary thinks that if Bobby getting close to homosexual people it will make him will make him far from God because homosexuality is a very big sin and it is not forgiven by God who commits it. Therefore, Mary says this because she feels that if Bobby has no will to be normal and still thinks he is homosexual Bobby still cannot change and also has not tried to keep himself away from homosexuals who will have a bad impact on his future and the hopes of his family who do not want the wrong child in his life.

In another data, Mary says, *“I read that homosexuals have sex in public bathrooms, and that they recruit children.”* (Ford, 2009). Mary said this because she read a rumor in the news about hyperbolic information about homosexuals and because she does not want Bobby to do those things with homosexuals, and that means he will not do those things or commit those sins like other homosexuals out there because it will give Bobby a disease if he does that and it will also ruin both his family name and the future that his family hopes for, which her

family hopes will not happen to Bobby and he will not follow in the footsteps of homosexuals out there. It is because homosexual disease has occurred throughout the world and this disease is quickly taking its toll every day (Ercüment and Meriç, 2020; Ibrahim, et al., 2022).

In another data, Mary says,

“Joy's right Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own's person the due penalty for their error.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary agrees with what Joy says that homosexual is a shameless way to do. She says this when Bobby decides to drop out of school. Mary thinks that homosexual people doing thing will receive punish what they doing in their life with this thing, because she thinks it a great sin in their life and ashamed for their family too (Ercüment and Meriç, 2020). It will make them being punish too in hell and they will not be given forgiveness by God.

The researchers would like to answer the research questions which have been stated in the chapter one by presenting the data and analyzing the reasons of them. And also the writer analyzes the dialogues uttered by Mary Griffith regarding homophobia indicated through the theory. The classifications are based on the indicators of pathological dread of the same-sex love, the discriminations built into a culture's laws, and customs against homosexual based on patriarchal system. The data is following:

a. Pathological Dread of the Same-Sex Love

In this data, Mary says,

“In Leviticus, if a man lies with another man, they should both be put to death. being together in the next life.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because if man lies or sleep together, they should both be put to death according Bible's verses. And Mary asks if there is anything that needed to be discussed when Bobby get home and she thought that Bobby should be open with his and his family would help if he could tell the truth about what he was going through (Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). Mary also thinks that this can be overcome if they work together and get through and God will certainly help Bobby.

Mary says

“Bobby, if there is something wrong, you need to share it with your family. Bobby, we're your family.” We can get through this. I know that if we trust in God, we can get through this. It's curable with his help (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because if man lies or sleep together, they should both be put to death according Bible's verses. And Mary asks if there is anything that needed to be discussed when Bobby get home and she thought that Bobby should be open with his family and they would

help if he could tell the truth about what he was going through, and Mary also thinks that this can be overcome if they work together and get through and God will certainly help Bobby.

In another data, Mary says,

“If a homosexual who wants to renounce to homosexuality... finds a psychiatrist who knows how to cure homosexuality...” (Ford, 2009).

Mary reads a book in her office to find a word about homosexuality and how to cure homosexual people in it. And Mary thought that she could seek psychiatrist so that she could give a sermon to Bobby so that he could live the same life as before and Mary hoped that this would make Bobby a person who could live a normal life. And she can find a solution for Bobby. By facing a psychiatrist, Mary assumes that religion could cooperate with psychology to defend her son against homosexuality (Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). Actually, she would like to be more rational by involving psychological matters, but that situation is only done in matter of homophobia.

In another data, Mary says,

“He has every chance of becoming... a happy well-adjusted heterosexual.” (Ford, 2009).

When Mary reads the bible, she says that Bobby still has a chance to fix himself to be a normal person. Mary writes this because she wants to know more about homosexual people and she thinks she should give Bobby lots of advice so he can listen and do it so he does not get lost in life. She really hopes that Bobby can still survive so that he can recover.

In another data, Mary says,

“I read that homosexuals have sex in public bathrooms, and that they recruit children.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because she reads rumor in the news about hyperbolic information on homosexual persons. Mary says this because she will not Bobby to do that thing with other men it does mean he will not do that thing or doing that sin such as other homosexual out there because it will give disease to Bobby if he will doing that thing.

b. Discriminations Built into a Culture’s Laws

In this data, Mary says,

“O Ed stop it. It’s disgusting.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary comments Bobby’s brother demonstration of himself like a woman bring a purse. She thought that Ed was really inappropriate to do that because he was a man. She thought that was too disgusting to be shown to men. She also assumes that all humans should be heterosexual

and play role as their sexual nature. Therefore, she refuses any mimic of other sexual role done by members of her family.

In another data, Mary says,

“Well you have to stick with it. I mean that I hope you are trying with all your might. I cannot lose you to this. Have faith!” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because Bobby still not keep trying by what Mary says to him, because she will not lose Bobby to live in that way. So she hopes Bobby to keep praying and have faith. And she hopes too that Bobby keep trying so hard because she thinks that he will not lose Bobby because of that thing. She also hopes that Bobby have faith in himself.

In another data, Mary says,

“This could make him or break him.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because Bobby can ruin his future life by doing homosexual way. Mary thinks Bobby will crush his life if he does that way so he will not a good life and having a bad impact for himself and his family because she does not wants his family having a bad outlook for them. Thinking about the future, Mary hopes Bobby will return to normal. By forgetting temptation, Bobby, and even everyone, will become more true and pure (Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). That is why Bobby must distance himself from any temptation. Bobby must stick to his heterosexuality to fight the effects of homosexuality.

In another data, Mary says,

“Some people wouldn't understand. And I told you time after time not to do that thing with your arm. Makes you look like a girl and you continue to do it.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because she does not want her friends know what Bobby is wearing and she hates Bobby's attitude like a girl. She will not allow her friends to think that Bobby is a gay person so she makes Bobby feels uncomfortable when she avoid to answer Bobby's question because she feels ashamed if her friends will know about it or see what Bobby looks like.

In another data, Mary says,

“No, you haven't. It's gotten worse. Why you're doing this? What's wrong with you? Stop that!” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because Bobby does not want to listen what Mary says and why Bobby still doing that way in front of her. She feels that Bobby cannot change himself and also Mary confuses what make Bobby thinks like when she telling to her stuff like that (O' Donohue & Caselles, 1997; Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). She asking why Bobby is still like that and make him will stuck in himself.

c. Customs Against Homosexual Based on Patriarchal System

In this data, Mary says,

“He’s not. Ok, It’s good I’m glad you told me. There’s no doubt in my mind that God can handle this. He’ll help’ he’ll heal Bobby.” (Ford, 2009).

When Mary knows about Bobby’s secret from Ed, she does not believe but Ed is trying to make understand Bobby’s situation because she believes that Bobby is not a homosexual person and she does not worry about it because God will help them and will help Bobby to. There is no doubt for Mary to be worried because God will help him (O’ Donohue & Caselles, 1997; Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). This is also showing Mary’s firm heart that being homosexual should always be hindered. She condemns homosexuality as that attitude reflects any betrayal towards God himself.

In another data, Mary says,

“In order for all of us to be together in the kingdom of heaven, we cannot stray.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says she does not wants her family lives that way. She also says this because homosexuality is a terrible sin in the bible. When Mary says this because she does not wants her family is a stray or being homosexuality in her house. She will not accept it if it going to be happened because their family is devout family (Greene and Herek, 1998; Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). This utterance underlines that Mary really wants her family to be normal as it is being required to be as a whole in front of God himself.

In another data, Mary says,

“We can’t sin like that. That is a terrible sin.” (Ford, 2009).

The bible calls it an abomination. Mary says this because she does not want her family to do that sin which the bible says is an abomination. She thinks that she does not want her family to have homosexual and so on because it is a very big to commit. What is stated in the bible must be or it will be sin that will be carried over to the afterlife (Greene and Herek, 1998; Yuliastuti, et al., 2022). This is a crucial part in which Mary really hates homosexual since she thinks that those people deserve to be condemned in hell.

In another data, Mary says,

“I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. When the Holy Spirit controls your life, it will produce love, joy and kindness, goodness and self-control.” (Ford, 2009).

Mary suggests Bobby to embrace God in his life tighter. She pushes Bobby to pray and to control his desire to other man. And she really hopes that Bobby had to what he wanted because he would get lost if he still lives that way.

In another data, Mary says,

“I can't erase what's in the bible. Even animals know what to do it with. What's next? You wanna ruin your life?” (Ford, 2009).

Mary says this because she cannot erase what in the bible says, she thinks that animal know what is right and wrong. So, she is asking Bobby what he will do for his future in the next life. She thinks that if Bobby drop out from school is going to ruin his life and not having a future.

D. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study of homophobia uttered by Mary Griffith as the main character in the Prayers for Bobby film. The representation of Mary Griffith's character is as a devout Christian who raises her four children Ed, Bobby, Joy and Nancy. From the first sub-chapter of the analysis, it could be concluded that Mary is so homophobic related to the situation of Bobby and his surroundings. Mary tends to hate homophobia since she knows that homophobia is not natural at all. She also quotes many aspects in Biblical verses as her justification to defend Bobby from homophobia. She also tries to cure Bobby by taking him to a psychiatrist, getting him closer to his father, and praying hard for him. She keeps trying her best by being homophobic for the sake of her son. The homophobia uttered by Mary also shows that Mary thinks that her perceptions and perspectives are the best for her son.

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