



MOTHERLY LOVE AS PORTRAYED IN DOROTHEA
FROM 20TH CENTURY WOMEN MOVIE

A FINAL PROJECT

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PRONOUNCEMENT

I state truthfully that this final project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research paper in any university, in S-1, S-2, S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, I ascertain that I did not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in the bibliography.

Semarang, December 7th 2018

Nadia Mutiara Rahmadani

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”

Conrad Hilton

“Be kind and honest, and harmful poisons will turn sweet inside you.”

Rumi

“Love the life you live, live the life you love.”

Bob Marley

This project is dedicated to my beloved family:

Papa, Mama, and Kania.

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Semarang, December 7th 2018

Nadia Mutiara Rahmadani

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this final project is to analyze how motherly love portrayed in Dorothea, the main character of Mike Mills' *20th Century Women* movie. In collecting data, the writer uses library research such as reading text books, articles and internet. The writer focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic elements in analyzing motherly love. The intrinsic elements are character, setting, conflict and cinematographic. The extrinsic elements are by psychological approach, psychoanalysis that is *id*, *ego*, *superego*, and motherly love. The result shows that motherly love can be seen in how Dorothea raising her one and only son, Jamie.

Keywords: Motherly Love, Psychoanalysis, Mike Mills

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A perfect family is a group of people who truly love each other. Family shares love, happiness, or even sadness together. Every child wants to have a perfect family, they want to feel the love from their father and mother. As a parent, father and mother have their important roles. Father's role is to be the head of the family, he protects the family and he has a big responsibility in the family. Mother's role is also important. She has many things to do at home such as cleaning the house and cooking meals for the family. In some situations, fathers can also do what mothers do, and mothers can earn money for the family. A mother is important for the child, since she is the one who had the child in her womb for nine months and give a birth to the child, loving her children with all her heart is a mother's role, that can be called as motherly love. That is why the child is commonly more closer to mother than father. Jeffrey S. Turner on his book titled *Families in America: A Reference Handbook* said:

There are many young mothers who report being overwhelmed by the constant flow of infant-oriented tasks to be carried out. Feeding and bathing of the baby and laundering clothing, added to the regular household routines of cleaning, cooking, and shopping, is a full day's work (2002: 46).

Based on the brief explanation above, this paper discusses about a movie directed by Mike Mills entitled *20th Century Women*. This is one of the best movies that published at the end of 2016. In making of this movie, Mills inspired by his mother and sister when he grew up in California. The social background in this movie shows about South Californian's family live in 1970s. The writer found

out that it is an interesting matter to be analyzed in this study since the main character can be an example to explain as the forms of motherly love in this movie. Therefore, the analysis of motherly love is by using Erich Fromm's theory of love, and it will be discussed in this paper, entitled *Motherly Love as Portrayed in Dorothea From 20th Century Women Movie*.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the effort of the main character named Dorothea in raising her son. Dorothea wants to make her son become a better person. It will also be supported by intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the movie such as character, setting, conflict, cinematographic, Dorothea's personality, and motherly love.

1.3 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, this paper discusses motherly love from psychological approach. The main character, Dorothea, will be the main object of the study. There are few questions to support this study:

- (1) How is the *Id*, *Ego*, and *Superego* described in Dorothea?
- (2) How is Dorothea's character in *20th Century Women* described?
- (3) How does motherly love being reflected in Dorothea?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are specific aims to be analyzed, in this case related to the analysis from *20th Century Women* movie. There are three objectives of this study:

- (1) To analyze the *Id*, *Ego*, and *Superego* in Dorothea
- (2) To analyze the character of Dorothea
- (3) To explain how Dorothea expresses the motherly love to her son

1.5 Methods of the Research

The writer uses library research as a method in this writing. The writer collects the data from electronic and printed media to support this study. According to Wellek and Warren in *Theory of Literature*, library research is a research that uses some books and many other sources as references related to the subject matter that is being analyzed(1977: 58) with the help of psychological approach.

2. BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR AND SYNOPSIS

In this section, the writer discusses the biography of the author and synopsis of *20th Century Women* movie. The biography focuses on the life background of the author and his work. The synopsis tells about the characters and plot of the movie.

2.1 The Author and His Work

Mike Mills is a filmmaker and a graphic designer who was born in Berkeley, California in 1966. He is a great director who has made many good movies, his best known movies are *Beginners* (2011) and *Thumbsucker* (2005). Some of his movies won awards at film festival, one of them is *Thumbsucker* which won awards at Sundance Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival. In 2016, he created a new movie about women in the 20th century. This movie tells a bit about Mill's childhood times with his mother and sister, that is why this movie is dedicated for them. The title is *20th Century Women*. It has a good response from the audience. The *20th Century Women* is one of the best movies that published at the end of 2016. This movie was nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay, and also Golden Globes USA 2017 for Best Performance by an Actress, Annette Bening as Dorothea.

2.2 Synopsis

20th Century Women is a movie set in 1979. Dorothea (Annette Bening) lives in a house located in Santa Barbara with her son, Jamie (Lucas Jade Zumann). Jamie is 15 years old. Dorothea was 40 when she had Jamie in labour, she was too old to have a baby that time. She no longer lives with her husband, they got divorced not long after Jamie was born. Now, Jamie is her only one, she loves her son very

much. Her husband left a Ford Galaxy car for her and Jamie. Dorothea and Jamie go to the supermarket by that car, but suddenly they find out their car burns down in flames. Then the Fire Department cleans up the car. Dorothea invites the fireman to her birthday party, that is her way to say thank you. In their house, there is another woman named Abbie (Greta Gerwig). She is a survivor of cervical cancer, and she will not be able to have children. Until one day Abbie looks for another place to live, she starts renting a room in Dorothea's house. There is also Julie (Elle Fanning), she is 17 years old and Jamie's best friend. Jamie is in love with Julie, but Julie says that sex will spoil their friendship. William (Billy Crudup) is a 30 who works with Dorothea and a boarder in that house like Abbie.

Jamie is playing a dangerous game with his friends, but he thinks that the game is a fun game. Dorothea asks him to stop playing that game, but Jamie ignores her, he keeps playing the game. After that, Jamie does not feel well and he faints. Knowing that, Dorothea is angry and she brings him to the hospital. After Jamie gets better, he can go home because there is nothing serious. But Dorothea is still angry with him, she asks Jamie to stop playing such stupid game like that again. Jamie gets mad with his mother and then he goes far away from home. Dorothea feels that Jamie does not want to listen to her anymore. Dorothea thinks that she has to show her extra love to Jamie, she wants Jamie to understand that she really loves him because he is her only one son in this world. She tries so hard to be the best mother for Jamie. Finally, Jamie can understand that his mother was doing right for him, she just wants him to be a good person in the future.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The writer uses two elements in analyzing *20th Century Women* movie, those are intrinsic element and extrinsic element. The intrinsic elements contain character, setting, conflict, and cinematographic aspect. In extrinsic elements, the writer chooses psychoanalysis and motherly love to support the analysis.

3.1 Intrinsic Elements

There are some aspects of intrinsic elements contained in *20th Century Women* movie. The writer focuses only on 4 aspects such as character, setting, conflict, and cinematography aspects to be analyzed.

3.1.1 Character

Character is the most important element in every kind of literary works such as drama, novel, and film. A character has an important role and have to play it right so that the reader or the audience can understand what is going on through the story. Potter said that:

Characters are a basic element in much imaginative literature and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid for them. When critics speak of a character they mean any person who figures in a literary work, not particularly a peculiar or eccentric one. (1967: 01)

According to Perrine in the book *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* there are two types of character based on its development, namely, flat characters and round characters (1988: 67). A flat character has one side of personality and never change in whole story. Meanwhile a round character is more complex and need more understanding.

3.1.2 Setting

Setting is also an important aspect in a literary work, including the setting in *20th Century Women* movie. According to Meyer (1990: 107) in his book entitled *The Bedford Introduction To Literature*, setting is divided into three elements, which mentions the time, place, and social environment. Setting of place explains about where the story happens, setting of time explains about when the story happens, and setting of social environment explains about the social circumstances that happens around the character.

3.1.3 Conflict

Wellek and Warren (1977: 8) explain that conflict is the important instrumental of a story. The story goes flat and does not entertain the readers or audiences if there is no conflict. A conflict can be happened between the central character with other characters, the character with the social life, and it can also be a conflict with the character itself.

3.1.4 Cinematographic Aspects

Cinematography is an important aspect in making of a movie, it is basically the art of visual telling. There are a number of intelligent studies on the relation of literature and movie as it stated by Brian Gallagher on his journal titled *Film Imagery, Literary Imagery: Some Distinctions*. He quoted from Allardyce Nicoll's *Film and Theater* (1936), that drama really had little in common with cinema. A movie or film is a visual media content that can stir the emotion of the audience through a visual image. Since this paper has taken from a movie titled *20th Century Women*, the writer puts the cinematographic aspects on it.

In the process of making this movie, several techniques are needed to get a good shot or angle. The good shot or angle is needed to transfer the story visually. According to Brown on his *Cinematography: Theory and Practice*, there lies number of shots of basic building blocks of film grammar, such as wide shot (long shot), full shot, medium shot, and two shot. Wide shot (long shot) shows the entire scene of the movie (2012: 17). Full shot shows the audience about the character from head to toe, it refers to objects as well. The medium shot is closer than a full shot. Medium shot might show a person, or some people talking at a table. Two shot is a shot happens between two characters. They might be facing each other, both facing forward, or maybe both facing away from the camera (2012: 20).

3.2 Extrinsic Elements

There are many external aspects contain in a literary work, such as feminism, racial discrimination, psychoanalysis, etc. The writer chooses psychological approach to analyze the extrinsic elements in *20th Century Women* movie. Psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud's theory, is a theory for knowing the main character's personality, while theory of love by Erich Fromm is also used to explain how motherly love being reflected in Dorothea as a mother.

3.2.1 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis was found by Sigmund Freud, it consists of three elements; *Id*, *Ego*, and *Superego*. As Hall explained in his book, *A Primer of Freudian Psychology*, by working as a team, they manage an individual to be efficient and able to fulfill one's need with his environment. (1954: 22)

The first element is *Id*, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, struggle of life, wants and needs. According to Hall, the function of *Id* fulfills the primordial or initial principle of life which Freud called the pleasure principle (1956:15). The next one is called *Ego*, as Hall said that instead of the pleasure principle, the *Ego* is governed by the reality principle. Reality means something that is real or exist. The aim of the reality principle is to postpone the discharge of energy until the actual object will satisfy the need that has been discovered or produced (1956:22). The last one is *Superego*, it is named as morality principle because of its relation with moral values and norms. Hall explained that *Superego* represents the ideal rather than the real, and it strives for perfection rather than for reality or pleasure. (1956:31)

3.2.2 Motherly Love

Love is a kind of emotion that people can feel. It is a strong feeling for someone, and it can build relation between two people or more. There are many kinds of love such as love for family, love for best friend, and love between a couple. As pointed out by Fromm on *The Art of Loving*, that love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person, love is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one “object” of love (1956: 46). There are five forms of object of love according to Fromm: brotherly love, erotic love, self-love, the love of God, and motherly love. The writer focuses only on one type of love, motherly love.

Motherly love can be described in many ways such as the mother’s responsibility, the protective way, caring and loving. *Oxford Living Dictionaries*

online (2018) defines responsible as having an obligation to do something for someone. A mother should be responsible about everything especially to her kid. Sometimes, a mother can be over protective to her kid. The protective way shows that a mother cares and loves her kids very much. A mother will always take care of the kids, she will do everything for them and make sure that they are safe.

Mother gives a birth to her kid, and she nurtures the kid to be a better person. She will give affection for the kids, and she will help them when they have problems. That is what we called as motherly love. Motherly love can be seen since the kid is still on the mother's womb. According to Fromm, motherly love is unconditional affirmation of the child's life and needs. Affirmation of the child's life has two aspects, one is the care and responsibility absolutely necessary for the child's life and his growth. The other aspect is the attitude which instills in the child a love for living. (1956: 49)

4. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the writer identifies several aspects to get the detail explanation about *20th Century Women* movie. This analysis is important since it discusses about the characters, setting, and conflict. The other aspects such as psychoanalysis and the forms of motherly love are also needed to complete the analysis.

4.1 Characters

There are many characters in *20th Century Women* movie, and each character has an important role. The first character is Dorothea (Annette Bening), she is a single parent in this movie. She has a son named Jamie (Lucas Jade Zumann). Dorothea and Jamie are the two main characters. Another character in this movie is Abbie (Greta Gerwig), a girl who rents a room in Dorothea's house. In analysing the characters, the writer focuses only on the two characters, Dorothea and Jamie.

4.1.1 Dorothea

Dorothea is the main character in *20th Century Women* movie. She is a 55 year old mother who raises her son alone. Dorothea's appearance can be seen through the scene in **Picture A1**, which uses a full shot. She looks tall, and she always wears simple clothes. **Picture A2** uses a medium shot, it shows Dorothea's appearance closer than before. She has a short gray hair, it looks slightly wavy and messy. She looks a bit old and she has fair skin.



A1. 00:22:35



A2. 00:20:50

She gave a birth to her first child when she was 40, everyone says she was too old to have a baby. Dorothea is a round character in *20th Century Women* movie because she develops her character from an over protective mother, and then tries to be a good mother for Jamie. She has love that can not be described for Jamie. She got divorced with her husband not long after Jamie was born. Since that day, she became a single parent and have to be the head of the family.

4.1.2 Jamie

Jamie is a son of Dorothea. He is still 15 years old. He is a naughty kid, and he often argues with his mother. Jamie is also a round character, because even though he is a bad person in the beginning of the movie, but he learns something new and changes himself to be a better person.



B1. 00:18:16



B2. 00:03:14

In **Picture B1**, Jamie's appearance can be seen through a full shot. He actually looks good, but he is very thin. He usually wears a T-shirt and a jacket.

The next picture in **B2** uses a medium shot. This scene shows Jamie with a black hair, and it is a bit curly. He has pointed nose and fair skin just like his mother.

4.2 Setting

The writer discusses about three components of setting from this movie. Those components of setting explain about the time, place, and social environment that occurred in the movie. Those components are important to be discussed in this paper to support the analysis.

4.2.1 Time

At the beginning of this movie, there is a sign “Santa Barbara, 1979” to show the story happens in Santa Barbara in 1979, as it is captured in **Picture C1**. To support that this movie is set in 1979, there is an old television in **Picture C2**. The next picture is **C3**, it uses a wide shot (long shot) and it shows an old car from the 1970s. Those kind of stuffs are very different with nowadays’ modern styles.



C1. 00:00:45



C2. 00:15:30



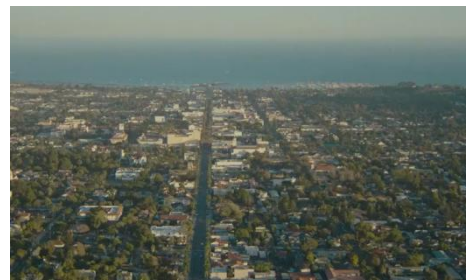
C3. 01:45:23

4.2.2 Place

The story of this movie is mainly set in Santa Barbara, especially in Dorothea's house (see **Picture D1**). Santa Barbara is not a crowded place, it is a small town in California. The director of this movie, Mike Mills, wants the movie to be set in Santa Barbara because it was a place when he was born and grew up with his lovely mother and sister. This movie takes a bit story from Mills' life. There will be a scene with a picture of the Pacific ocean because Santa Barbara situated on a south-facing section of coastline, as it was seen in **Picture D2**.



D1. 00:08:05



D2. 00:00:48

4.2.3 Social Environment

Santa Barbara is located near from the East Beach. Dorothea often visits East Beach just to relax her mind. **Picture E1** uses a wide shot (long shot) and shows Dorothea is having a talk on the East Beach with the other two women. There are also some people spend their time in the beach with their friends. Dorothea is having good relations with her neighbors, she likes to invite them to have dinner in her house (**Picture E2**). They usually talk about their own problems, sometimes they like telling jokes, and many more.



E1. 00:19:57



E2. 01:32:40

4.3 Conflict

There are many conflicts that happen in this movie. The conflicts can be internal or external. The internal conflict can be seen through Dorothea's conflict with herself. A conflict can also happen between two characters, it is called external conflict. The writer chooses to analyze the external conflict that happen between Dorothea and Jamie.

4.3.1 Dorothea's Conflict with herself

Dorothea as the main character in this movie has an internal conflict inside herself. It happens when Dorothea wants a figure of a father for her son, but she also does not want to have any close relationship with a man. She may think that she is too old to have another married, and she still does not have any feeling for someone at the moment.

4.3.2 Conflict Between Dorothea and Jamie

The external conflict happens between Dorothea and her son, Jamie. The conflict starts when Jamie is playing in the park with his friends. He watches his two friends playing a game called "the fainting game". Jamie wants to try it, and then he plays that game. Jamie almost died because of that game. Dorothea is angry and she asks him why he plays such a dangerous game. Jamie does not need any advice. He thinks that the game is challenging to be played, but Dorothea thinks it

is dangerous for him. He says that everyone loves to play that game and nothing to worry about. He is mad with Dorothea because she does not allow him to play any dangerous game anymore. He runs away from home with his friends after arguing with his mother.

4.4 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is used to identify Dorothea's personality. Personality is composed of three elements. Those three elements of personality known as the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. The writer chooses to analyze Dorothea's personality by using those elements above.

4.4.1 *Id*

The *id* in Dorothea reflected by the way she loving his son since he was an infant. Dorothea and her husband got divorced since Jamie was still a baby. Dorothea never feels the love from the man since that day, that is why she wants to make Jamie a better person and hoping that one day he can care and love her as a mother. Another *id* shows when Dorothea is angry because Jamie acts disrespectfully to her. Dorothea is still talking serious with him, but he does not want to listen to his mother and he just walks away. Jamie does not always want to do what his mother says, and it makes Dorothea upset.



F1. 00:17:57



F2. 00:17:58



F3. 00:18:00

In **Picture F1**, Jamie says that Dorothea should not be worried about him, but Dorothea thinks that Jamie playing a dangerous game is a bad thing for him. She does not want anything bad happen to him. The *id* in Dorothea describes in **Picture F2** and **F3** that she is really angry because Jamie ignores her and does not want to listen to her. He just walks away and leaves his mother.

4.4.2 *Ego*

The *ego* is the opposite of the *id*, it is based on reality and influenced by society. In the *ego*, Dorothea feels she needs the help from other persons to tell Jamie and to make Jamie become a better person, because she thinks her way in raising Jamie alone is not enough. She asks the two young women who she thinks can help Jamie to understand the problems.



F4. 00:21:11



F5.00:21:15

In the scene above, Dorothea talks with Julie and Abbie, the two young women who are Jamie's bestfriends. She thinks maybe with the help from them,

Jamie can be a better person because sometimes Dorothea feels like she is too old to be a modern mother. Dorothea actually feels sad knowing that her son can not have a good relationship with herself.

4.4.3 *Superego*

The last is about *superego*. *Superego* represents a moral aspect. Dorothea shows her *superego* from her action to stop being over protective to Jamie, for example she lets him free again to play outside with his friends, but she keeps telling him to be safe and not to do the bad game again. Jamie is almost die because of a dangerous game. Dying is a bad aspect of life, Dorothea does not want her son to die. She starts to think that maybe being protective to Jamie will not good for himself. She knows that Jamie is still a teenager, he needs to find the meaning of life, and he does not want to be confined by the rules of his mother. But finally Jamie realizes that his mother was being protective to him just because she just wants him to have a better life.

4.5 Motherly Love in Dorothea

Since she got divorced and lived as a single parent, she just wants to give an extra love for Jamie. She is the one who is taking care of Jamie. She gives affection and protection since Jamie was in her womb. That is what we called as motherly love.

4.5.1 Responsible

Dorothea has a responsibility as a single mother in raising her son. She makes breakfast for Jamie every morning, she drives Jamie to school with her old car, and she should be the head of the family since she got divorced. It means that she controlled everything by herself in the house. There is a day when Dorothea gets a

phone call from Jamie's teacher at school, the teacher says that Jamie often skips the class and writes a letter with Dorothea's fake signature.



G1. 00:11:01

The scene in **Picture G1** uses a two shot, it shows when Dorothea goes to Jamie's school and meets the teacher. She apologized to the teacher. She can not believe of what Jamie has been done during this time.

4.5.2 Protective

Dorothea becomes protective because she wants Jamie to be safe. She wants him to do the right things and leave his bad habits, such as go to the pub until the dawn comes, fight with his friends, or play the dangerous game. The problem starts when Jamie and his friends are playing in the park. By looking at his friends playing the dangerous game called "the fainting game", Jamie is curious and he wants to try the game. He plays that game until he faints.



G2. 00:15:59



G3. 00:16:19



G4. 00:16:22

In **Picture G2**, the one kid hyperventilates, and another pulls on his diaphragm from behind. The kid faints and then get up again, they laughs after that like nothing serious happens. In **Picture G3**, Jamie is trying the game. He faints in **Picture G4** but he does not wake up. Dorothea knows about it and she brings Jamie to the hospital. After they get home, Dorothea talks to Jamie why he played that stupid game.



G5. 00:17:48



G6. 00:17:55

The first scene in **Picture G5** shows that Dorothea is angry to Jamie. She says it was a stupid game, but Jamie thinks that it was just a game, and it looks fun. In **Picture G6**, Dorothea says that Jamie is almost die because of that game. She worries about him, she does not want Jamie to play outside. She asks him to take a rest. She does not want something bad happen again to him. But Jamie ignores her and runs away.

4.5.3 Caring and Loving

The last form of motherly love is about caring and loving. When Jamie got an accident because of the dangerous game he played, Dorothea as a mother brings Jamie to the hospital. Although she is angry with Jamie, she is still taking care of him, loving him very much and does not want something bad happen to him. As it is said in Fromm's *The Art of Loving* that motherly love is unconditional mother's love to her child in order to protect her child in every situation.



G7. 00:29:20

Jamie runs far away from home every time he gets mad to his mother. Dorothea worries because Jamie has not arrived home yet until that night. Dorothea's anxious feeling in **Picture G7** is a sign that she is afraid if something bad happen to him out there. Dorothea shows her care through her anxious feeling and thinking about Jamie. She keeps waiting, and not long after that Jamie arrives at home. He knows his mom is still awake just because to make sure that he will back home that night.

Jamie starts to realize that his mother truly loves him, and he finally understands that it is not easy to raise him alone without the help of a father. His mother does such things because she just wants him to be a good person in the future. In **Picture G8**, a moment when Dorothea is washing Jamie's hair. It means

that Dorothea is caring and loving Jamie. It makes Jamie realize how important Dorothea is in his life.



G8. 01:47:08

Even though Dorothea cares and loves Jamie very much, but he will get older one day. Fromm says in his book that the child must grow, it must emerge from mother's womb, it must eventually become a completely separate human being. The mother must not only tolerate, but also must support the child's separation. (1956: 51)

5. CONCLUSION

The *20th Century Women* movie directed by Mike Mills is a movie about a mother living with her son. This movie shows how motherly love portrayed in Dorothea. Dorothea is the main character who lives in Santa Barbara with her son, Jamie. Dorothea as a single parent really loves Jamie with all her heart, she gives him a lot of affection, and becomes a good mother for him. She wants Jamie to be a good person in the future.

Dorothea tries her best to be a good mother for Jamie, but in some situations Jamie can not understand what his mother wants. That is why a conflict occurs between them. This movie has a great explanation to know the phenomenon of motherly love that captured in Dorothea, with the help of Erich Fromm's concept of motherly love, and psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. Dorothea appears with the forms to show her motherly love by taking care of Jamie, loving Jamie, showing her responsibility and being over protective to Jamie. It can be said that motherly love is unconditional love to her kid in order to protect her kid in every situation.

As the final result, Dorothea can live happily with her son, and Jamie can also understand the struggle of his mother raising himself alone. He starts to listen to his mother every time she gives him advice about what is good and what is bad for him. It proves that his mother truly loves him.

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