

The Suicide of Jackson Maine in *A Star Is Born*

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ABSTRACT

In the thesis, I am interested to see the reasons for Jackson Maine, a famous and successful rock star to end his life based on the film *A Star Is Born*. To do that, I use Thomas Joiner's *Interpersonal Theory of Suicide*. Joiner's theory discusses the qualities and conditions in his life that may cause him to commit suicide. To see the reasons for Jackson Maine's death as portrayed in the film, I also use David Brodwell and Kristin Thompson's *Mise-en-Scène* theory. Using the approach, I can find the reasons behind his death by analyzing the film's visual arrangement within the scenes. In my research, I find that Jackson Maine experiences great difficulties and disappointment that he fails to cope and encourages him to end his life. Social disconnections, burdensomeness beliefs, and suicide capabilities become the reasons behind his self-destruction decision.

Keywords: Suicide, Mise-en-Scène, Film Analysis, Social Disconnections, Self-destruction.

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic, intimate, and exciting relationship between the two lovers has led romantic drama films to become not only the top-grossing movie's genre but also the Oscar-winning works. The genre discusses the romantic love story or the search for authentic and pure love and romance as the main plot focus (Dixon, 2000). In 2018, the romantic drama movie that caught both critics and audiences attention was *A Star Is Born*. It is a musical romantic drama movie produced, directed, written, and starred by Bradley Cooper. The film has grossed over \$413 million worldwide and received critical acclaim from National Board of Review and the American Film Institute as one of the Top 10 Films of 2018.

A Star Is Born revolves around a famous country music singer, Jackson "Jack" Maine and an aspiring singer, Ally (Tallerico, 2018). As the two meet, perform and make music together, they both fall in love. When Ally gets more popular, Jack feels further apart and cannot adapt to his surroundings. To cope with his unpopularity and failure to make Ally stay, he drowns himself in alcohol, drugs, and loneliness. He ends up ending his own life as the best solution for both when he finds out Ally's career sacrifices for him.

The The topic I am going to discuss is the suicide reasons for the main character, Jackson Maine. Suicide itself is a global phenomenon and occurs throughout the lifespan. It is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds globally (World Health Organization, 2018). Close to 800.000 people die due to suicide every year, one person every 40 seconds. Despite its danger, only two treatments have been shown to prevent the deaths caused by suicide: providing psychosocial counseling and ongoing supportive contact (Fleischmann, et al., 2008). Similar to suicide issues that happen in current social life, the movie *Star Is Born* also ends with Jack's suicide. The decision for Jack to end his life gets me interested because while he struggles, the movie portrays death as the final transformation. His death was both a bold and tragic ending that is not a typical mainstream romance drama with a happy ending. Therefore, I am curious to know what are the reasons of Jackson Maine's suicide. I am using use a psychological approach, which is Thomas Joiner's *Interpersonal Theory of Suicide*. According to the theory, people commit suicide because they want to and because they can. Two interpersonal forms trigger someone desire to commit suicide: thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness (Van Orden, et al., 2010). These two interpersonal forms deal with communication and the relationship that builds between people to another socially and to its surroundings, such as to work, marriage, and health. In *Why People Die By Suicide*, Joiner explains that the desire to commit suicide alone will not result in

suicide death (Joiner, 2005). He argues that the capability to be able to perform a suicide act plays a significant role. The capability to perform suicide consists of the ability to overcome human's natural fear of death and the tolerance towards great physical pain. Jackson Maine must have these two factors to make his thoughts on ending his own life into the action of suicide. The combination of suicidal thoughts and the ability to perform a harmful act is the reason for Jack's death to come true.

In portraying the tragedy of Jackson Maine's suicidal desire to be sympathetic and reasonable to audiences, the movie director needs to build certain conditions and arrange many elements. Each issue within the movie must portray Jack's life circumstances: an alcoholic star, a lonely man, and a troubled past person. Each scene has meanings to carry, and each element is placed in a certain way to be meaningful. All of these constructions can set up the atmosphere and get the audience to both enjoy the movie and relate to his death. By using the theory of *Mise-en-Scène*, I want to reveal Bradley Cooper's interpretation, as the director in *A Star Is Born*, portrays the character of Jackson Maine.

The main issues in the film that I am discussing are the circumstances that happen to Maine's life: the thwarted belongingness, the perceived burdensomeness, and the acquired capability to commit suicide. To see the reasons behind his death, I will discuss the film's *Mise-en-Scène* that is placed to portray Maine's circumstances of social disconnection, the burdensomeness belief, and the suicide capabilities. The scenes are taken in a certain way to set the extreme conditions for Maine's choice to end his life.

In the process of committing suicide as a life-ending act, a person will have a particular disposition, which is influenced by the circumstances in his or her life. These circumstances develop a person's inherent qualities, and when they reach a certain degree, they will make a suicidal act to be unavoidable. There is a set of three specific circumstances: social disconnection, the burdensomeness belief, and suicide capabilities to make suicide happens. Social disconnection is a circumstance of feeling alone, and burdensomeness belief is the circumstances of being a burden, and suicide capabilities are the circumstances of making suicide possible to happen. Jackson Maine's himself suffers from these circumstances within himself, his wife, his family, and his work that later resulted in his decision towards his life: ending it. As a result, these circumstances become the reasons for him to pursue death.

JACKSON MAINE'S SOCIAL DISCONNECTIONS

The social disconnections that happen in Jackson Maine's life occur in his life relationship with others: his wife, his bother, and most importantly, with himself. Loneliness and disability to perceive support are the aspects of social disconnection. There is a circumstance that creates isolation for Jackson Maine and another element that structures the disability to perceive social support. The circumstance that causes loneliness is his marriage life. On the other hand, family conflict is the circumstance that creates a disability in perceiving social support. The fusion of Jackson Maine's feelings of loneliness and his disability towards understanding social support leads him to suicide.

SOCIAL DICONNECTIONS: PERSONAL FEELINGS OF LONELINESS

From the film, loneliness captures Jackson Maine's great suffering. He goes to the bar alone, stays in the home alone, and works alone. Rather than spending his time with his friends, his colleagues or his family, Maine is portrayed to spend his time and his life alone. Through his lonely circumstances, it discovers the lack of interaction with others, which is depicted in the scene during his marriage with Ally from the film. One of the scenes that support Maine's loneliness in his marriage is the scene where he plays piano in their house alone. The two become more distant after the marriage: Ally gets busier while Jack has to stay at home alone. The setting of the whole scene tells the irony of Jack loneliness in his marriage. The scene arrangement of Jack's isolation in the marriage is told from the film's settings, the costumes, and the lighting.

The settings in *A Star Is Born* scenes show Jack's loneliness in his marriage. A scene that captures it entirely is Jack's playing piano at home alone. The ranch-style house is seen through the wood exterior materials, the large windows, and warm colors furniture. The style of the ranch house is very informal and casual living style (Allen, 1996). In other words, the house is designed to offer high comfort and a relaxed feeling for both Jack and Ally once they are home as husband and wife, away from the bright stage spotlight. The fact that the family room is a place where he should be with his family, Jack is there

alone. Ally's presence is absent, and Jack only left alone with a piano she always plays. The piano itself is a representation of Ally's. When Jack, as a guitar player, plays the piano than his guitar, the scene of him playing the piano is to emphasize the idea of his longings to her. As he is longing for Ally, but she is absent, the circumstance becomes lonelier for Jack to cope. The more lonely feeling he feels, the more it creates the reason for him to feel disconnected with Ally, the person he loves the most. That disconnection gets him closer to lighten the weight to stay alive: committing suicide then shows up as a solution.

The costume of Jackson Maine in the scene of *A Star Is Born* also shows Jack's loneliness within the marriage that encourages him to suicide. At the scene, the family room is spotless and organized. The sofa is clean and only has pillows, the table only has decorations and a book, and the piano is clean and looks well-taken care. In contrast, Jack, as the main character looks in bad shape. His hair is a mess, and he wears a dark hoodie. His messy hair would represent the stress and the unhappiness he feels as the loneliness feelings grow on him. On the other hand, the hoodie does not only express leisure to reject the formal suit and uniform, but it relates to a rap culture to narrate social exclusion (Wilson, 2006). The decision for Jack, who used always to wear loose shirts into the hoodie represents not only his expression to reject the usual style of his, but also works as a description of his loneliness. He isolates himself, wears something he never wears before, and does not take care of himself by letting him look like a mess. This physical portrayal of his loneliness projects his loss of direction. As a result, his incapability to fix and let himself stay in the loneliness showed by the costume of Jackson Maine; they create the grounds for him to self-destruct by suicide.



The other element of setting that supports Jackson Maine's loneliness due to his marriage in the film *A Star Is Born* is the lighting. One of the lighting arrangements used in the film is high-key lighting. Instead of using the shadow to make the intended elements of the movie sticks out, the movie uses the harsh lighting to stick out the intended elements with darker shadows. The outside world is represented to bright for Jack to go out while he chooses to stay alone with the darker shadow inside his house. The scene displays two contrast lighting qualities: hard lighting and soft lighting. The decision of hard lighting sets the audience to focus on what is inside of Jackson Maine's house: focusing on his mess and feeling his loneliness. Each placement of the properties is seen. It makes the film marker has better control over the objects to support Jack's loneliness, such as the piano and the sofa. As a result, the hard lighting on Jackson Maine allows the audience to capture Jack's decision to stay inside of the house alone looking like a mess while missing Ally. The darker light represents Jack's darker atmosphere, which is in contrast with the outside. As a result, the contrast of the two lighting quality generates the feeling of Maine's loneliness inside the house greater. Since Ally is not inside the house, the bright light may represent Ally's presence that is brighter and positive compared to Jack. The representation of the two contrast lightings brings the gap between the two characters. The loneliness of Jackson Maine became inevitable as they both are in the two different places and two different conditions. The loneliness makes Jack's state of being indifferent. Thus, the indifferent condition sets a reason for Jack to disappear from the world through suicide.

SOCIAL DICONNECTIONS: DISABILITY TO PERCEIVE SUPPORT

In *A Star Is Born*, Jackson Maine starts as a very complex character. He is an alcoholic, drug user, famous rock star with a troubled past. Although there are presences of many support around him: his brother, his band members, his fans, his wife and his wife family who love him, Jack responds to their presence with rejection. He prefers to keep himself alone and pull himself away from others accompaniment. The scene that suits his rejection behavior is when Jack argues with Bobby. When he decides to visit his father's grave and ranch with Ally, he finds out Bobby has sold the land. Furious with his decision, the two got into an argument and ended with Bobby's leave. Rather than listening to Bobby's explanation, Jack sets himself in the distance with Bobby and refuses to open up. This attitude of rejection to his brother portrays the disability to perceive support that triggers Jackson Maine's suicide.

Jackson Maine's disability to perceive support is portrayed in Jack and Bobby's visual elements through the actors' facial expression and gestures. Unlike the previous reaction that is expressing a calm reaction, Bobby starts to express his frustration by raising his tone. Although the pace of his speaking is still slow, the actor's decision to perform it in that low pace tone leaves a more threatening manner. The gesture is the representation of another effort of Bobby's trying to ask for Jack's understanding. He tries to tell him the circumstances that lead him to that decision and tries to make him understand that their father has done nothing to Jack.

The two actors have a huge age gap. As the eldest whose all of his hair has turned grey, Bobby stared and held right at Jack's face: his eyes are teary, his vein on the forehead tensed and his mouth is opened wider. Bobby's teary eyes are the expression of his sadness and begging. The sadness comes as Jack, the brother he raised on his own, confronts the issue directly to him as a form of distrust. The tears on Bobby's eyes emphasize the regret and sorry for what happened. They also show begging as it points straight to Jack's eyes. It is the visual language of his sincerity of the explanation he gives and also how much he means it. The tensed vein expresses his keenness on every word he says. He thinks hard and hopes for Jack's understanding. His opened lips also display his effort on explaining himself and expecting on Jack to hear and see his good intentions. The whole visual expression of Bobby implies the intended regrets: Bobby's gesture of holding Jack's body shows the great attempt of his to persuade Jack and to get his attention. Bobby's attempt to giving social support for Jack is apparent.



While Bobby shows great social support on how much he cares and regrets what happens, Jack, on the other hand, shows a contrast visual expression. Although Jack is also facing Bobby right at his face, his eyes wander down, his mouth is opened, but no words come out, and his veins are all relaxed. The rejection Jack gives through his eyes direction, avoiding Bobby's direct look shows his refusal to see Bobby. He is not interested, even though they are so close to each other. His distant choice is also showed through his decision for not saying anything. Despite his opened lips, it expresses that he has nothing to say or respond to anything that Bobby says. The relaxed nerves show the zero effort Jack wants to make, although Bobby's hands are holding him close, asking for his response. Unlike Bobby, Jack shows no gestures to express towards his brother. The lack of effort for Jack to show conveys his lack of social support. Although others have shown the support, he might need, but it is in his nature to reject it. Rather

than listening and accepting others, Jack tends to distance himself. He does not feel supported even if others do. Jack focuses on the heart-breaking decision that his half-brother made than to the effort he has already done for him throughout the years. His disappointment brings Jack falls to the despair of thinking no one in his surroundings would support him. As a result, Jack's failure to see reasons the lack of support from his social surroundings creates an assurance for him to be suicidal.

Jackson Maine's disability to perceive support from his surroundings as one of the circumstances within his life that lead to suicide agrees to Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. The family conflict he has with his brother leaves him with a failure to see others' efforts to support him. As the feeling of not being supported grows, the feelings for being disconnected from others also grow. The disconnection with his own family does not only symbolize his problems in life, but it also displays Jack's incapability in sensing others compassion towards him. Due to his incapability to connect with others, he places himself differently, and a decision to end his life is seen as one of the closest ways out to exit from his surroundings.

JACKSON MAINE'S BURDENSOMENESS BELIEF

The burdensomeness belief is a view that sees an individual's to be an expandable member to others. Ironically, this is the perspective Jackson Maine sees about his surrounding life: life relationship within himself and with his closest people. The liability and self-hate are the features of burdensomeness belief. There is a circumstance that creates liability for Jackson Maine and another circumstance in the movie that displays the self-hate. Liability, the perspective that sees him or her presence as the cause of problems, is portrayed in Jackson's career downfall. On the other hand, shame is the circumstances that create the self-hate. The fusion of Jackson Maine's views towards his capability as a liability and views his life as hate bring some reasons for him to perform suicide.

JACKSON MAINE'S BURDENSOMENESS BELIEF: LIABILITY STATE

The first circumstance of Jackson Maine to perceive himself as a burden is from his liability within his career. Jackson Maine's liability state starts to show as he slowly stops appearing on the roadshows and stops making albums. Jack, who plays on tours and music festivals, gets an offer to perform on the Grammy's. Thinking he would be the leading performer, he ends up as the guitar player that plays along with a newcomer singer. Rather than negotiating or rejecting the offer, Jack decides to hide the fact to his wife and accepts the Grammy's offer. The situation shows his huge responsibility performing at Grammy's because his wife is nominated for the awards and is excited for his first Grammy's performance. However, rather than sharing the truth to her, Jack chooses to keep it as a secret. As a rock star that uses both singing and playing guitar on the main stage, his decision to hide the downslide of his career displays Jackson Maine's liability: place and accept himself at a disadvantage position. There are three elements of *Mise-en-Scène* within the scene that sets the circumstances of his liability: the setting, the lighting, and the acting.

The setting is the first element of *Mise-en-Scène* within Jackson Maine's Grammy stage performance that supports his liability state towards the desire for suicide. To capture his liability state, I will compare the scenes between the performance during Grammy's performance and the performance during Jackson Maine's prime. The scene comparison of a newcomer country singer stands towards the audiences and shimmers by the spotlight on the big Grammy stage versus Jack's performances on a music festival is the perfect scenes that represents Jack's liability state as a musician. First of all, the decision to choose Grammy as the stage in showing Jack's liability represents his small role in one of the biggest music stages in the world. The annual award only has the best musicians to play on its stage. Thus, to be able to perform on it means Jack got his recognition from both the audience and the music critics. Therefore, as the Grammy shows recognition of his popularity and his talent, it also shows the irony within. Jack may own what it takes to perform, but he does not have what it needs to be in the spotlight. On the other hand, music festival serves a less popular stage than the Grammy's. He is not standing as someone who features a country singer; Jackson Maine stands as a beloved singer and guitarist. The decision on portraying Jack's incapability to be the star at the Grammy's shows as the irony when he ends up on the bigger stage but only to be the featuring musician.

Another element in the setting that displays Jackson Maine's liability state is the audience as the



setting background. It is true that Grammy, as a prestigious award show, never has an active audience who would jump or shows outstanding enthusiasm for the music performance. Therefore, it is in very contrast compared to Jack's audiences who always come and excitedly watch him perform. There is no excitement portrays from the Grammy's audience. Their expressions are very dull and faceless. The audiences' sights are only showing straight at the stage as the center. In comparison, the audiences in during the music festival are seen to be livelier. The camera captures their excitements as they scream, take pictures and clap for him. Grammy's scene setting placements creates an atmosphere that similar to an arena of a match, which is tenser compared to the audiences of the festival where Jack always performs. The tenser atmosphere brings unfamiliarity that Jack never experience throughout his career life as a musician. His incapability to adapt to the grand stage placed his liability as a musician on the spot. The setting of the audience as the background can set a tense atmosphere that stresses Jack's liability state as a musician. As Jack loves music, loves his audience, and loves his performance, his liability about his work as a musician and a performer must leave a big scar for him to cope. The failure for him to stand up and see the Grammy as an opportunity; it creates a reason for him to see himself as a burden and would end his life as a solution.

The third element of *Mise-en-Scène* in Jackson Maine's Grammy performance is the acting. The irony is set within the scene's camera angle by giving an intense and contrast spotlight to another musician who in a way, resembles Jack: both play guitar, both can sing, and both wear suits. Therefore, as both of the actors are not facing the camera, their expressions are not seen. Thus, to express the actor's expression, the camera took the angle of Jack facing the back of the other younger musician who has the same genre as him and offers the same skill as his. The angle of this camera shows the act of overshadowing and the loss of presence. Placing himself at the back, almost like his is just a regular band member, Jack places himself as nothing more significant than someone who can play guitar. It implies Jack's career loss and his incapability to get it back. As a result, finding his position during his Grammy performance as advantaging and respectable must be difficult for him to manage. His acceptance towards his career position as a featuring guitarist than the main singer causes a burden perspective over himself that later becomes one of his reason to get the strength to commit suicide.

JACKSON MAINE'S BURDENSOMENESS BELIEF: SELF-HATE PERSPECTIVE

Power has always been a vital essence in Jackson Maine's life. As a rock star, not only many people recognize him and his work, but he also receives love from them. In the early part of the *A Star Is Born* scenes, he has the power to change Ally from an unknown singer to be a famous star. Jack has the power to make Ally listen to him and make others listen to Ally as he wishes. When he starts to lose power over her and his own life, it is a difficult situation for him to cope. The position shifting is not something Jack can adapt to quickly. As a result, when things started to get all over him, the feeling of self-hate grows. The shame of losing all the power he used to have has taken him to another side of his. The best scene that able to portray Jackson Maine's shame that leads him to self-hating and triggers his suicidal desire is Ally's visit to the rehabilitation. There are two elements of *Mise-en-Scène* that represents his shame: the settings and the acting.

The setting is one of the *Mise-en-Scène* elements, which implies Jackson Maine's shame of his life. The setting was chosen for the scene where Ally visits Jack is in the visiting room of the rehabilitation center where Jack goes. The place has a lot of windows and light wall colors. The ambiance is very bright, and it shines towards the couple. In that bright place, there is a placement of several properties: empty chairs, a lady in the background, and a piano.

First of all, the empty chairs around the couple are set in the rehabilitation's room for the visitors. There is no other visitor in the place beside Ally. The rareness of the visitors creates a lack of social interaction

between the people within the rehabilitation with their families outside the rehabilitation. Although she has no line to say or gives a significant contribution to the storyline, she represents the other patient in the rehabilitation. Placing her on the back stresses that she has no visitors, although she was a patient in the visitors' room. As each of the rehabilitation patients is required to make a notebook, the lady on the back is sitting alone, writing a notebook that fits the image of a Jack's life as a rehabilitation patient. During his stay, he is required to make a notebook every day. Thus, the lady who writes her notebook resembles Jack's life as a patient in the rehabilitation which is alone and not in his best condition. The placement of the lady on the back also portrays a comparison between a life in the rehabilitation and a life outside the rehabilitation. While the lady wears a hoodie and does not apply any make up on her, Ally dresses differently. She wears bright designer clothes and dyes her hair with bright orange color. While the lady in hoodie looks depressing, Ally looks joyful. The contrast between these



two draws a great comparison of a rehabilitation patient and a star's life. As Jack sits in between, it shows the life he wants as a rock star with Ally and the life he has is a rehabilitation patient. His inability to create the life he wants to be true with Ally and his current depressing condition in rehabilitation create a great shame that gives him another reason to end his own life.

Another *Mise-en-Scène* element that displays Jackson Maine's shame towards his life is the acting. Jack's gesture and his dialogues with Ally express his shame significantly.

JACK	Listen... I'm... I'm sorry.
ALLY	It's okay. It's okay, it's not your fault.
JACK	I'm sorry I did that.
ALLY	It's okay. It's not your fault. It's a disease.
JACK	No, but I embarrassed you. I embarrassed you.
ALLY	I'm not embarrassed of you.
JACK	But it was so wrong. And then your dad.
ALLY	My father loves you, it's okay.
JACK	I know, but I...
ALLY	It's okay.
JACK	I know but...
ALLY	It's okay.

(Cooper, B., Fetters, W., & Roth, E., 2018, p. 121-122)

Although he sits close to Ally, Jack hides his face away from her. He covers his face with his hands and does not dare to face her. As he is repetitively mentioning how sorry and how much he has embarrassed his wife, he cannot accept Ally's acceptance and blaming other factors as an excuse. His whole body gestures show his shame explicitly by hiding his face. He feels shameful to bring Ally to all the mess he created while he was drunk and also to bring her to visit him as a patient, not as an excellent rock star. The shame is also supported by the camera angle where the couple looks small in the distance. The distance creates an atmosphere of less confidence and a lack of self-assurance. As a result, the acting of Jackson Maine and the camera angle creates an emotional strain that Jack feels within himself, which is full of shame towards the people he loves the most. The great feelings of shame will easily trigger him to

see him as a burden towards others. Thus, ending his own life is seen as a solution for him to relieve the burden others felt because of his existence.

JACKSON MAINE'S SUICIDE CAPABILITY

Jackson Maine's physical pain tolerance and his lowered fear of death are seen through the scene when he talks to Carl, the head of rehabilitation he checks. There is no exact scene where the moviemaker reenacts the direct scene of Jack's childhood and his past problems. Therefore, the filmmaker displays Jack's expression in retelling the whole childhood memory he had and his encounter in committing suicide during his conversation with Carl. In analyzing Jack's suicide capabilities of physical pain tolerance and his lowered fear of death, there are several aspects of the *Mise-en-Scène* acting element: facial expressions and body gestures.

First of all, the facial expressions of Jackson Maine express his physical pain tolerance that leads to suicide in the film *A Star Is Born*. When Carl, the head of rehabilitation asks Jack if the hearing problems can be fixed, Jack responds, "Well, you would know that, don't you? Once it's gone, it's gone." (Cooper, B., Fetters, W., & Roth, E., 2018, p. 117). Jack faces Carl right to his eyes to see Carl's reaction. While Carl tries to seek if there is another effort to be done, Jack ends the conversation by changing the topic to his childhood story where he believes the ringing condition happens because he likes to put his whole head into his dad old music player. Although the scene does not show how much Jack can bear physical pain, the lightness of Jackson's act in telling there is no other way that shows his preparation for his condition. He handles the hearing trouble by accepting that he will not be able to fix it. The ability to accept Tinnitus means he has to bear the buzzing ringing sound always.

In the earlier scene, the buzzing sound causes him high dizziness and cold sweats all over his body. Indeed, the pain is never actually stated or mentioned, but handling all of the pain from Tinnitus during his performances and daily life requires high pain tolerance to keep no one else, not knowing it. He emphasizes it further by showing a calm facial expression and quiet body gesture, "Right. Well, I just hear that tone, that's all. You know, the tone, yeah. The ringing." (Cooper, B., Fetters, W., & Roth, E., 2018, p. 117). This line implies his body's ability to feel is only the ringing sound. It must have been painful to endure since it is the only thing he can hear. However, the calmness on his facial expression expresses the capability for him to tolerate that pain. In proving Jackson's lowered fear of death, the scene to analyze is when he continues the story to Carl. He reminisces his childhood and shares how he attempts to commit suicide for the first time:

JACKSON 'Cause you gotta figure, it was just me and him all day long. My brother's out there trying to make something of himself... So I took one of his belts. I put it around the ceiling fan and... tried to do the deed. The whole fucking fan came out of the ceiling. Had a big cut on my fucking forehead. I was more mad about that than it not working. And he didn't even notice. He didn't even fucking notice.

(Cooper, B., Fetters, W., & Roth, E., 2018, p. 118)



When he retells the suicide attempt that he did, his facial expression was calm. Jackson does not show specific, apparent anger or disappointment on his look. He was laughing when he mentions Jack was madder due to a cut on his forehead from the fallen fan than the fact that he committed suicide. This laughing facial expression during the tragic retelling story of his suicide attempt shows his lowered fear of death. The fact that he gets a scar bothers him more than the irony he almost loses his own life on his own. The laugh is a direct opposition of fear that human should usually fear when his or her life is in the thread of losing. Therefore, Jack is very cunning and playful that he wraps the whole tragedy and his capability on performing a suicidal act as a joke to deliver. Besides, he ends his laughter by saying how his father did not pay attention to his attempt to suicide. These childhood experiences cause Jack to lose the fear of death since he was young.

The second *Mise-en-Scène* acting element to perform Jackson's pain tolerance and loss of fear of death to end his own life in the film *A Star Is Born* is portrayed in the actor's gestures. As a visual element, gestures speak a lot to represent the actor's intention and feelings. In portraying Jackson's pain tolerance, the scene when he discusses his childhood with Carl can be a good example. At the moment when Jack tells his first suicide attempt, Carl asks Jackson further on the reason why Jackson's father does not become aware of his own son's suicidal attempt:

CARL 'Cause... 'cause he was drunk?
 JACK Yeah... That fucking fan stayed on the floor for about a half
 a year.
 CARL How old were you then?
 JACK I was just shy of thirteen.
 (Cooper, B., Fetters, W., & Roth, E., 2018, p. 118)

During answering Carl's questions, Jackson refuses to face his rehabilitation program's head. Jackson places his head down towards the grass. He does not move an inch and remains seated in one place. While the conversation happens, Jackson does not even bother to fix his seating position to be closer or further from the older adult. He just firmly stays still. Bradley's act as Jackson Maine shows the openness to share about Jackson's childhood and personal traumatic experiences. Although his body does not move an inch, it is not the sign of his for being comfortable with the state. As the eyes are wandering around, there is one clear body language that he is seen unsure during the sharing conversation. Although the endurance of physical pain is not stated clearly, the use of the word 'just' reflects it. When Jackson describes his age precisely with 'just,' it shows that the traumatic memories still linger to him. He does not forget but remembers the day clearly as the details on his age and the length of the ceiling fan stays untouched. Time as something that people easily forget as it passed so quickly, it meaningfully stays in his memories. The gesture of using 'just' also delivers how he sees himself is too young to experience what he has happened. Although Jackson's wandering eyes are enough gesture to reflect his anxiousness, he can stay calm and holds the same expression in sharing a sensitive issue. Jackson must get through great painful memories that make him looks like he is fine to handle the issue. The struggle between his anxious feelings and the urges to look all right are a form of excellent pain tolerance.

Besides pain tolerance, Jackson Maine's ability to end his own life seen in *A Star Is Born* scene through his gestures is a lowered fear of death. The scene I use to analyze its the whole conversation he has with Carl when he asks about Jackson's hearing problems to his childhood mistreatment. During the one-minute and thirty-seconds conversation, Jackson repeats three similar gestures: smiling, looking at Carl for seconds, and staring at the grass. I will focus on the smiling and looking directly as the gestures to discuss. These two repetitive gestures symbolize the lowered fear of death because although they are laughing, they both are laughing about a third teen years old kid failed suicide attempt. The first gesture is smiling. Although Jack describes his anger through curse comments such as 'fucking fan' and 'not even fucking noticed,' but he is also smiling in telling what happened. His lips lift up and sometimes giggle at his own story. His smiling gestures show he takes the whole problems he had in a perspective where he can only laugh about it. The contradiction between the painful text of his story and smile as the happy reaction makes his gesture to be cold about his suicide attempt. Which a person would generally feel the fear of thinking about death, Jackson is smiling and discussing death as if it is something funny enough to laugh. The second repetitive Jackson's gesture that portrays the lowered fear of death is looking at Carl. As the head of the rehabilitation and rehabilitation patient, it is unclear how close the relationship between the two turns out during the two months to stay. However, they are close enough that Jackson

discusses his childhood mistreatment and his health problems too. In sharing it, he does not intensely look at Carl. Jack looks at Carl for a few seconds before stares at the empty grass lot and will see his face again in another second. The gesture of looking that Jackson performs, it shows he wants to look at Carl's facial expression and wants Carl to see his too. It is a symbol of trust and a symbol of connection. By looking at Carl, Jackson gives an assurance of truth and seriousness. As the positive relationship is seen when they are discussing Jackson's issues, it also shows Jackson's keen perspective towards his suicide attempt. He does not show regret or doubts in sharing his desire to die. It is because he refers to his suicide attempt as a 'try to do the deeds.' Jackson views death is not something he would cover as an issue to be fear: suicide has become a part of him. He is very keen on his own suicide experience by the ability to both laughing at it and sharing it directly.

Jackson Maine is not only a person who has the desire to die. He is also a person that has the capability. These capabilities are seen through his pain tolerance and lowered fear of death from his facial expression and gestures in the movie. In line with *Interpersonal Theory of Suicide*, the condition to feel nothing about pain and death will bring a fatal decision, which only leads to committing suicide as the condition, meets the great desire to die.

CONCLUSION

The first part of my analysis talks about the reasons for Jackson Maine's suicide due to thwarted belongingness. During his life, Jackson often disconnects himself with his social surroundings. This disconnection happens due to the great loneliness he feels and the inability to feel other's support. One of the two circumstances in Jackson Maine's life that cause social disconnection is loneliness. Loneliness is something that everyone has to live with throughout his or her life. Although everyone experiences it, they all have different ways and perspectives to cope and handle the lonely feeling. Therefore, Jackson fails to manage the sadness. He carries along with the loneliness and spends his whole life living with isolation. Jack tends to keep himself away from the others and spends his time in a mess. Rather than standing up for fighting the loneliness, he chooses to drown himself into the loneliness and feel the sadness. Fixing the condition is the solution that Jackson Maine fails to overcome. To have a healthy and normal relationship with others, he has to have the balance ratio between having the time alone with himself and blend in with the others, which he fails to do. Because of this estrangement that Jackson feels, Jack starts to detach himself from his social circle and refuse to develop his social skill. For these reasons, he is living his life as a fallen piece among the people in his surroundings, in which people are focusing on pursuing their dreams and their families. However, this is a comfortable condition for him. He likes to stay living away with no intention to be the better version of him. His distant relationship with his loved ones has caused him to start isolating himself more. His purposeless life and disconnection have caused him to alienate himself from his society.

Disappointment and anger towards a personal self is something that everyone must have experienced in life. However, Jackson perceives the disappointment and anger to the level of hating himself. The hate he has towards himself fails to bring the encouragement he needs to fix himself. On the contrary, self-hate drags him addressing himself as the burden for both himself and the others. The circumstance of liability and self-hate creates a fatal understanding that pressure Jackson to relate himself as the cause. As loneliness and the failure to perceive support show the side of him which taking everything in his life only from his point of view, the circumstances of liability and self-hate work as the piece that connects everything in Jack's life to be his fault. This depressing thinking would directly lighten up a great desire to die.

The last part of my analysis that discusses the cause of Jackson Maine's suicide is the acquired capability to commit suicide. Direct physical harm towards one's self requires high pain tolerance and low fear of death. Jackson grows up with a lot of issues around him, such as family conflict, health problems, and mistreatments during his childhood. These circumstances give an outstanding influence for him to be able to stand the pain and show cheerful expressions instead. Not only that, sensitive topics like death are not perceived as a difficult topic to discuss. These capabilities, accompanied by the great desire to die, will lead to suicide as a fatal act. Because of these factors, committing suicide is not a difficult task for Jackson Maine. It is a decision that sets him free from all the pressure he puts, the disappointment he feels and the shame he undergoes towards himself. Suicide grants him freedom from all the issues he is tangled himself.

In conclusion, extreme feelings towards the desire to die and to have the capability of it are hazardous to oneself if the reasons are not dealt with as early as possible. Otherwise, that problem will keep on reemerging throughout our lives. Every person needs to develop a sense of fixing the problems in their lives. Thus, when the problems are not fixed, and the person drowns up deeply in, the person may put himself or herself to a harmful situation where death can be seen as a way out. Each person's problems to cope in their life may be varied to deal with each. The solution to it for each may vary. In Jackson Maine's case, falling in love with someone else and expecting his partner to fix the problems is not the solution. Although he is in a romantic relationship, where love is seen to conquer all the problems within, love itself is not enough. As he takes issues personally, he sees himself as the cause of the issues then translates the issue for him to commit suicide. No matter what the individual is going through and the solution may vary to each, it is that oneself that can save him or herself.

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