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Influence of Bipolar Disorder on Stephen Fry's Prose

Stephen Fry is one of the best-selling and most well-known writers and cultural figures of the twenty-first century. In addition, he is interested in activism in the field of mental health that is associated with bipolar disorder, which he personally suffers from according to the diagnoses of specialists. This feature does not affect the attitude of readers and fans towards him since his literary works are an example of quality and fascinating philosophical prose. Nevertheless, considering the topic of his illness in the context of the effects that the mental problem can have on the development of his writings, it is possible to note that most levels of his success like increased productivity, thematic diversity, and thoughtful characters are the consequence of bipolar disorder. An evaluation of the influence of any aspect on a person's creativity and ability is impossible without a clear theoretical basis and analysis. In this connection, it is necessary to distinguish several essential features of mental illness that has affected the author. Information shows that Stephen Fry admitted many times that he is ill with bipolar personality disorder, which can influence the psyche of a person from different points of view ("Discussing Depression and Bipolar Disorder with Stephen Fry"). First of all, the most noticeable feature of this phenomenon is the manic stages of the patient's condition. These episodes are associated with such symptoms as a sense of happiness and joy, the lack of full sleep, a surge of energy, a confusion in thoughts, and the loss of a real understanding of what is happening ("Bipolar Disorder"). Moreover, people who suffer because of this type of disease are also exposed to

stages of depression that have an opposite effect on their psyche.

At the foundation of the sensations experienced by a person with this disorder are such emotions as sadness, apathy, a decrease in self-esteem, and changes in such habitual actions as food intake and sleep (“Bipolar Disorder”). These stages are also often associated with the onset of alcohol or drug dependence as a person tries to find a way out of the situation in which he or she got into. Thus, the patient is confronted with two opposite states that change in different periods of life. Most importantly, the above symptoms are the most common signs of bipolar disorder, while additional ones can complicate severe variants of the disease (“Bipolar Disorder”). For example, many patients face hallucinations that occur during periods of high stress. This option allows them to survive situations they could not handle. Delusions are also a frequent consequence of this disorder, since people who are at the stage of depressive psychosis cannot adequately perceive reality, and can focus on incorrect and insignificant ideas and rituals. In this way, such a mental disorder can have many different effects on the human psyche that allows one to understand its significance in the case when the patient is a writer.

Considering the question of the effect of this disease on the literature under the authorship of Stephen Fry, it is essential to begin the analysis with a study of his productivity. As already described above, bipolar disorder is the cause of periods that make a person feel strong and unreasonable energy surges. Such an aspect could not but affect the author's efficiency. Considering the bibliography of Stephen Fry, it is possible to calculate that he wrote 11 full-fledged books in 24 years of his career, which was supplemented by his essays, plays, scripts, and documentary prose. Most authors are not capable of such a level of productivity, since other priorities occupy their minds while Stephen Fry—who was exposed to frequent episodes of mania—was able to stay awake and feel increased self-esteem for several days. If he did not

have a bipolar disorder, the amount of literature that he prepared would be significantly less. Most people are affected by self-criticism and often procrastinate. Thereby, through the correct application of the disease as a motivator, Stephen Fry managed to develop a system that increased his productivity that allowed him to go through a long literary path and provide more experience to his readers.

In addition, the disease affects the choice of topics that Stephen Fry covers in his works. This writer knows about his own diagnosis and communicates with specialists in the field of psychiatry in this regard. This process imposes specific patterns of thinking that become available only to a person who views the disorder not only as suffering or an illness, but also as a set of factors that can improve or worsen a patient's condition. In this respect, one of the most frequent and disclosed topics that affect Stephen Fry are various psychopathologies and mental disorders. His prose is filled with various tips and facts that can be useful to a reader who suspects to have or has mental problems. Therefore, it is possible to assert that the absence of bipolar disorder could change the themes that this writer uses radically, since the basis of his reasoning relies on the knowledge and experience in dealing with psychiatrists and psychotherapists.

Lastly, the peculiarities of the disease of Stephen Fry are able to influence the professionalism and stylistics of his works significantly. One of the characteristics of the frustration from which the author suffers is the changeability of mood. In contrast to the usual emotions experienced by healthy people, Stephen Fry is able to experience a vast range of polar sensations that can change from fear and apathy to euphoria. Most writers are deprived of this opportunity because they are trying to look for prototypes for heroes of their prose or create characters that do not seem real to readers. A lack of personal experience is a frequent problem in this area. Nevertheless, the ability to experience an unlimited range of feelings helped Stephen Fry write such literature that has become bestsellers for more than twenty years. This fact is direct proof that an author can be more professional and successful in creating prose if he or she has quality personal experience in topics about which they write.

In conclusion, the analysis of the literary features of Stephen Fry is evidence that he developed writing skills under the substantial impact of bipolar disease, which enabled him to apply increased productivity, awareness in unusual topics, and an understanding of a broad spectrum of experiences and emotions. These aspects make him an example of a man who can use a natural flaw to benefit the world community. Thanks to this approach, Stephen Fry shows that the talents of people with distinctive features helps readers to be able not only to read quality literature, but also to obtain unique moral experience.

Works Cited

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