

PERSONALITY IN MICHAEL PUNKE'S NOVEL *THE REVENANT: A NOVEL OF REVENGE*

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Abstract

This study is the result of a library research which is qualitative in nature on the bravery and strength of the protagonist named Hugh Glass depicted in Michael Punke's *The Revenant*; overall exposing the social phenomena tied to personality. Concepts about the protagonist and personality covering bravery and strength are highlighted to support the analysis. The research findings show that the protagonist's bravery and strength are found in the novel and have helped him much to survive in the wild woods when he is abandoned by his two friends named Fitzgerald and Bridger, who prove themselves to be unreliable. Fitzgerald and Bridger not only abandon him but also rob all his belongings that he needs to survive in the wild woods. In his serious wounds and state of dying added with no rifle, hatchet, knife and flint and steel, Glass eventually overcomes the obstacles in the wild woods, and survive to materialize his ambitions.

Keywords: *bravery; strength; survival; protagonist*

1. Introduction

The Revenant is a 2002 novel by American author Michael Punke, based on a series of events in the life of 19th century American frontiersman Hugh Glass (Bonner, 2014). *The Revenant* by Michael Punke is a great work of nonfiction. Michael Punke is primarily a nonfiction writer. He is a talented researcher with a keen understanding of the times he depicts so that the setting is vivid and the reader is given a solid grip on the stakes especially the one concerning one's attitude in the corridor of personality.

According to Funder (1997:1-2) personality refers to individuals characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, that determine unique adjustments to the environment. It means that personality is the unique combination of patterns that influence behavior, thought, motivation, and emotion in a human being. Over time, these patterns strongly influence personal expectations, self-perceptions, values, and attitudes. Thus, someone's personality is an important element in forming behavior.

In order to be able to understand the person's behavior both in everyday life and in the organization, we must first understand his personality. Everybody has a personality. This personality is also unique in every person, and is influenced by such things as the environment and his genetics. Therefore, humans should behave properly well in nature (Siwi, et al., 2022).

In defining who we are, there needs to be an understanding of our personality. Further, individuals have many different types of personality traits like possessed behavior, actions, and attitudes. The personality can be formed by education, and education itself comes in three education centers, namely the family, school, and community. The family is the first educator in the child's life, because of the family serving as caregivers, counselors, and as educators to their children. Basically, the family gives a basic formation behavior, character, morals and education of children. Therefore, parents have a great influence on the formation of the child's personality. Besides, the family is also the first environment where the child's personality is formed. The family has the function to receive, treat and educate a child, including school as a second environment where children interact and develop abilities. Someone's personality is also influenced by the presence of other human groups.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Protagonist

A protagonist is a very important tool used in developing a story. There are different terms used for a protagonist such as a hero, focal character, central character, or main character. Regardless of what title you give a protagonist, s/he remains the key ingredient in the development of the story that is why the story revolves around him/her. Protagonist is usually fair and virtuous, and is always found supporting the good moral. Further in the plot the protagonist may undergo some changes, which will probably be the climax of the story (Raj, 1991).

2.2 Personality

The term personality by experts is used to indicate an attribute of an individual, or to describe what, why, and how human behaves. Lundberg (2010) states that the term personality refers to the habits, attitudes and other social traits that are characteristics of a given individual's behavior. Allport (1987) claims that personality is defined as the kind of one person and how they interact socially. They may be sweet, mean spirited or caring. They may be friendly or antagonistic. Maslow (2002) contends that personality is a pattern of behavior and habits of human behavior as a creature who has never been in a state completely satisfied tending to only paying attention to himself.

Based on the definitions of personality proposed by the experts above, it can be concluded that personality shows how someone lives, does things, thinks, acts, and responds to something. The personality usually makes a difference between someone to another. Someone's behavior shows her or his characters and historical background. Someone's personality depends not only on the character of person itself, but also on the social environment.

According to Maslow (2002: 108), the factors that can affect a person's personality are:

- a. Biological factors, factors related to the physical state or also known as a biological factor. This approach believes that heredity plays an important part in determining a person's personality.
- b. Social factors the one that influences individual personality among other traditions customs, and regulations applied in the community. In fact, it is these factors which play a role in shaping a personality.
- c. Cultural factors the one that influences an individual's personality among others, the ways of life, customs, habits, language, beliefs, etc. The development and formation

of personality of each person cannot be separated from the culture of the society in which a person is raised.

2.2.1 Bravery

Humans have been attracted by tales of bravery, heroism, courage from time immemorial. It is something which makes a person produce admiration. It is this human infatuation with the macho persona that makes psychologists and behavioral scientists delve deeper into the behavioral attribute which mirrors bravery.

Bravery can be simply defined as being brave or possessing and displaying courage. In heroic parlance, it is being able to face and deal with danger or fear without flinching or batting an eyelid.

Bravery is a quality of spirit that enables a person to face danger or pain without showing fear, but one often misconceived notion of people is that being brave means being fearless. Being brave does not mean we do not fear the adversity; it means we have the strength of will to overcome whatever fear we have. Bravery as a concept that can be applied to a fairly large number of instances, therefore a quick classification of bravery will help us look at its various aspects in greater detail.

Bravery is a behavioral trait which allows us to overcome our inhibitions, our inner fears and gives us the strength to do what we feel is right, irrespective of any form of backlash. It is something which imbibes in us a sense of self-belief which can make us feel great (Jung, 2006).

2.2.2 Strength

The first thing that pops into our mind when we think of the word strong is probably “physically strong”. There are many people who are physically strong, but mentally weak. What is needed actually is that a person should be mentally and physically strong. In short, strength is endurance to face any difficulty, problem or obstacle. A person who does not retreat in time of difficulty is purely strong mentally and physically. Strength, a term often evoking images of physical prowess and resilience, is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond the boundaries of mere muscle power. It encompasses a spectrum of attributes, both tangible and intangible, manifesting in various dimensions of human existence. Strength is the bedrock upon which individuals build their lives, facing challenges, overcoming adversity, and embodying a resilience that transcends the physical realm. Strength is a concept that defies a singular definition, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. It is a dynamic force that shapes the human experience, propelling individuals to navigate the challenges of life with resilience and grace. True strength is not merely the absence of vulnerability but the ability to confront and transcend it, emerging stronger and more enlightened on the other side. In its myriad forms, strength becomes a beacon of hope, inspiring individuals to reach beyond their perceived limits and forge a path of unwavering determination. (Gunarsa, 2000)

3. Research Method

In carrying out a research, a researcher must know what kind of research method that he would use. This research applies a descriptive qualitative research method which helps analyzing the protagonist’s personality in the forms of bravery and strength found in Michael Punke’s *The Revenant*. Descriptive method is a research method used to

acquire and describe accurate, factual, and systematic data. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 4) a qualitative method refers to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken works and observable behavior. From the definition, it could be said that descriptive qualitative research is a research method in which the qualitative data collected would be analyzed and interpreted descriptively. The data in this study which are related to the subject matter discussed are originated from the novel *The Revenant* by Michael Punke (2015).

4. Discussion

4.1 Bravery

Bravery is a behavioral trait which allows us to overcome our inhibitions, our inner fears and gives us the strength to do what we feel is right, irrespective of any form of backlash. In other words, bravery is a trait which will triumph over our inner fear. It flames our self-confidence and lights up our strength to do something good or even great.

The protagonist of the novel named Hugh Glass is a manly hunter who works for William H. Ashley, the owner of Rocky Mountain Fur Company. As an animal trapper as well as a fur hunter, Glass is respected by his friends. Even the captain of the fur hunters, Captain Andrew Henry never regards Glass as his subordinator, he considers Glass as his peer, and his best man, the best mix of seasoning, skills, and disposition. Glass's bravery is renowned among his friends in Rocky Mountain Fur Company. His first bravery can be seen as his hunter friends named Anderson and Fitzgerald are involved in a duel. Fitzgerald seems stronger than Anderson that Anderson is flipped backward and helpless within a couple of minutes. However, Fitzgerald does not stop his action, he moves spryly, pounces to pin his knee against the chest of the gasping, bleeding Anderson, and ready to kill Anderson with his knife.

He put the skinning knife to Anderson's throat. "You want to go join your brother?" Fitzgerald pressed the knife so that the blade drew a thin line of blood. "Fitzgerald," Glass said in an even but authoritative tone. "That's enough." Fitzgerald looked up. He contemplated an answer to Glass's challenge, ... (Punke, 2015: 14).

The quotation above shows that Glass is a brave man as he dares to challenge Fitzgerald who proves to be a strong and skillful man as he can easily defeat Anderson. Moreover, there are a number of other men in the place, but they just watch the fight without having courage to stop it.

Glass's bravery can also be seen when he is fighting against a grizzly bear in a forest. In the fight, he proves his immense bravery. Actually, he realizes that the grizzly bear is not his equal opponent since the grizzly bear is very huge and must be much stronger for him. Glass has ever seen a grizzly bear absorbs half a dozen rifle balls without dying, while he now has only one shot. However, his bravery has flamed his strength to overcome the grizzly bear. His bravery to fight the grizzly bear can be seen in the following quotation:

Glass struggled to sight on the bouncing target of the sow's head, unable to align a shot. At ten paces, the grizzly lifted herself to a standing position. She towered three feet over Glass as she pivoted for the raking swipe of her lethal claws. Point-blank, he aimed at the great bear's heart and pulled the trigger (Punke, 2015: 26).

From the quotation above it can be seen that the grizzly bear is very big as she towers three feet over Glass. When the grizzly bear is ready to attack him, Glass who at first wants to shoot the bear at her head eventually makes up his mind to shoot the great bear on his heart.

The grizzly roars as the ball enters her chest, but her attack does not slow. She is even now ready to attack him with her six-inch claws. Now, Glass's rifle is useless since he has no enough time to load the rifle. However, Glass does not feel hopeless. He reaches for his knife and keeps on fighting the grizzly bear fiercely.

Glass dropped his rifle, useless now, and reached for the knife in the scabbard on his belt. The bear brought down her paw, and Glass felt the sickening sensation of the animal's six-inch claws dredging deep into the flesh of his upper arm, shoulder, and throat. The blow threw him to his back. The knife dropped, and he pushed furiously against the earth with his feet, futilely seeking the cover of the willows (Punke, 2015: 26).

The above quotation shows that the protagonist, Hugh Glass is really a brave man. He fights fiercely to overcome the grizzly bear. Even though the grizzly bear's claws have raked repeatedly through the flesh of his back and scalp, and the crunch of her teeth has stricken the bone of his shoulder blade, Glass keeps fighting till the last blood.

Glass's bravery can also be seen when he who is dying is abandoned alone in the wild woods by his friends, Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger. Glass is unable to walk because his thigh is seriously wounded that his legs cannot support the weight of his body, and what he can do is only crawling slowly. Abruptly, he encounters a six-foot rattlesnake whose position is only one and a half meters from him. Actually, he wants to get rid of the poisonous snake, but his profound and gnawing hunger gives him an idea to kill the snake and eat it. However, Glass has no weapon with him since his rifle and knife is taken by his friends who have abandoned him in the woods. He does not feel hopeless and he uses a rock to kill the rattle snake.

In the last moments of daylight, he examined the rattles at the tip of the tail. There were ten, one added in each year of the snake's life. Glass had never seen a snake with ten rattles. *A long time, ten years.* Glass thought about the snake, surviving, thriving for a decade on the strength of its brutal attributes. And then a single mistake, a moment of exposure in an environment without tolerance, dead and devoured almost before its blood ceased to pump. He cut the rattles from the remains of the snake and fingered them like a rosary. After a while he dropped them into his possible bag (Punke's. 2015: 96).

The quotations shows that Glass has never seen a snake with ten rattles. Even though, he knows well that the rattlesnake is a very poisonous snake, he in order to survive in the woods kills it, and he does so without his knife and rifle.

After being abandoned alone in the woods by his friends without having a rifle and a knife, Glass's hope to live in the wild woods seems impossible. Moreover, his condition is very bad since his body is very weak and full of serious injuries. He is unable to walk, and what he can do to move his body is by crawling slowly. Two weeks

after being abandoned by his friends, his body is weaker as he is lack of nutrition. He can only have leaves and corms or tubers to eat because he cannot hunt without his rifle and knife. He badly needs good nutrition to help him recover soon. Therefore, as he sees a group of wolves are attacking a buffalo calf, he has a bright idea to take advantage of taking the meat of the calf. However, it seems that the wolves are so hungry that they seem to eat out all the meat of the calf and leave it carcass. His hunger infuses his bravery to flame, and Glass armed only with torches of sage begins attacking the wolves. He thinks that it is his only chance to get meat. With the burning sage branch in one hand and the four backup branches in the other, Glass crawls down the bank toward the wolves and begins attacking the wolves.

He thrust the torch toward the wolf with one ear. Flames singed the animal's face and it jumped backward with a yelp. The white wolf leapt at Glass's flank, sinking its teeth into his shoulder. Glass pivoted, craning his neck the keep the wolf off his throat. Only a few inches separated Glass's face from the wolf's and he could smell the animal's bloody breath. Glass struggled again to keep his balance. He swung his arms around to bring the flames into contact with the wolf, burning the animal's belly and groin. The wolf released its grip on his shoulder, retreating a step (Punke, 2015: 121).

The above quotation shows that Glass, who is still weak and cannot stand normally, should fight against a wolf in order to get meat from the buffalo calf. However, the wolf does not want to retreat, in return it attacks Glass fiercely. It sinks its teeth into Glass's shoulder that blood trickles from two puncture wounds. Eventually Glass can drive the wolf away. The wolf takes one last look at the buffalo, Glass, and the smoking sage, then it turns and lopes after the other wolves.

Glass's other bravery can also be seen when he wants to take revenge to Fitzgerald. He has been wandering for hundred kilometers in order to take revenge to Fitzgerald, who has abandoned him alone in the wild wood and robbed his belongings. However, at the time when he meets his target, Fitzgerald, the man has already become a soldier in the United States Army. Major Constable, the man who is commanding in the officer of the US Army in the fort says to Glass that he will punish Fitzgerald in accordance with military law and he does not like Glass disrespecting his authority. He says that it is his job to administer justice on his post. However, in the courtroom, Fitzgerald does not acknowledge that he has stolen Glass's belongings; even he speaks glibly about a story full of lies. Glass cannot stand hearing Fitzgerald's lies. That is too much for him. He does not care anymore with the martial court, and does not want to heed Major Constable's warning in order to respect the court.

In the firmness voice he could muster, he said, "Lying comes easy to you, Fitzgerald." "Mr.Glass!" roared Constable, his face twisted suddenly into a stiff knot of indignation. "This is my proceeding. I will cross-examine the witness. And you will keep your mouth shut or I'll hold you in contempt!" (Punke, 2015: 286) "You bastard!" Glass spat the words as he stood and moved toward Fitzgerald. Two soldiers with rifles and bayonets blocked his path. "Mr. Glass!" yelled Constable, beating a gavel on the table. "You will hold your seat and hold your tongue or I will have you jailed!" (Punke, 2015: 287).

The quotations above clearly show that Glass is really a brave man since he even dares to disobey the instruction of a Major who has warned him to be put in jail if he does not respect the court. Since Fitzgerald keeps on telling lies, Glass can bear it no longer. He reaches beneath his capote for the pistol concealed at his belt, pulls out the gun and fires. The ball strays to its mark, burying itself in Fitzgerald's shoulder.

4.2 Strength

Generally being strong is associated with the physical appearance as well as powerful energy. However, it actually can be emotionally as well as mentally strong. One may be strong in only one or two of them, or even in all the three. The protagonist of the novel, Hugh Glass is a manly fur hunter who is strong not only physically but also emotionally as well as mentally. It means that he is strong in all the three. Glass's mental as well as emotional strength can be clearly seen as he is abandoned alone in the woods by Fitzgerald and Bridger. They do not only abandon him alone but also rob his belongings such as his rifle, knife, hatchet, a powder horn, flint and steel. All the things are badly needed by every fur hunter as well as animal trapper in the wild woods. It can be imagined that Glass who is very seriously wounded and dying is abandoned without anything to make him possible to survive.

Bridger scrambled to his feet, wide-eyed and startled. He watched as Fitzgerald walked to Glass, who lay on his back with a few possessions piled next to him: a possible bag, a knife in a beaded scabbard, a hatchet, the Anstadt, and a powder horn.

Fitzgerald stooped to pick up Glass's possible bag. He dug inside for the flint and steel, dropping them into the pocket on the front of his leather tunic. He grabbed the powder horn and slung it over his shoulder. The hatchet he tucked under his broad leather belt.

Bridger stared, uncomprehending. "What are you doing?" Fitzgerald stooped again, picked up Glass's knife, and tossed it to Bridger. "Take that". Bridger caught it, staring in horror at the scabbard in his hand. Only the rifle remained. Fitzgerald picked it up, checking quickly to ensure it was charged. "Sorry, old Glass. You ain't got much more use for any of this."

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The man in the wolf skin looked up briefly, then disappeared in the woods.

.....
The boy turned and ran into the woods.
(Punke, 2015: 69-70).

The quotation above shows how Fitzgerald and Bridger have robbed his belongings and abandoned him in the woods. Glass is dying and can do nothing but his eyes just glare into them without being able even to speak.

One day after being deserted by Fitzgerald and Bridger, Glass has no idea what to do. He still lays in the very place where he has collapsed the day before. However, he is really a man with immense mental as well as emotional strength. He thinks that he must survive, but now he is in high fever. The grizzly bear has carved away at Glass

from the outside and now the fever carves away from within. He shivers uncontrollably, yearns for the seeping warmth of a fire. He really needs his blanket which has been tattered but it lays twenty feet away from him. Glass feels the twenty feet is like twenty miles since his condition makes him unable to move now. He even has to take all his strenght just to lift his head. However, his mental as well as emotioonal strength has infused a powerful spirit for him to survive.

I have to get warm. It took all his strength to lift his head. The blanked lay about twenty feet away. He rolled from his side to his stomach, maneuvering his left arm out in front of his body. Glass bent his left leg, then straightened it to push. Between his one good arm and his one good leg, he push-dragged himself across the clearing. The twenty feet felt like twenty miles, and three times he stopped to rest. Each breath drew like a rasp through his throat, and he felt again the dull throbbing in his cleaved back. He stretched to grab the blanket when it came within reach. He pulled it around his shoulders, embracing the weighty warmth of the Hudson Bay wool. Then he passes out (Punkle, 2015: 72).

The quotation above shows how Glass tries his utmost to take his blanket. He must take all his strength to get his blanket which is actually only twenty feet away or six meters from him. As far as his physical condition is concerned, it seems impossible for him to move, but his mental strength has infused his inner power to enable him to take the blanket. Moreover, now his body must fight against the infection of his wounds. He slips between consciousness, unconsciousness, and a confusing state in between. When he is conscious, he wishes desperately to sleep again, and it is done by him just to gain respite from the pain.

Two Pawnee braves and Chief Kicking Bull came to carry him to the pyre. When they found him, face down, they read it as a sign of fear. Kicking Bull cut the bindings to the post, while the two braves each reached for a shoulder to pull him upright. Ignoring the pain in his thigh, Glass sprang to his feet, facing the chief, the braves, and the assembled tribe (Punke, 2015: 89).

It is clearly seen from the above quotation that Glass has not hoped anymore to escape from the Pawnee village. He will be sacrificed by the Pawnee soon. However, Glass has an immense mental strength that he faces bravely the Pawnees who are about to sacrifice him. His action makes the collected Pawnee tribe stand in front of him open-mouthed in shock. He continues his action by slapping one of the braves with his open hand, leaping a vermillion hand print etched on his chest. All the Pawnees are in gasp including the Chief Kicking Bull. Eventually, the chief walks slowly up to Glass, stops exactly before Glass, reaches around his neck, removes a necklace from which dangles a pair of hawk's feet, and places the necklace around Glass's neck. Glass is adopted by the chief of the Pawness like his own son, and Glass spends almost a year with the Loup Pawnee on the plains between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers.

Yet he did not find what his body craved. It had been twelve days since the attack by the grizzly. Before he was abandoned, Glass had swallowed a few sips of broth on a couple occasions. Otherwise, the rattler had been his only real food. Berries and roots might sustain him

for a few days. To heal, though, to regain his feet, Glass knew he needed the rich nourishment that only meat could provide. The snake had been a bit of random luck, unlikely to be repeated. Still, he thought, there was no luck at all in standing still. The next morning, he would crawl forward again (Punke, 2015: 100).

From the above quotation, it can be seen that Glass realizes that the snake he has eaten is only luck for him, which is unlikely to happen again. Therefore, he realizes that he should keep on crawling in order to make his luck. It is his mental strength that has triumphed over his pain and infection of his wounds that he does not want to stand still in his place now.

Glass's mental strength gradually is fruitful as he gradually regains the strength of his feet. He realizes it when he is fighting with the wolves. He has been surprised at the weight that his wounded leg can support.

With the aid of a crutch, Glass believed he could now walks upright, a prospect he relished after three weeks of crawling like a gimp dog. He found a cottonwood branch of the appropriate length and shape. He cut a long strip from the Hudson Bay blanket, wrapping it around the top of the crutch as a pad (Punke, 2015: 125).

The above quotation shows that Glass is sure that he can walk upright with the aid of crutch. It is really a prospect that he has relished after three weeks of crawling. He cuts a long strip of his blanket and wraps the crutch around the top as a pad so that he can make use it to help him walk upright.

Glass's physical strength can be clearly seen as he is eventually successful to arrive at Captain Henry's fort. Glass comes in by blasting the cabin door that it completely opens. It is only a great strength that can blow the door. It is Glass who has blown the door.

Then the cabin door blasted suddenly open—completely open—as if some great external force had built up outside before blowing the portal inward. The elements came in earth the open door, frigid fingers grabbing at the men inside, ripping them from the snug comfort of the shelter and fire (Punke, 2015: 236).

The above quotation shows that Glass is so powerful that he can blow the cabin door easily. His main purpose of coming to the fort is to take revenge to the men who have abandoned him.

Glass is searching Fitzgerald and Bridger in the room, but he only sees Bridger while Fitzgerald has deserted the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and then enlisted in the U.S. Army at Fort Atkinson. Having crawled towards this fort for hundred days, the prospect of vengeance is now coming. His target is now exactly before him. First he thinks to shoot Bridger but eventually thinks over that a mere bullet seems too intangible to express his rage. Therefore, he lowers down his rifle and leans it against the wall, and he starts punches and kicks Bridger fiercely.

Glass's first punch struck him full force in the face. Bridger offered no resistance... Glass could feel the cartilage snap in Bridger's nose, saw the torrent of blood set loose.

Glass's second blow caught Bridger under the chin, knocking him backward against the log wall of the cabin... The wall kept Bridger from falling, holding him upright.

Glass closed in tight now, erupting in a spasm of punches against Bridger's face. When the blood became so thick that his punches began to slide off ineffectively, he shifted his blows to Bridger's stomach. Bridger crumpled as he lost his wind, finally falling to the floor.

.....
Glass delivered another brutal kick. Though he tried to contain it, Bridger groaned at the impact of the blow. Glass stood above the crumpled form at his feet, panting at the sheer exertion of the beating he had inflicted.
(Punke, 2015: 238-239)

The above quotation clearly proves that Glass is a powerful man. His punches make Bridger's nose broken and his face is full of blood. Glass's kicks which are done not with his full force have also made Bridger fall to the floor. Therefore, Glass's physical strength is unquestionably so great.

5. Conclusion

Bravery plays important roles in our life since without it we will not be able to make our dreams come true. In this analysis, it is found that Glass's bravery plays important roles in his life that he eventually overcomes many obstacles in his life and makes his objectives come into existence. Strength should not always be associated with physical appearance or powerful energy. In fact, mental or emotional strength is much more important in this life and plays significant roles to materialize our dreams. It is proved in the analysis that Glass has not only physical strength but also emotional as well as mental strength that he eventually can survive in the wild woods and overcome all the obstacles in his life in order to materialize the purposes of his life. The power of negative thinking sometimes may help someone to survive in this life. It is found that Glass is really in rage as he is abandoned and robbed by his own friends in the wild forest. The feeling of taking revenge overwhelmed Glass's mind makes him promise to survive. Therefore the results of the analysis show that personality in the forms of bravery and strength are seen from the protagonist.

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