

A Study of Friendship Relation in the Novel *Here We Lie* by Paula Treick DeBoard

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Abstract

The study of society is never complete without the discussion of the relation of friendship which is too important besides it shapes society. The current study is descriptive in nature and the data is secondary whereas the qualitative approach has been used to analyze the data. In this research, the researchers have analyzed the theme of friendship in terms of its beginning and breakup; moreover the researchers have tried to discuss and identify those socio-psychological factors that bring about the vicissitude of such relations such as friendship. The researcher has also analyzed, how these socio-psychological elements i.e. jealousy, class difference, keeping secrets and sexual violence affects friendship. The novel, "Here we lie" by Paula Treick DeBoard, has been analyzed in the light of interdependence Theory and Reis and Shaver's model of intimacy that reflect the factors which affect friendship. The results reflected that there are many social factors that influence this relationship.

1. Introduction

The study of society is never complete without the discussion of the relation of friendship. In order to breathe in a society, one needs fellowship. Fellowship helps one to survive in a society. This relationship provides the one, the courage to face the problems in one's life. If one has a good friend then he or she can bear the toughest time of his or her life. A time comes in everyone's life when their relationship gets tested either by society or some socio-psychological factors. In the novel "Here We Lie" the friendship between Lauren and Megan gets tested by some socio-psychological factors and finally breaks.

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In this research, the researcher has analyzed the theme of friendship. The researcher has taken some aspects from Reis and Shaver model of intimacy and some from the theory of interdependence in order to explain the theme of friendship and those factors that ruin this beautiful relationship.

1.1 Problem Statement:

Friendship is one of the most beautiful gifts that God has bestowed on us in order to survive in a society. There are some socio-psychological factors that affect this beautiful relationship. In the light of the novel "*Here We Lie*" the main focus of this research article is on the theme of friendship and those socio-psychological elements that become the cause of broken friendship.

1.2 Research Objectives:

- i. To describe the theme of friendship in the novel 'Here We Lie' with the help of its main characters.
- ii. To investigate the socio-psychological factors which might bring about friendship breakup.

1.3 Research question:

1. What are the socio-psychological factors in the novel 'Here We Lie' that bring about friendship breakup?
2. How is friendship depicted in the novel "*Here We Lie*" by Paula Treick Deboard?

1.4 Significance

Everyone needs companionship in order to adjust in a society. It is one of the basic needs of a man in order to survive in a community. Friends can be defined as the person with whom we can share our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. A friend is considered to be the one, about who we think that they would always be there whenever we need them. This research has explored the theme of friendship and those socio-psychological elements present in our society that cause friendship breakup. It also explores how jealousy, class difference, keeping secrets and sexual violence affect the personalities of the main characters. This will be quite useful for the relations in the current era which might not last long owing to certain unperceived reasons

in the socio-cultural context and the socio-psychological perceptions on individual levels.

1.5 Delimitation

The present study is delimited to DeBoard's novel "Here We Lie", the researcher has analyzed only the theme of friendship and those socio-psychological factors that become the cause of friendship breakup.

2. Literature review

Friendship is one of the most beautiful relationships in this whole universe. This relationship had come to this world since the birth of mankind. When Adam was sent to this world, he had Eve as his companion to facilitate his survival in this world. But sometimes this beautiful relationship gets ruined by some of the socio-psychological factors. It is true that a man comes to this world alone but in order to survive here, he needs companionship. When people start living together and get to know each other, it is human nature that gradually competition starts between them. According to Nehamas (2010), great Philosophers like Aristotle and Cicero have also written about the theme of friendship (Nehamas, 2010). We can also define friendship with the use of the term Intimacy, Reis and Shaver explains Intimacy is a term that "can be used to refer to feelings, to verbal, to nonverbal communication processes, to behaviors, to people's arrangements in space, to personality traits, to sexual activities, and to kinds of long-term relationships" (Reis & Shaver, 1988).

In the light of this novel "*Here We Lie*" we can clearly observe how Megan makes use of the situation and takes advantage of Lauren as she belongs to a wealthy family. On the other hand, Lauren who does not have a good friend in her life relies on Megan and later she cheats her by dating Megan's boyfriend. They both show concern, when they need each other. A time comes in their lives where they take advantage of the situation and transform themselves according to their own preferences. The main features of the interdependence theory are; that it is a behavioral theory that helps to

understand the social mind. It explains how people react in different situations according to their personal preferences. How they undergo a transformation on the basis of the situation they are facing and how they react according to their social experiences (Kelley & Thibaut, 1980)

When people get to know each other, they tell each other about their deepest secrets and the listener pays attention to the speaker's feelings and emotions. This leads to the establishment of an intimacy bond between them.

P (n.d.) explores the idea of friendship and explains how Aristotle gives us the idea of three types of friendships i.e. friendship of pleasure, usefulness and perfect. He also says that in order to survive happily one needs happiness, and friendship is one of the main causes of happiness, so the one who wants happiness, he should opt for friendship (P). Same is the case with the main protagonists of the novel "*Here We Lie*", that in order to seek happiness they make this bond of friendship or we can say that they take refuge in the relation of friendship.

As cited by Miranda (2008) in her article, Yager (1997) explains friendship in five different stages. In different parts of her book, she explains the nature of friendship and why friends are necessary for one's life during different phases of life, she gives the tricks to strengthen and prolong one's friendship. She also talks about the pros and cons of good and harmful friends. She explains how good friends can magnify your career and become your strength (Miranda, 2008). One of the protagonists of the novel "*Here We Lie*", Megan has a great influence on the career of Lauren, because of her friend she excels in her career. It is their friendship that helps both of them to attain some satisfaction in their lives. In our society, if we see some people unhappy or in sorrow, we can easily assume that he or she is lonely, loneliness and sorrow is directly proportional to the lack of companionship. While living in a society it is the human psyche that they get into the competition and the feelings like jealousy and anger most of the time influence him/her. Miranda explores the roots that become the cause of friendship breakup. In order to find the causes, she uses the method of the questionnaire and conducts interviews. After doing all this process she provides some facts. She states that because of flaws in parenting, domestic violence and negligence one has trust issues and difficulty in making new

relationships or companionship (Miranda, 2008). In the light of this novel "*Here We Lie*" we can trace these facts that Yager (1997) has mentioned above, that how Lauren has trust issues because of the family negligence, and how she becomes an outsider to her own family. Because of family negligence she gets involved in some immoral activities, she always longed for someone with whom she could share her feelings and lean on, however, because of trust issues, she fails to maintain any relationship. Even when she tries to solve her issues regarding friendship with Megan, she fails at it too. The base of any relationship is trust, if one trusts anyone, he or she can be an open book to that person or he/she can tell each and everything to that person even the gravest secret. In the novel "*Here we lie*" we can see clearly how Lauren and Megan share the deepest secrets of their lives. Megan, who belongs to a middle-class family, tells Lauren how she helped his father in ending his life, and Lauren tells Megan about her so-called boyfriend's death; how her mother covered the matter for her. In this novel, they share the extreme level of intimacy as one says that excess of everything is bad, same is the case with them that they both become so close to each other that in the end, their friendship breaks down, not only their friendship breaks but somehow breaks them too.

Nehamas (2010) stated that "friendship is immune, or at least resistant, to slander: we know our friends well and it takes much to undermine our faith in their goodness; [friends] trust one another". So if we cannot trust our friends it means they are not our friends. The definition of friendship has changed over time, nowadays people make acquaintances, whom they find profitable, if we look at this fact under the light of this novel, and this fact somehow proves to be true as Megan is a member of the middle-class family. She takes advantage of Lauren Mabrey who is the member of a higher upper-class family. Their friendship goes through the worst of scenarios one could imagine. Their friendship is a kind of give and take type of relationship; both are together because they both need someone to rely on.

If a person who one trusts and calls their friend and that friend is always there for them; this might reflect the most pleasant time of their lives. As it

might be noticed in the story (the Last Leaf) by O' Henry, how Behrman sacrifices his life in order to give hope to her friend Johnsy, and how Sue encourages her throughout her illness (O' Henry, 1995). Likewise, Megan encouraged Lauren to pursue her career as a photographer, and she should not lose hope.

Sometimes this happens that because of some socio-psychological factors the sacred relationship of friendship gets ruined. It has been observed in the novel by Shakespeare how some socio-psychological factors like jealousy and lust for power can easily make two friends as 'enemies'. Because of lust for power, Macbeth even does not hesitate to kill his friend Banquo (Shakespeare, 1901). In the selected novel "*Here We Lie*" friendship also gets ruined by some of the socio-psychological factors like jealousy, frustration and hiding things. The friendship between the friends starts falling apart when Lauren starts dating Megan's ex-boyfriend and keeps it as a secret and Megan gets frustrated by Lauren's achievement.

If we compare "*After twenty years*" written by O' Henry (1995) with "*Here we lie*" then we can find out that both these stories have portrayed the theme of morality; as Jimmy gets his friend arrested, after twenty years, when he finds him guilty and Lauren after fifteen years stands with her friend against her family, when she finds out that her friend did not betray her fourteen years back.

Shelton and Trail (2010) have explored the theme of friendship, for this purpose they used the process of the questionnaire and applied the Reis and Shaver model of intimacy (1988). The researchers, in order to carry out their research, has selected the whites and blacks, and with the help of questionnaire checks the level of intimacy between them. He also finds out how people of the same community want to befriend and be open to people within the same community: blacks and whites both races find their own community members more trustworthy for friendship than the other community members. In the case of Megan and Lauren as they belong to different social status, this social status becomes one of the socio-psychological factors behind their friendship breakup. Almaatouq, Radaelli, Pentland, and Shmueli (2016) in an article talk about the extent of influence of one person's behavior on another person's attitude

in a friendship. They explain that poor perception of friendship directionality leads to failure of this relationship. Yu, and Xie (2012) in their article also talk about friendship but from the perspective of “role of preference in friendship choice”, and explains how people prefer people from higher status to be their friends, as Megan chose Lauren to be her friend and always fancy her background.

Morry (2005) talks about the theme of friendship under the heading of “cross-sex friendship” the researcher in this article has used the Reis and Shaver model of intimacy and interdependence theory. She has used the questionnaire method as a tool in order to find out the result. A lot of research has been done on this topic of friendship but most of them have used the method of experimentation and questionnaire by applying the Reis and shaver model of intimacy but no research is done in order to find out the socio-psychological factors that become the cause of a friendship breakup. Most of the researches have been done from the perspective of racial inferiority and superiority with the help of the use of the questionnaires and interview method (Kerns, 2000). No research is done on this novel *where we lie* from the perspective of the theme of friendship and the socio-psychological factors that become the cause of friendship breakup. The researcher in the light of this novel “*Here We Lie*” written by DeBoard, tries to attain its objectives by using Reis and shaver model of intimacy as theory and combines it with the theory of interdependence. However, none of the researchers has used Reis and Shaver model of intimacy as a theory on DeBoard novel “*Here we lie*”. The current study focuses on the area as mentioned above in order to highlight the epistemic aspect.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The present study analyses the theme of friendship and the reasons behind the friendship breakup. The researcher has used the qualitative method in order to carry out the research on the novel *here we lie*, and the nature of this

research is descriptive as it describes the theme of friendship and the factors which contribute towards the friendship breakup

3.2 Theoretical framework

The researcher has taken some aspects of the Reis and Shaver model of intimacy (1988) and then combined it with some aspects of the theory of interdependence given by Kelley and Thibaut (1980).

These two theories provide the theoretical framework for the present research. The first theory focuses on when people get to know each other and disclose secrets; the listener shows respect and affection towards the speaker's feelings and emotions, this leads to the establishment of an intimacy bond (Reis, 1988).

In the light of this novel "*Here We Lie*" we can clearly observe how Lauren and Megan start this relationship of intimacy by showing concerns to each other's past incidents and gradually their friendship strengthens with the passage of time. The researcher has also observed the socio-psychological factors that become the cause of friendship breakup. In order to focus on those factors; the researcher has used interdependence theory.

The interdependence theory is a behavioral theory which helps to understand the social mind. Interdependence theory is based on the following features:

- i. The principle of structure talks about how people react according to the demand of the situation.
- ii. The principle of transformation highlights how people transform themselves according to the situation.
- iii. The principle of interaction tells how people learn from interaction with different people
- iv. The principle of adaptation explains how people change their behavior based on their experiences of the interactions with people.

It explains how people react in different situations according to their personal preferences. How they undergo a transformation on the basis of the situation they are facing and how they react according to their social experiences. In the light of this novel "*Here We Lie*" we can clearly observe how Megan makes use of the situation and takes advantage of Lauren as she belongs to a wealthy family. On the other hand, Lauren who does not have a good friend in her life relies on Megan and later she cheats on her by dating Megan's boyfriend. They both show concern when they need each other and a time comes where they take advantage of the situation and transform themselves according to their own preferences. However, Lauren and Megan react in every situation and then their transformation according to their preference in that situation contributes towards their friendship breakup.

4. Data Analysis

The study of society is never complete without the discussion of the relation of friendship. The novel, "*Here we lie*", analyzed in the light of interdependence Theory and Reis and Shaver model of intimacy that reflect the factors which affect the friendship. The results showed that there are many social factors that influence this relationship.

This is a story of friendship and its breakup. It is a journey of trust and misunderstandings that lead towards the end of the friendship. This is the story that tells us how the past affects our present. This is the story of Megan Mazeros and Lauren Mabrey who once were inseparables. It is a tale that tells us how some socio-psychological factors like jealousy, class difference keeping secrets and sexual violence can bring disastrous changes in someone's life. Fourteen years ago the life of both Megan Mazeros and Lauren Mabrey was different than what it is today. Back then they were two different individuals. The incident that occurs fourteen years back has changed their lives completely. This story tells us how the relationship of intimacy starts between Megan and Lauren; how it develops with the

passage of time, how it gets affected by some socio-psychological factors and how finally it breaks.

In this novel, Paula Treick DeBoard has logically interpreted the theme of friendship, how this relationship develops with time and then affected by some socio-psychological factors and finally moves towards its end.

The story started fourteen years ago when Megan and Lauren were two strangers, living in different states. Lauren Mabrey is the daughter of a senator. She belongs to an aristocratic family, she feels herself like an alien in her own family, and she feels her personality to be mismatched in contrast to her family. Her mother is more concerned about the image of the family than her children's feelings. Lauren does not have any good friends in her life so she gets involved in some immoral activities. She starts taking drugs and has an affair with a drug dealer. That drug dealer gets arrested by police and killed while on the other hand, Lauren's mother covers things for her. Her mother abandons her for some time, she lives in complete loneliness. After that, she is sent to Keale College only for girls.

Megan Mazeros belongs to the middle-class family. She is the only daughter of her parents. She is daddy's girl. Her family does not have a lot of money but they are happy. Her father is suffering from the fatal disease. Megan and her mother take turns, in order to take care of Mr. Mazeros. Megan takes a gap year and does part-time jobs for the survival of the family. When Megan helps his father in killing himself that becomes the changing point in her life. After the death of his father, she gets two hundred thousand dollars and decides to get admission in Keale College only for girls.

As we know that both the main characters i.e. Megan and Lauren are lonely and do not have anyone to share their feelings with. They both are strangers in Keale College and then due to some incidents, they become roommates. This is how their friendship starts to grow.

"We ended up getting drunk and laughing so hard that occasionally one of the girls next door banged a shoe against the wall to get us to be quiet" (Freshman Year 1999-2000, p. 73).

It is clearly observed through the text that Lauren and Megan get close to one another. Two strangers who do not know anything about one another come so close to each other that they start sharing things. It is human nature that they attach with other people so easily. Especially in the case of Megan and Lauren who are alone since childhood, they do not have anyone with whom they can share their feelings. They do not have anyone with whom they can share their deepest secrets. They do not have that one who can understand them. So when they get a chance to live as a roommate, they finally find that partner with whom they can do all the crazy stuff they wanted to do long ago. So logically they act according to the requirement of the situation. They start to tell each other about their daily routine. Even when they are not together they remain in touch through email.

“Since arriving at Holmes house, I’d emailed Megan every day from the computer in mom’s office” (Summer 2000, p. 3).

When a person starts to know a stranger and whose interests are the same as his, he tries to spend more time with him or her. Same is the case with Megan and Lauren. As Reis and Shaver of model intimacy suggest, the relationship of intimacy starts to develop when one person shares personal information with other people; the listener in response respects the other speaker’s feelings. So with the passage of time, Lauren and Megan’s friendship strengthens to such an extent that they share their deepest secrets with one another. When Megan tells Lauren that how she helped her father in his suicide attempt. Lauren listens to her carefully and understands her.

“What are you saying? And why would you say it? This doesn’t change anything between us” (Sophomore Year 2000-2001, p. 15).

Lauren comforts Megan by disclosing one of her deepest secrets.

“We’re telling secrets? I have one, too” (Sophomore Year 2000-2001, p. 17).

She tells her how she was fallen in love with the drug dealer, how he was killed by corps and how her mother covered the things up for her. The intimacy bond that has started earlier between both of them, strengthens by the secrets they share. Now they start to depend on each other more. "The principle of structure" of interdependence theory totally applies here as Lauren always looks towards Megan in difficult situations. Megan always pretends to be strong and cool, because that is the requirement of the situation

"You're a freaking hero! You're my hero!" (Freshman Year 1999-2000, p. 89).

In every difficult situation, a person always looks towards the person he loves. He thinks that the other person will solve that matter for him. Same is the case with Lauren and Megan. When some street boys attack Megan and Lauren, Lauren looks towards Megan for help. Somehow, Megan tries to save both of them from street boys and eventually become successful in her defense. Lauren praises Megan by calling her a hero.

There is a class difference between Megan and Lauren. Lauren is from the higher upper class and Megan from the lower Middle-class family.

"You've seen us on the news, in the Hartford Register, on campaign posters. We're an all-American family-the dad, the mom, the three kids, the golden retrievers" (1998-1999, p. 19).

"The dean would encourage Erin not to pursue her complaint any further on the unstated grounds that I was a Mabrey and that was important here" (Freshman Year 1999-2000, p. 67).

It can be clearly observed from the text given above that Lauren is from the higher upper class. Her Family members are like the shining stars of the society. Lauren and her siblings have a bright future ahead of them. One can see in the novel how Lauren gets the favors just because of her family name. She is not arrested by the corps in drug dealing matter. She is not even suspended for taking Erin's immoral pictures. So whenever Lauren gets caught in difficult situations, her family name saves her. While on the other hand, Megan does not have a lot of money. She goes through a lot just

because of lack of money. This is a kind of default in our society that we always give privilege to the one who has more money. The one who has no money suffers a lot.

Lauren praises Megan a lot. Megan feels proud to have such a place in Lauren's life. She transforms herself according to the situation. "The principle of transformation" of Interdependence theory applies here. She knows that Lauren belongs to the Aristocratic family. So if she is on good terms with Lauren that will help her in future. She borrows dresses from Lauren whenever she needs it. Sometimes Lauren pays her bills too. Megan portrays her personality in front of her with exaggeration.

"It was surprising what came out of my mouth when I was talking to Lauren. Not lies, but more like shreds of truths held together by exaggerations" (Freshman year 1999-2000, p. 77).

It is also a socio-psychological factor that most of the people show when they interact with people from the upper class; they try to portray themselves differently from what they actually are. From the start of their friendship, Megan exaggerates things about her personal life. She does not tell Lauren about her actual house and financial conditions. She makes stories up about her love affairs just to look cool in front of Lauren

"But I was jealous of the sense of purpose the trip had given her, the manic energy she had that night, scribbling in her notebook long after I turned out my light. We were miles apart" (Junior Year 2001-2002, p. 13).

Like all other friends Lauren and Megan also take oaths that they will remain friends forever, they will travel around the world together etc. with the passage of time like other relationships, a feeling of jealousy erupts between them. Megan, as she belongs to the middle class, when sees Lauren achieving success, she becomes jealous of her. Once she has encouraged her to pursue her dream but now she herself becomes jealous of her friend.

It is a fact that where there is class difference, there would be jealousy. This class difference is one of the root causes of creating disturbance in the society. The aristocrats seem so nice at first but are actually not. Most of them have covered their faces with fake masks. When Megan first comes to Lauren's place she warns her about such nice fake faces.

It is human nature that he tries to hide things when he is jealous of something. He tries to create distance between that person and himself. So when jealousy starts to grow between Lauren and Megan, they change attitudes towards each other. Lauren hides about the job that her brother offers to Megan. She also hides from Megan that she is dating her ex-boyfriend. On the other hand, Megan from the start of their friendship hides about her true identity. She has this habit of exaggeration. Because of the incidents that have occurred in their lives, they change their behavior towards each other.

"There would be no more Lauren and Megan" (Summer 2002, p. 59).

It is human nature that they try to survive even in the worst situations. He always tries to make good out of bad situations. So Megan and Lauren give their friendship a final chance. Lauren tells her about her dating Megan's ex-boyfriend. They try to sort things out in order to save their friendship. But the incident that happened fourteen years back proves to be the cause of their friendship breakup. Lauren does not listen to Megan's side of the story; she believes that she has backstabbed her. "The principal of Interaction" applies here as both of the main characters on the basis of a particular situation "produce a particular way of interaction".

Now after fourteen years, Megan holds this press conference in order to disclose the matter that became the cause of their friendship break up. Megan gathers her courage and emails to Lauren and tells her that:

"Your brother raped me on July 3, 2002. Tomorrow, I'm going, to tell the truth" (October 15-17, 2016, p. 3).

"We may have our faults as a family. But in the end, we always support each other" (Summer 2000, p. 45).

It is the human psyche that when it comes to choosing between friends and blood relations, the majority of us choose our blood relations over friendship. Same is the case with Lauren, she believes in her brother's fabricated story and refuses to listen to Megan's words fourteen years back. People act according to the situation. They transform themselves according to situations. It is a human psyche. These lines also highlight the factor of class difference, how Lauren's mother saves her son and threatens Megan, in order to protect her own rapist son. In order to survive in a society, people learn from each other's behavior and act according to the situations. They learn how to move in a society through interactions. Through these interactions and their experiences, people learn how to react and interact in a particular situation.

"Things were always changing and always moving on, and who we were at one moment wasn't necessarily the person we would be forever" (Epilogue February 2017, p. 9).

So after fourteen years Lauren and Megan have become totally different persons. "The principle of adaptation" applies here that they both have changed their interaction pattern towards each other in that particular situation. Now they have embraced the reality that a lot of things happen in life, so it is better to just go with the flow. No one remains the same throughout his life. Because of some misunderstanding or some socio-psychological factors, the Relationships break too. It is better for oneself to adjust in order to live. That is how one survives. This is the problem in human society that at first, people find happiness in friendship but then they ruin this relationship because of some socio-psychological factors.

5. Conclusion

Everyone needs companionship in order to survive in a society. It is human nature that he likes to communicate and socialize. On the other hand, loneliness leads to a lot of psychological problems. The main theme that is discussed in "Here We Lie" is of friendship. The researcher has firstly analyzed the theme of friendship and then has discussed those socio-

psychological factors that become the cause of friendship breakup. With the help of main characters present in the novel i.e. Megan Mazeros and Lauren Mabrey, The researcher has analyzed the theme of friendship in the light of the theoretical framework in order to achieve its objectives. The researcher has analyzed the complete cycle of friendship. How it gets started, develops over time and finally breaks.

The researcher has found out how people learn to interact and react in different situations. How people take advantage of each other when they get a chance. How they transform themselves according to the situation. This research also highlights the factors like jealousy, keeping secrets, sexual violence, and the most important class difference. Class difference is the root cause of creating issues in society and in relationships. so with the help of context the researcher has achieved its objectives. The researcher has only analyzed the theme of friendship and the socio-psychological factors behind the friendship breakup. The present research will help the future researchers in analyzing literature from a new aspect and will provide a new perspective.

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