

## UNDERSTANDING AMY LAU'S DEPRESSION AND COPING STRATEGIES DEPICTED IN LEE SUNG JIN'S *BEEF*

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### Abstrak

Disutradarai oleh Lee Sung Jin, drama serial *Beef* (2023) berkisah tentang Amy Lau yang menderita depresi karena cenderung menekan emosi dan keinginannya. Dia menggunakan beberapa strategi untuk mengatasi stress. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui depresinya yang dialami oleh Amy dan strategi koping yang digunakan untuk mengatasi stresnya. Dalam menganalisis depresi Amy, penelitian ini menggunakan teori Tahap Cermin dan Tatanan Simbolik dari Jacques Lacan untuk mengungkap pembentukan identitas yang dapat memicu depresi. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menggunakan teori *Transactional Model of Stress and Coping* dari Lazarus and Folkman untuk mengungkap penilaian kognitif dan strategi koping yang dialami oleh Amy. Dengan menerapkan metode penelitian studi film, peneliti akan fokus pada ucapan, perilaku, adegan, dan ekspresi karakter utama sepanjang drama serial. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa depresi yang dialami oleh Amy dipicu dari keinginannya yang tidak terpenuhi. Dalam mengatasi stresnya, Amy menggunakan beberapa strategi koping, antara lain mengendalikan diri, memusatkan dan melampiaskan emosi, menghindar/pelarian, mencari dukungan sosial, perencanaan, penilaian ulang positif, dan penerimaan.

**Kata Kunci:** Depresi, Strategi Koping, Keinginan Terpendam.

### Abstract

Directed by Lee Sung Jin, the miniseries *Beef* (2023) portrays the story of Amy Lau, who suffers from depression because she tends to repress her emotions and desires. She employs several strategies to cope with her stressors. Therefore, this article purposely attempts to find out Amy's depression and the coping strategies used to deal the stressors. In analyzing her depression, this study employs Jacques Lacan's Mirror Stage and Symbolic Order to reveal the main character's identity process that can lead to depression. This study also uses Lazarus and Folkman's (1986) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping to reveal Amy's cognitive appraisal and coping strategies. Applying the film study research method, the researcher will focus on the behaviors, utterances, scenes, and character's expressions throughout the miniseries. The result indicates that Amy's struggle with depression stems from her unfulfilled desires. In overcoming her stressors, Amy uses several coping strategies, such as self-controlling, focusing on and venting emotions, escape avoidance, seeking social support, planning, positive reappraisal, and acceptance.

**Keywords:** Depression, Coping Strategy, Repressive Desire.

## INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the pivotal stage that affects human behavior and development. Such desires, dreams, traumas, and conflicts can be embedded in the infant's unconscious mind and influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Early adverse childhood experiences are linked to significant behavioral changes that indicate fear and anxiety, potentially increasing the risk of depression in adulthood (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001; Poole et al., 2017). Adverse childhood experiences encompass emotional abuse, parental separation, and mental illness in the household before the age of 18 (Dube et al., 2001).

Besides, the risk of depression tends to increase when individuals use maladaptive coping strategies rather than adaptive ones. Individuals respond to stressful experiences, like problems, stress, or trauma, with various coping strategies. The ability to effectively manage emotion may help individuals to handle a wide range of environmental situations adaptively. However, when it becomes uncontrolled and hides their negative emotions, it can endanger mental health (Garssen, 2007).

Mental health awareness, especially depression, is introduced through a drama series on Netflix entitled *Beef* (2023). This dark comedy miniseries explores the theme

of repressed emotions that contribute to depression in both main characters due to their childhood trauma, family demands, and toxic positivity. Amy puts a lot of pressure on herself to become a positive person with good behavior. As a depressed person, she uses various coping strategies to deal with her stressors, with different considerations. Therefore, this study will analyze how Amy suffers from depression and understanding the coping strategies she uses in dealing with stressful situations.

Several studies have conducted research on depression and coping strategies. Kamilia and Ayu (2021) discusses the trauma of the main character's childhood abuse treatment, which resulted in his lack of confidence. The main character is suffering from depression, and it is difficult to escape from the Symbolic Order.

Maxon (2023) finds coping strategies in Sally Rooney's *Normal People* can help the characters in facing their issues. Yet, the strategies have maladaptive outcome, hence they use another coping strategy. Last, Putri and Anwar (2023) shows how the main character uses coping mechanisms when experiencing grief. The study finds that the main character uses seeking social support, distancing from stressors, escaping avoidance, and accepting responsibility.

This recent study will discuss further about depression, especially when Amy misrecognizes her idealized image in the mirror stage, also difficulties in articulating her desire due to always internalizing the social expectation in symbolic order. Besides, this study also analyzes the coping strategies used by Amy.

In the beginning of the psychological development, the infant experiences a unity with the environment. Around six and eighteen months, mirror stage occurs when the child is delighted to see the image of his own body. According to Lacan (2006), the mirror stage is an identification, which means "the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image." Through the identification process, ego formation occurs due to identifying with one's specular image (Evans, 2006).

The image that symbolizes the unified self is the basis of 'Ideal-I' and turns into 'fictional,' leading to alienation (Tallis, 2000). The image replaces the self, meaning an external reflection rather than one's own body forms the basis of the child's sense of a unified self. The ego emerges through alienation and fascination with one's image. Lacan argues that the ego maintains an illusory sense of wholeness, and its function is to perpetuate this illusion, thereby continuing misrecognition. The ego refuses to accept the reality of fragmentation and alienation, instead fostering a false sense of coherence (Homer, 2005).

Mirror stage serves as the threshold to the language system. Language helps to differentiate the child from mother and others, introducing the child into symbolic order (Savita & Kaur, 2020). This stage begins when the

child acquires language and uses symbols to represent objects and experiences. The child is able to differentiate themselves from their environment and communicate their thoughts and feelings.

The separation with others represents a significant experience of loss. Individuals seek substitutes for the lost union with their mother, often unconsciously pursuing it. This never-ending seeking for fulfillment because individuals enter the symbolic order, and it occurs unconsciously because individuals separate from the mother within the conscious experience in the Imaginary Order.

The individuals have needs, desires, and fears. Entering this stage, they will experience loss and lack. The lost object connects to the repressed desire. This repression creates the unconscious, due to the lack of an "overwhelming sense of loss, frustrated desire, guilt over having certain kinds of desire, and the fears that accompany a loss of such magnitude" (Tyson, 2015).

Language exists in a desire (Savita & Kaur, 2020). However, individuals must obey the rules and restrictions, that is "Name-of-the-Father". Father is the one who authorizes upholding the rules and prohibitions in society, and we learn that through language. Symbolic order dominates human culture and social order. It consists of society's ideologies, that can shape individuals based on their responses (Tyson, 2015).

If an individual gives up on desires when faced with *jouissance*, it can cause depression (Skriabine, 1997). In Television (1990), Lacan states that depression is a "moral weakness, which is, ultimately, located only to thought; that is, in the duty to be Well-spoken, to find one's way in dealing with the unconscious, with the structure". Swales (2023) offers several ways of understanding the phenomenon of depression in neurotic individuals. First, the depression is viewed as a moral failing. The "Well-Spoken" has an ethical duty to overcome the ignorance and to engage in the talking cure. The depressed people need to well-spoken, exploring the unconscious and articulate herself about the life issues.

Second, the depression as hiding a neurotic conflict. Depression is frequently accompanied by feelings of self-blame or self-esteem, which is influenced by superego. When the aggressive thoughts are repressed, superego plays part in transforming the hatred for another which turns inward on the self and leads to the feeling of guilt.

Third, depression as giving up on one's desires. In Lacan's seventh seminar on ethics, having given up on its desire makes the subject guilty. The feeling of guilt is connected with subjective complaints of depression. A depressed mood is often the result of giving up on one's desire.

Depression can have a significant impact on the suffers' lives, and they usually use coping specific coping

strategies to deal with it (Li & Xu, 2023). Lazarus and Folkman introduces the concept of Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. It shows the interaction between the individuals and their environment, which produces stress. Individuals are constantly appraising the factors that determine the level of stress in their environment. Stress does not occur unless a situation is perceived as demanding of one's resources or ability to manage.

The intensity of stress is influenced by the cognitive appraisal, which consists of primary and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal determines the interaction that can affect well-being. Secondary appraisal determines the strategy to manage the stressor and distress. In primary appraisal there are benign-positive, irrelevant, and stressful. (Biggs et al., 2017).

Stressful appraisal can be classified into harm, threat, and challenge (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Harm/loss occurs when the person has already experienced damage. Threat stressful appraisal refers to harm that has not yet occurred but is anticipated. It focuses on potential harm and brings negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger. Challenge appraisal focuses on the potential for gain or growth, leading to positive feelings.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish two different coping function to manage the stressor, such as emotion-focused and problem-focused. These coping are further developed into several coping strategies from the Ways of Coping Questionnaire. There are eight models of coping strategies by Lazarus and Folkman, such as planful problem-solving, escape-avoidance, accepting responsibility, positive reappraisal, confrontative coping, distancing, self-controlling, and seeking social support (Folkman et al., 1986).

Carver and colleagues provide 13 coping strategies labeled as COPE inventory. This concept is based on Lazarus and Folkman's emotions-focused and problem-focused coping but adds more main strategies, such as less useful and two additional scales. The coping strategies from COPE include active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, seeking social support for instrumental reasons, seeking social support for emotional reasons, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, denial, turning to religion, focus on and venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement, mental disengagement, humor, and substance use (Stanisławski, 2019).

## METHOD

It is a film study with the fundamental data used originated from the miniseries *Beef* (2023) by Lee Sung Jin, which was produced under A24 entertainment production house. The data will be taken from episodes 1,2,3,4,7,8,10 of the miniseries. The first research question

will use Jacques Lacan's concept about Mirror Stage and Symbolic Order to answer the factor that contribute to Amy Lau's depression. The second research question will use Transactional Model of Stress and Coping in the *Dynamics of a Stressful Encounter: Cognitive Appraisal, Coping, and Encounter Outcomes* (1986) by Lazarus and Folkman and to answer the coping strategies used by Amy Lau. There are also the other coping strategies by Carver (1989) that will help in identifying the strategies used by Amy Lau.

Furthermore, the study analysis is carried out on the emotions, behavior, childhood, and thoughts of Amy Lau throughout the series. Therefore, the researcher takes the scenes, dialogues, expressions, and behaviors from the main characters of the series to be the collected data. In analyzing the data, there are some steps to do: (1) identifying the data from scenes and dialogues, (2) screenshotting the scenes or taking some dialogues for data, (3) interpreting the data, and (4) elaborating the data with the theories.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Amy Lau's Depression

In *Beef* (2023), Amy Lau has suffered from depression. Lacan believes depression is a moral failing, and an individual needs to be well-spoken. In Mirror Stage may manifest in her idealized perceptions of herself and her life, which are not her true self. In Symbolic Order, she experiences lack and seeks to fulfill her desire. However, her family norms prevent her from freely expressing her desires. This situation makes Amy suffer from depression. Therefore, it will analyze Amy Lau's self-perception in her Mirror Stage, leading to depression in her Symbolic Order.

#### 1.1 Mirror Stage

In this stage, Amy develops her image in a mirror, which refers to the actions and words of others that influence the shaping of the ideal ego. Her self-perception can give impact on her well-being. Below, it will analyze how Amy builds her identity formation through mirror stage.

Amy's self-recognition is disrupted because of the reflection of her parents in the mirror.

*"This is about you and dad. More and more when I look at the mirror, I see you and dad, and I hate it."*  
(E8, 07:38-08:00)

From Amy's utterance, she metaphorically sees her parents' reflection instead of hers when looking the mirror. The reflection of her parents represents her parents' traits that have shaped her behavior and communication style.

Amy sees that her father tends to “*bottling up everything inside until it just exploded out at once*,” which influences her inability to express emotions. Similarly, her mother's reluctance to talk about her feelings is similar to complaining. Amy unintentionally creates her Ideal-I from her parents' characteristics.

When a child sees the similarity between her reflection and the mother in the mirror, the mother influences her self-perception (Savita & Kaur, 2020). Also, if the father is present in the child's identification, the child cannot differentiate herself from the other; otherwise, she will identify with both parents (Tallis, 2000). Consequently, Amy misrecognizes her true identity because what it reflects in the mirror is not her true self. Here, her parents' presence in her identification process causes her to identify more with her parents' characteristics instead of developing her true identity.

Aside from parents, the reflection of the witch as in “Miss Nelson Is Missing!” also influences Amy's self-perception.



Figure 1. the witch reflects from the mirror (right) (E8, 01:30-01:50)

The scene above, when Amy looks in the mirror, she assumes the image of the witch's reflection symbolizes her shame. In a flashback scene, when Amy was a child, the witch ever warns her, “*Don't misbehave*” and later says, “*I can't tell anyone your secrets. [...] Because no one would love you*” (E8, 09:23-09:41). The witch from the children's book has contributed to Amy's identity. The witch's warning leads Amy to develop self-perception as someone who must behave well.

Lacan introduces the ‘ideal ego’ as the idealized self-image of the subject, which is “the way I would like others to see me” (Žižek, 2007). It aligns with Amy likes others to see her positive behaviors. Amy feels shame if anyone discovers her flaws. She must hide it like a secret because “no one would love” her if she reveals her negative side. That is the reason why she covers herself with blanket when having sex with an old man as in the scene above. Therefore, Amy builds self-perception to always behave well in front of others and hide her negative image.

Not only her parents and the witch, Amy's encounter with George also has influenced her ideal ego.



Figure 2. Amy's expression after agreeing with George's idea (E1, 06:43)

From the scene above, Amy's expression looks insincere because she actually disagrees with George's idea to do a gratitude journal. For Amy, her husband, George, embodies genuine positivity, contrary to her artificial positivity facade. With George, Amy identifies herself with his positivity and wants to be like him. It represents her ideal ego, reflecting “the way I would like to be” (Žižek, 2007). This identification, along with the ‘jubilant’ mood, can deal with misrecognition (Vanheule, 2011). Here, it explains Amy's willingness to engage in positive activities, such as doing a gratitude journal, even though she does not intend to it.

Amy finally recognizes that “*I've been like this my entire life. I want to blame my parents ... but I think it's just me*” (E8, 13:03-13:14). She fails to distinguish her own identity from the images of her parents. In this situation, the misrecognition is still the basis of the child's identity (Bertens, 2008). She feels trapped in an identity that does not reflect her true self. This persistent state of misrecognition, combined with her inability to meet the idealized standards, makes her struggle with depression.

## 1.2 Symbolic Order

Symbolic Order consists of language that begins to experience loss, and the subject will seek the desired object (Tyson, 2015). Lacan states, “man's desire is the desire of the Other.” The Other represents the society's ideology that shapes the subject. Society's rules and prohibitions, authorized by the Father, inhibit personal desires, leading to depression. The Father's desires make Amy inhibit her desire, so she suffers from depression. Below, it will analyze further Amy's Symbolic Order and how this phase can lead to her depression.

“*Hey, Dr. Lin. Do you really think it's possible to love someone unconditionally? You know, there must be some point where we all, like, fall outside the reach of love, right? Like, the mistake is so big and then the love has to stop.*”

“Did you ever feel like your parents did that?”

“No. I know my parents loved me. They showed me that through sacrifice.” (E7, 16:53-17:39)

From childhood, Amy experiences a lack of love because her presence is unwanted. Experiencing a lack will cause desire. Lacan asserts that “man’s desire is the desire of the Other,” which is desire to be the object of another’s desire and the desire for recognition (Evans, 2006). Amy’s desire for recognition to be loved and acceptance makes her conform to her parents’ doctrines, like not complaining, believing it is a good behavior.

In Amy’s case, she needs unconditional love, but her parents’ love feels conditional. Then, it raises demand, which Amy seeks to fulfill the unconditional love of George and Junie. They indeed love her, yet still do not fulfill her need for unconditional love. She believes unconditional love does not involve sacrifice and expectation. Nonetheless, she continues to act as her idealized image whenever she is with George.

In this situation, the way Amy acts as her idealized image contradicts her desire for unconditional love. She experiences low self-esteem when she does not repress her true self. According to Swales (2023), hiding neurotic conflict can lead to depression. It can be seen in how she fears showing her feelings because she believes she will not receive unconditional love. Here, Amy’s habit of repressing her true self by internalizing the moral standard has led her to be depressed because she tends to feel low self-esteem and worthless, believing she is unworthy of being loved.



Figure 3. Amy irritates when George interrupts her (E3, 23:10)

. In the scene from figure above, Amy irritates when George interrupts when she confides her feelings. Amy also desires to be heard. She needs George to be her listener, but he never fully listens to her feelings. Instead, he asks her to internalize positive behavior. It is hard for her to express her feelings. During the couple's therapy, Amy reasonably states, “I think growing up with parents taught me to repress all my feelings” (E3, 02:37). Here, the expectations and desires of the Other have shaped her actions. According to Swales (2023) giving up on one’s

desire can lead to depression. It is in line with Amy, who does not pursue her desire to be heard by others, which makes her more depressed.



Figure 4. Amy pretends to smile as response to Fumi's idea (E1, 15:04)

Furthermore, Amy also adds to the therapist about her mother’s belief that “talking about your feelings was the same thing as complaining.” Then, she internalizes her family’s expectation to act good. Therefore, when she is with Fumi, she prefers to comply with her wishes to avoid triggering further conflicts. She also pretends smiling as in the scene above. It contributes to Amy’s inadequacy in expressing herself, leading to depression.

Lacan says depression is a “moral failing” or a “moral weakness, which is, ultimately, located only to thought.” Therefore, Amy’s inability to articulate her true desires and emotions, influenced by societal expectations and the Other, contributes to depression. This repression prevents her from fully expressing herself and seeking fulfillment, leading to feelings of inadequacy and sadness. Lacan further points out “the duty to be Well-Spoken, to find one’s way in dealing with the unconscious.” Not only to be Well-Spoken but also to explore manifestations of the unconscious to overcome depression (Swales, 2023). In this case, Amy needs to ask in-depth questions and articulate her feelings.

## 2. Amy Lau’s Coping Strategies

The miniseries *Beef* (2023) portrays the protagonist, Amy Lau, who grows up in an emotionally neglectful family. She encounters numerous stressors that threaten her well-being, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. Then, she uses several coping strategies after evaluating her stressful situation that can make her more depressed. Therefore, this sub-chapter will analyze Amy’s coping strategies by Lazarus, Folkman, and Carver to understand how she can manage her depression after she appraises her stressors.

## 2.1 Self-Controlling

The first strategy that is used by Amy in managing her depression is self-controlling. It describes as efforts to detach oneself (Folkman et al., 1986).



Figure 5. Amy suddenly changes her expression into smiling (E1, 14:20)

In the scene above, Amy attempts to vocalize her objection regarding Fumi's advice about recruiting an art teacher for Junie. She realizes the situation is suddenly freezing and immediately appraises it as a threat if she continues vocalizing her objection to Fumi's advice. It can potentially harm her relationship with Fumi as well as her good image, which she believes complaining about is misbehavior.

As a result, Amy engages in self-controlling as her emotion-focused coping to manage the situation with her mother-in-law. It is portrayed in how she suddenly rectifies her words and will consider Fumi's advice. Therefore, Amy perceives good self-control to maintain her image in front of others so she will not look inadequate.

## 2.2 Escape Avoidance

Amy also uses escape-avoidance coping strategy that describes wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid (Folkman et al., 1986).

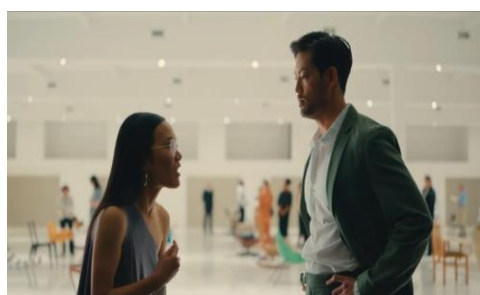


Figure 6. Amy debates with George (E2, 21:53-25:08)

In the scene above, Amy gets furious with George because she knows that Jordan will reject the business deal. She appraises the rejected deal as a threat to her. It potentially harms her well-being, and Amy has been "really stressed about the deal". As their quarrel

intensifies, Amy asks him to re-communicate their conflict, but George ignores her. Therefore, Amy decides to leave the exhibition.

A scene when she leaves the exhibition instead of reconciling with George indicates that she is adopting escape avoidance as a coping strategy. Carver defines this coping strategy as "behavioral efforts to escape or avoid" something (Stanisławski, 2019). Leaving the exhibition is her way to escape from the conflict and avoid any more negative emotions. However, she reappraises her efforts to make amend are unsuccessful, which can lead to negative outcomes and distress.

## 2.3 Focus On and Venting Up Emotions

In dealing with depression, Amy uses focus on and venting up emotions. Carver defines this strategy as "the tendency to focus on whether distress or upset one is experiencing and to ventilate those feelings" (Stanisławski, 2019).



Figure 7. She is thrilled after venting her emotions to Danny (E2, 28:45)

After having confrontations with Danny, Amy realizes that having a beef with him is a perfect medium to vent her emotions. She cannot be upset with George since he ignores her and they are at the exhibition; instead, she uses Danny to "ventilate those feelings". She even sprays "I CAN'T DRIVE" on his truck. After confronting Danny, Amy feels relieved from her stress. It can be seen in the figure above; she looks happy as if they had never been in dispute before. She immediately accepts George's advice to attend couple therapy.

Amy has used this coping strategy before getting revenge and confronting Danny, assuming he is a stranger. At that time, Amy already has too many responsibilities at the moment, both in her business and at home. She appraises what she feels all this time becomes a threat to her well-being. Therefore, she employs this coping strategy. Amy unconsciously vents her upset to Danny. She can freely express her upset feelings without needing to maintain her positive image. She unconsciously had

overcome her depression by doing the duty of Well-Spoken.

## 2.4 Seeking Social Support

Amy also uses social support coping strategy for instrumental reason as problem-focused coping. This strategy tends to “seek advice, assistance, or information” (Stanisławski, 2019).



Figure 8. Amy and George's therapy session as coping strategies (E3, 03:33)

According to the scene above, Amy and George decide to go to a couple therapy. They want to consult and straighten up their complaints outwardly revealed out of anger. In this situation, the strategy used by Amy in overcoming her problem with George is seeking social support. Considering Carver's coping strategies, Amy's coping strategy for this situation tends for instrumental reasons. Attending a couple therapy, Amy and George seek advice and assistance from Dr. Lin on practical strategies for bridging her miscommunication by digging deeper into the couple's feelings. Dr. Lin also gives her information related to Amy's stressor. Here, depressed people tend to need more information aligned with seeking advice and support from others (Coyne et al., 1981)

Aside seeking for instrumental reason, Amy also seeks social support. this strategy refers to “getting moral support, sympathy, or understanding” and something like “I talk to someone about how I feel” (Stanisławski, 2019).

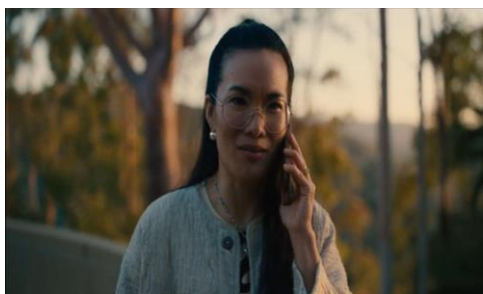


Figure 9. Amy confides her problem to Paul (E3, 16:57)

When George accidentally sends the wrong photo of Mia wearing a bikini, Amy appraises the situation as a threat. It triggers her low self-esteem, making her feel more insecure. Therefore, she wants to get validation

about her sexiness and attractiveness. His response boosts her confidence; hence, she keeps pretending to be Kayla. Besides, she also confides her situation as a breadwinner that becomes her stressor.

In this case, Amy's coping strategy is seeking Paul's social support for emotional reasons. According to Carver and colleagues, this strategy refers to “getting moral support, sympathy, or understanding” and something like “I talk to someone about how I feel” (Stanisławski, 2019). Receiving sympathy from Paul has boosted her mood.

## 2.5 Planning

Amy also uses planning coping strategies to cope with the stressors that are underlying her depression. According to Carver and colleagues, planning involves “comping up with action strategy, thinking about what steps to take and how best to handle the problem” (Stanisławski, 2019).

Amy ever witnessed her father cheating with another woman when she was a teenager. She never talked about her father's affair because of her inability to vocalize her thoughts. Amy has already realized that her repressive emotions since childhood have become a stressor for her. As a result, she appraises her affair with Paul as potentially harmful to her marriage because she fears losing a loved and valued person, George.



Figure 10. Amy feels sad when expressing her hidden feelings to her parents (E8, 05:54)

Therefore, Amy decides to resolve the underlying problem with her parents first using a planning coping strategy by Carver. She believes that discussing her difficulties growing up with repressing her emotions and desires is the best way to handle the problem and overcome the causes of her depression. Besides, Dr. Lin ever says that, “*When we're stressed, we revert to the pathways we created as children. But acknowledging this is just the first step. In order to create new neural pathways, we have to uncover what lies underneath our awareness*” (E3, 02:54-03:13).

However, she reappraises her coping strategy, which is unsuccessful. Her father just walked away from the conversation. Her mother dismissively responds, “*Just stop. You're not gonna tell me anything I don't already*

know. [...] No. We don't have to. And you and I don't have to either." (E8, 06:57-07:08). The unsuccessful coping strategy will lead to further appraisal and coping attempts (Biggs et al., 2017). Thus, Amy commits another coping strategy, which is positive reappraisal.

## 2.6 Positive Reappraisal

Amy's next coping strategy is positive reappraisal which refers to the efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth (Folkman et al., 1986).



Figure 11. She feels guilty by always repressing her feelings (E8, 13:17)

After her cheating has been revealed, she chooses to be honest with her husband. She does not want to be her mother, who is unconcerned with her father's affair and believes there is no reason to discuss it. Amy says demandingly to her mother, "*This is the problem with our family. We never talked about anything openly*" (E8, 07:09-07:13). Amy appraises the problem she causes to be a threat to her future marriage if she keeps lying to him.

Therefore, she decides to speak the truth. She admits her mistake by saying, "*I slept with him*" (E8, 11:08-11:13). She does not want to hide it anymore. Instead, she wants to straighten out her affair and everything connected to after the road rage incident. In this case, Amy employs positive reappraisal by (Folkman et al., 1986), which refers to the efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth. This scene shows her character development from someone who usually repressed her emotions to express her feelings. Furthermore, Amy learns from her mother's experience in dealing with infidelity. She knows the consequences, hence making her open up with George.

## 2.7 Acceptance

The last coping strategy Amy uses to overcome depression is acceptance. According to Carver et al., acceptance is learning to accept the reality of a stressful situation (Stanislawski, 2019). This strategy involves accepting the reality of a stressful situation, both emotionally and situationally.

After the incident at Jordan's house, she appraises a threat, fear of the potential damage to the future relationship with her family. When Amy falls off a cliff and gets trapped with Danny, she initially blames him for her problems. This incident shifts her primary appraisal from a threat to a challenge. Amy's challenge appraisal focuses on potential growth by reducing her inhibition of desires. She sees an opportunity to confront and express her repressed emotions, even unintentionally, due to consuming the poisonous berries.



Figure 12. Amy feels touched that someone understands her feelings (E10, 25:23)

The scene above indicates how Amy employs the acceptance of emotion coping strategy after consuming the berries in this scene. Acceptance of emotion means allowing emotions to arise and unfold naturally without trying to change, suppress, or judge them (Liu & Thompson, 2017; Stanislawski, 2019). Here, Amy and Danny finally can share and understand their true feelings and desires. Referring to Amy's situation, she admits her feelings to Danny when she gets a little sober:

"All you wanted was not to be alone."

"You don't have to be ashamed. It's okay. I see it all. You don't have to hide. It's okay." (E10, 25:23-25:38)

Amy has been trapped by loneliness within the positive family all this time. With Danny, she expresses her genuine feelings without fear of judgment. Talking with Danny is the first time someone understands and validates her emotions, asking her not to feel ashamed of being herself and hide her feelings. Employing an acceptance coping strategy is adaptive in overcoming her depression. She feels relieved after accepting her true nature and confiding in someone with similar feelings.

Furthermore, she also employs acceptance of the situation, which involves coming to terms with past experiences and current circumstances (Liu & Thompson, 2017).





Figure 13. Amy is in the acceptance phase (E10, 30:52)

Amy and Danny are portrayed throughout the miniseries as having similar problems, situations, and desires. The way Amy hugs Danny, as in the figure above, in the final scene symbolizes her acceptance of her true nature and current circumstances, especially after revealing her genuine emotions in the last few episodes.

## CONCLUSION

Amy's journey through Lacan's Imaginary Order and Symbolic Order portrays her idealized images, misrecognition, and internal conflicts leading to depression. Her misrecognition of her true self and identification with various idealized images lead her to create a standard influenced by societal expectations. People she expected to fulfill her efforts to seek unconditional love and to be heard leave her unfulfilled because she gives up on her desire due to her family's norms. Amy's repression of her genuine emotions and desires contributes to her depression.

If Amy fails to articulate her desire in the Symbolic Order, then her coping strategies serve as her duty to be Well-Spoken. In dealing with her stressors, she has used several coping strategies, such as self-controlling, focusing on and venting emotions, escape avoidance, social support, planning, positive reappraisal, and acceptance. There is a pattern in how Amy copes with her stressors. Initially she uses coping strategies that has maladaptive outcome to get a short-term relief, including self-controlling, focus on and vent emotions, and escape avoidance. Then, she changes the strategies that provide adaptive outcome, including seeking social support, planning, positive reappraisal, and acceptance, which can help in overcoming her depression. Amy mainly uses seeking social support coping strategies because she needs someone to talk to about her repressed desires. Besides, acceptance coping strategy is the most effective coping used by Amy in dealing with her depression.

## SUGGESTION

This study mainly focuses on understanding the main character, Amy Lau, depression and how she uses several coping strategies to manage with stressors. In analyzing her depression, this study only explores how the main character's identity can lead to depression by using Lacan's idea of the mirror stage and symbolic order. However, the researcher gives suggestion to the future research to explore the main character's depression by focusing on the symptoms or the broader ideas since Lacan's argument about depression is limited. The future research can also provide a broader analysis of Lacanian three orders.

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