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*Moonlight* directed by Barry Jenkins

*Moonlight* is an American coming-of-age drama movie directed by Barry Jenkins and produced by Andrew Hevia. The star actors are Ashton Sanders, Jaden Piner, Naomie Harris, Alex Hibbert, and Mahershala Ali. The protagonist of the movie is a young man who assumes the names “Little,” “Chiron,” and “Black,” which represent different periods in his life. The movie focuses on difficulties that this character faces with discovering his identity and sexuality.

Although Little is a young boy, he has a primary role of taking care of himself, preparing family meals, and ensuring that he is neat when going to school. Accordingly, his mother, Paula, has neglected her parental roles, and she is mostly in drug binges. Juan, a stranger, assumes the father figure for Little, and he provides the latter with accommodation, meals, and pocket money. His girlfriend, Teresa, also takes maternal roles for Little and she is caring and loving to him. All the family members are secretive in their activities. Juan, for example, does not disclose to Little that he is the one that sells drugs to Paula. Paula is not open to her son and does not like him to be around when she invites men to her house. Finally, Little is silent, reserved and does not disclose his thoughts to any person. He appears to be avoiding any form of confrontation.

In the movie, power transfers from Paula to Juan, and then to Black. In the beginning, Paula is an essential character since Little is entirely dependent on her. However, her addiction to drugs coupled with the healthy relationship that builds between Juan and Little makes power transfer to the former. Consequently, Juan assumes a father figure and he provides Little with

accommodation, meals, and pocket money. Interestingly, Paula also demands a share of her son's pocket money. She is also dependent on the drugs sold by Juan. In the last scenes, power shifts to Black when he also becomes a powerful drug dealer. At this stage, Paula, who is in a rehabilitation center, is entirely dependent on him.

Family life cycle refers to the emotional and intellectual stages that a person experiences from his/her time of birth till death. As a result, these experiences affect how an individual interacts with the society. Little lacks parental love and guidance when he is young. In the film, he is always bullied by his classmates, and his mother does not defend him. Consequently, he lacks confidence, is quiet, and he is also timid. These experiences make Little suspicious of everybody, including Paula.

Little's early exposure to drugs and criminal life makes him engage in these items when he becomes an adult. His mother is a heavy consumer of drugs and alcohol. Additionally, Paula is a prostitute, and she exposes him to criminals at an early age. Little's relationship with Juan further enhances his engagement with crime. Juan, who becomes his guardian, is a major drug dealer in his neighborhood. Therefore, the love he gives Little and his better living standards compared to the rest of the community shows the teenager that crime is a way of escaping his childhood miseries.

Chiron's incarceration after he attacks one of his classmates marks a significant transition in his life. He is just tired of being bullied by his colleagues and his attack on Terrel is an indication that he is no longer willing to be patronized because of his small and weak status. This action results in him being expelled from school, and although not shown, it is possible he was imprisoned. The subsequent scenes, show Chiron as Black, a now older, muscular, and

wealthier person. Interestingly, it is at this stage that he becomes willing to break the law by engaging in the sale of drugs.

The film shows a loving and caring culture in the society. Unfortunately, the struggles for survival push people into engaging in criminal activities. Although Juan is a drug dealer, he is genuinely concerned about Little. He provides him with accommodation and food. He even confronts Paula over her excessive use of drugs and her neglect of her son. The socio-economic class of Chiron almost subjects him to live in poverty in his entire life. His family lives in squalor and want. Moreover, the family's situation is aggravated by Paula's excessive use of drugs. Based on Little's background and limited opportunities, he is almost compelled to wallow to remain poor in his entire life (Bordwell, 86). Kevin, one of his childhood friends, is even surprised by his ability to climb the social status and become wealthy.

Traditional family responsibilities are shown in the film through Chiron's care for his mother. When he is a teenager, Chiron is forced to share his little pocket money with Paula, who regularly uses the money to buy drugs. Once an adult, he pays for his mother rehabilitation and visits her. These scenes show that caring for a family member is a mandatory duty in Black's society.

Little's main strength is love. Although his mother had neglected and abused him in his childhood, he cares about her health. As a result, he takes her to a rehabilitation center. The family's resilience is revealed by its determination to escape poverty. For example, Chiron goes to school, and he is determined to excel despite being constantly bullied by his classmates (Pramaggiore 101). Juan, who had a similar childhood as Chiron sells drugs to become wealthy. Once Chiron matures, he engages in this trade for the same reason.

If I were a social worker tasked with assisting this family, I would start by rehabilitating Paula. The family is dysfunctional because its leader, Paula, is a drug addict. In fact, most of the hardships that Little experiences are due to her drug binges. The counseling and rehabilitation of Paula would enable her to stop using drugs. As a result, Little would have an opportunity to grow in a loving and caring family, which would make him prosper. Therefore, a social worker is necessary for helping the family to treat Paula and inspiring other members to avoid illegal activities.

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