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## The Struggle Life Of A Football Player As Seen In Michael Lewis' *Blindside: Evolution Of A Game*

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### **Abstract**

*This research examines the psychological struggle of Michael Oher, the central figure in *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game* by Michael Lewis, through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory published in 1923. The research aims to analyze how Oher's personality develops in response to both internal desires and external forces, particularly focusing on the conflict between unconscious drives and societal expectations. Freud's structural theory of the psyche divided into the id, ego, and superego serves as the main theoretical framework for this analysis. The purpose of the research is to understand how Michael Oher's traumatic past and complex environment shape his identity and behavior. The study also seeks to explore the role of family, education, and social support in transforming Oher from a silent, emotionally distant boy into a successful athlete and functioning adult. To accomplish this, the research applies a qualitative descriptive method, using close reading as the primary technique for data collection. Selected quotations and scenes from the novel are analyzed to identify patterns that reflect Freud's psychological concepts. The findings indicate that Oher's life struggle is heavily influenced by unresolved childhood trauma, represented by the dominance of the id in his early life. Over time, with the intervention of the Tuohy family and exposure to structured environments, his ego and superego gradually develop, allowing him to navigate social expectations and personal goals more effectively. This transformation illustrates how external forces can support psychological development and how Freudian theory can deepen our understanding of character growth in literature.*

*Keywords: Struggle, External Influence, The Id, The Ego, The Superego*

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## I INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of written or spoken art that uses language to express ideas, emotions, stories, and human experiences. It goes beyond simple communication it uses imagination, creativity, and style to convey deeper meanings. Literature can be fictional or based on real events, and it often reflects the culture, values, and struggles of individuals or societies. It includes various genres and forms such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and essays. What makes a piece of writing "literature" is not just its content, but how it is crafted through rich language, symbolic meaning, emotional depth, and the power to provoke thought or feeling.

Due to important historical, economic, and social shifts, the novel rose to prominence as a literary genre. A novel is defined as a story consists of more than one event, contain a plot with characters, setting, a theme, a point of view, and also worldview of the character. The novel is commonly recognized as a literary genre that can capture a vast and imaginative representation of human experience because of its length and structural complexity. It frequently has a complex theme, a wide range of locales that capture the diversity of life itself, a vast cast of people, and a connected series of events. These qualities help explain why it is regarded as one of the main narrative forms in literature. In the meantime, that a novel is typically a lengthy, intricate piece of literature that aims to capture and convey the equality or worth of human experience or behavior. The author draws the conclusion that the novel is also strongly tied to human experience or the author's stance against a certain community based on the previously provided explanation. .

A novel is a piece of literature that tells a tale. The reader is meant to be entertained by the story. Even if the story's major focus is typically on experiences and challenges in life, fiction nevertheless needs to be an engaging narrative with a cohesive structure and aesthetic appeal. In *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* Janet Burroway emphasizes the importance of intrinsic elements as the essential components that create a novel's structure and meaning. She identifies aspects such as characterization, setting, plot and

structure, point of view, dialogue, imagery, theme, and style as core features that arise from the text itself. These elements, according to Burroway, shape not only the story's framework but also the reader's emotional and intellectual engagement. By examining how authors manipulate setting, voice, and structure, Burroway highlights how intrinsic elements operate together to construct narrative coherence. Thus, intrinsic analysis demonstrates how novels achieve aesthetic depth through their internal architecture (Burroway, 2019: 79)

This research focus on the extrinsic element from the novel *The Blindside: Evolution of a Game* by Michael Lewis. The main one the focus in this research will be discussed the struggle of the main character from the novel, another part more important is the influences have the other character as external force to help and shape the struggle of the main character for the purpose this research and make the main character to become a success like the main character dream and will

The researcher chose the title "The Struggle A Football Player As Seen In Michael Lewis' *Blindside: Evolution Of A Game*" because the novel provides a compelling portrayal of characters that reflect broader social and psychological themes. The main character, Michael Oher, undergoes a significant transformation from a homeless and traumatized youth into a successful football player which is influenced by the presence and support of key figures like Leigh Anne Tuohy. For example, in one scene, Leigh Anne confronts her friends' judgment about Michael and defends her decision to care for him, showcasing her strength, empathy, and willingness to challenge societal norms. Michael's quiet demeanor and emotional struggles highlight his internal conflict and resilience, making his character development a rich subject for analysis. By examining these characters, the researcher aims to explore how personal relationships, social class, and individual growth are represented in the novel, which makes character analysis an essential focus for this research.

## II RESEARCH METHOD

The method that must be implemented in a research process, while a technique is the practical way to carry out or apply that method. Essentially, the method outlines the framework of action, and the technique serves as the operational tool used to execute it. This distinction is echoed by John W. Creswell in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, where he clarifies: "Methods involve the overall procedures used in research, whereas techniques or instruments are the specific tools employed to collect and analyze data" (Creswell, 2018: 14). Understanding the difference between method and technique is essential for ensuring clarity and rigor in the research process. Thus, the read-note method is essential for qualitative research involving textual analysis, enabling researchers to gather precise data for interpretation. In the context of this research, the researcher conducted a reading of Michael Lewis' book "*The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*." to obtain the data intended in this research.

Analyzing the data to determine the important character comes next after all the data has been collected. When examining or evaluating data, the researcher employs the content analysis method. The content analysis approach was chosen because, at its core, it is empirically grounded, explanatory, predictive, and connected to actual phenomena. It indicates that the research data is thoroughly and critically discussed in order to derive a prediction from a significant character in Michael Lewis' book "*The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*."

Through that method, the way the researcher conducts data analysis can be described, namely: 1. The researcher performs coding or data tabulation based on indicators or character model 2. The researcher conducts a research and analysis of each main character main to determine the character model; 3. The researcher discusses the analysis results that have been conducted; and 4. The researcher provides a concluding statement based on the findings in discussion.

The researcher applies a descriptive qualitative research method supported by the

techniques of close reading and textual analysis to examine character development in the novel. The process begins with reading the novel approximately three times to fully comprehend the plot, themes, and character dynamics. This repeated reading allows the researcher to identify key patterns and significant or unusual language that guide the focus of the research.

The next step involves the use of close reading, where the researcher selects specific quotations such as phrases, sentences, or dialogues that reveal aspects of the character's development and traits. These selected excerpts are chosen for their relevance and depth in illustrating the transformation or consistency of the character throughout the narrative.

Finally, through textual analysis, the researcher interprets the selected quotations using relevant literary theories. This theoretical framework such as Freudian psychoanalysis provides deeper insight into the character's psychological and emotional complexity, resulting in a more structured, meaningful, and academically grounded interpretation.

### III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 *The Struggle of Football Player Through the Interaction in The Blind Side*

In the abstract, the concept of the struggle was introduced, highlighting how an individual's sense of identity and coherence can be disrupted, often stemming from trauma or unresolved internal conflicts. This chapter analyze with This can be seen from the data below as an example

*“Where are his parents?” asked Freeze. Big Tony said he could get Big Mike’s mom to fill in the forms, then just sat there, a bit uneasily. Finally, he asked, “You want meet them?” “The boys are here?” “Right outside.” (The Blindsight 2006 : 320).*

This moment uncovers the struggle Michael Oher’s life foundation, no father and a mother in rehab or no guardian to hold the frame. The superego is the moral compass for Michael , the lawgiver is absent to direct Michael life for good . Nothing is internalized in michael head no voice says “don’t,” and no one says “this way.” What’s left is the id primal instinct to quiet and to stay surviving. Michael mind floats, heavy and hollow, ruled by need and neglect. Freeze’s ask question, “Who is the guardian?” cuts deeper who anchors this boy in the social world? no one but his ego the mediator between his sense of what he wants in this world has not developed because no one ever showed him how. He remains unguarded physically in the world, and psychically within himself. Another example.

*“In his first nine years of school Michael Oher had been enrolled in eleven different institutions, and that included a hole of eighteen months, around the age of ten, when he apparently did not attend school at all. Either that or the public schools were so indifferent to his presence that they had neglected to register it formally. But it was worse than that. There were schools Big Tony mentioned that did not even appear on the transcripts.” (The Blindsight 2006 : 34).*

Michael’s early teenage years were scattered like broken glass eleven schools in nine years, Michael did not attend school for eighteen months, and no one noticed. He had no structure of life, no anchor to hold him , and no one to watch over him. The Superego withers in this chaos no rules to follow, no boundaries to internalize. Just the id raw and reactive instinct to searching for food, warmth, quiet. The system forgets about him. He doesn’t write his name down. Doesn’t even pretend he exists and so. The ego has meant to connect what he want in this world, it’s never grows the boy fades into invisibility inside and out.

#### 3.2 **Do external influences the development of Player Football in the narrative**

This part will delve into how do external influences (such as family, society, and education) shape the development of Player Football in the narrative? examining how they meticulously the interact and the defense mechanisms (such as denial or repression) she employs to cope with her trauma and eating disorder. We will analyze how these narrative techniques, by obscuring or distorting reality, underscore the very nature of her psychological distress. With this examples show how the external forces shaped Michael life

*“A few days later, Big Tony delivered the transcripts to Hugh Freeze. Steven, as advertised, was a model student and Briarcrest could see no reason not to supply him with a Christian education. Big Mike was another story.” (The Blindsight 2006 : 33).*

In The Blind Side, Michael Oher’s development is shaped by powerful external forces family, education, and social environment that influence how he understands himself and navigates the world. Growing up without consistent parental support or emotional guidance, Michael lacks the internal structure most children develop early in life. His instincts revolve around basic survival, not long-term goals or moral direction. School systems overlook him, offering no support or recognition, which leaves him unprepared to engage with learning or authority.

When Briarcrest first receives his transcripts, they see only gaps and red flags evidence of neglect, not ability. Once figures like Coach Freeze, Miss Sue, and especially the Tuohy family step in, Michael begins to experience consistency, expectations, and care. Their influence gives him the emotional and mental foundation he was previously denied. Football becomes more than a sport it becomes the space where he learns how to channel effort, respond to structure, and believe in his own potential. His transformation is not simply athletic; it's the slow construction of identity through love, guidance, and trust from others. .

### 3.2 Michael Lewis portrayed the Football Player in the novel

Michael Lewis portrays the football player particularly Michael Oher not merely as an athlete, but as a psychologically layered figure shaped by trauma, instability, and the slow formation of identity. Viewed through a Freudian lens, Lewis's depiction reveals a journey that begins in survival and moves gradually toward selfhood. Early in the book, Lewis writes: "*In his first nine years of school Michael Oher had been enrolled in eleven different institutions,*" (*The Blindside* 2006 :72) and there was even "*a hole of eighteen months*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 34) when he apparently didn't attend school at all. These gaps reveal a childhood defined not by growth, but by erasure. Michael is driven by basic needs food, warmth, safety without the inner structure to form trust or a sense of belonging. His silence and passivity are not laziness, but emotional defense mechanisms shaped by abandonment. Even the simple act of conversation exposes this: "*Every question Simpson asked elicited a barely audible mumble... He seemed completely intimidated by authority. Almost nonverbal.*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 78)

## IV CONCLUSION

Michael Lewis's *The Blindside* offers more than a sports biography it presents a profound psychological journey. Through the story of Michael Oher, the narrative reveals how an individual raised in neglect and instability can

As the narrative unfolds, Lewis shows how external forces begin to rebuild what was missing. Figures like Leigh Anne Tuohy and Coach Freeze become stabilizers in Michael's chaotic world. "*Do you know how big a fifty-eight long jacket is?*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 102) Leigh Anne asks her husband. "*Not big enough.*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 102) Her words reflect not just physical observation, but emotional awakening: Michael cannot be ignored. Lewis notes that "*She, too, had seen the file on Big Mike,*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 56) and still chose to act. Leigh Anne's decision to let Michael into her life begins to rewrite his understanding of what care can look like. When Michael's father dies and he finally speaks the words "*Pops, my dad died*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 87) it's not just grief; it's the beginning of emotional expression, spoken aloud in a world that finally listens.

Football becomes both a metaphor and a method for Michael's transformation. The technique he learns "*getting fit,*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 97) using his hands to control the defender is symbolic of a deeper shift. Lewis explains: "*He was so strong, and his hands so big, that there was no opponent certainly not in high school, probably not even in college who, once hooked...*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 97) Michael's strength is no longer abstract or accidental; it becomes deliberate and targeted. It is the first time he's taught how to use his body not just to survive, but to protect. This turning point also reflects in his emotional responses: when a rival player insults him during a game "*Hey fat ass, I'm a put your fat ass in the dirt!*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 98) Michael holds back, then slowly, silently burns. Lewis writes, "*The more he went on, the angrier Michael became, and yet no one noticed, possibly because no one was prepared to imagine the rage inside Michael Oher.*" (*The Blindside* 2006 : 98)

gradually build identity, discipline, and emotional resilience through structure, care, and human connection. Oher begins not as a promising athlete, but as a quiet, invisible figure drifting between schools and homes, shaped by

deprivation and emotional silence. His development is not the result of sudden talent discovery, but of slow emotional reconstruction. The novel illustrates that Michael's early life lacked the essential support systems family, education, and social recognition that allow individuals to form trust and direction. His silence, confusion, and passivity are not signs of failure but reflections of emotional trauma. Lewis captures this subtly, noting how even basic interactions, like shaking hands or answering questions, had to be taught to Michael. These moments show that he wasn't given the tools to participate in the world socially or emotionally. He was physically present but psychologically sidelined.

As the narrative progresses, the involvement of external figures particularly Leigh Anne Tuohy and Coach Freeze provides the framework for change. Their consistent presence and expectations serve as substitutes for the nurturing he never received. They offer stability, but also challenge, slowly encouraging Michael to connect effort with outcome. His relationship with Leigh Anne, though initially distant, becomes a defining source of emotional recognition. Her decision to buy him clothes, insist on rules, and

even force him to visit his mother shows a belief in his potential and a refusal to let him drift.

Football becomes both the setting and symbol of transformation. Through technique, repetition, and guided practice, Michael learns how to translate his strength into protection how to take control. In particular, the concept of "getting fit" is both literal and symbolic: as he uses his hands to dominate the field, he begins to gain control over his life. Football offers him structure and validation, but more importantly, it teaches him to channel instinct into purpose. It becomes the first arena where he is not just surviving but actively shaping his role.

In the end, Lewis's portrayal of Michael Oher is not one of simple success, but of healing. The story reminds us that potential cannot bloom in chaos it needs order, belief, and time. Michael's rise is emotional as much as physical, and his journey speaks to the power of environment in shaping the inner world. Through care, repetition, and challenge, he moves from being voiceless to someone who matters, not just to others but to himself. His story is a powerful testimony to the human capacity for transformation when met with consistency and compassion.

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