

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NICOLE BARBER IN DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN *MARRIAGE STORY* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

In a movie, there are intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. One of the elements that makes a film interesting is the conflict and the characters. Conflicts that occur can be in the form of physical or psychological conflicts. A person's psychology can affect the emergence of a conflict in a character and can also affect how a character can solve their problem. The undergraduate thesis entitled "Psychological Analysis of Nicole Barber in Dealing with Conflict in *Marriage Story* Movie" aims to show that there is a relationship between a divorce conflict that happened in Nicole Barber and its psychology. *Marriage Story* was chosen because at present, divorce is a common thing.

Keywords: Psychology, Conflict, Characters, Marriage Story

ABSTRAK

Dalam sebuah film, terdapat unsur intrinsik dan unsur ekstrinsik. Salah satu unsur yang membuat sebuah film menjadi menarik adalah konflik dan karakternya. Konflik yang terjadi dapat berupa konflik fisik maupun psikologi. Psikologi seseorang dapat berpengaruh terhadap munculnya sebuah konflik dalam sebuah karakter dan juga dapat berpengaruh terhadap bagaimana seorang karakter dapat menyelesaikan masalahnya. Skripsi yang berjudul "Psychological Analysis of Nicole Barber in Dealing with Conflict in Marriage Story Movie" bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan antara sebuah konflik perceraian yang terjadi pada Nicole Barber dengan psikologinya. Marriage Story dipilih karena pada masa sekarang, perceraian menjadi hal yang sering dijumpai.

Kata Kunci: Psikologi, Konflik, Karakter, Marriage Story

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures, and they have the tendency to share parts of their lives with others, then they use literature to express their experiences and thoughts of their life. According to Pickering and Hoeper (1981:1), literature is a uniquely human activity, born of man's timeless desire to understand, express, and share experiences. Literature can be divided into three parts; those are poetry, drama and prose. Films have two elements, i.e., intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements consist of characters, plot, setting, and point of

view. The character can be fictional or based on a real-life person it depends on the author that will use the characters to perform the actions and speak dialogue, moving the story along a plot line.

According to Bisno (1998:31), conflict is a social interaction process involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires. When a character faces a problem, it will affect that person's psychology, whether it happened before the conflict or a motive for doing the conflict itself. Conflict occurs not only caused by the

environment but also with psychology, whether it happened to satisfy his desires, ambitions, emotions, or influence.

Marriage Story movie depicts a marriage between Charlie, a New York theatre director played by Adam Driver, and his wife Nicole, portrayed by Scarlett Johansson. The movie displays the struggles of a marriage. Their decision for divorce has a significant effect on their psychology and pushes them to their personal, family, emotions, social, economic, and creative work.

From the explanation above, literature was chosen as a topic because we can learn without experiencing it from literary work. It becomes challenging to analyze psychological analysis through literary work because it impacts human life in facing a problem and dealing with conflicts. This study presents the relationship between the source of conflict caused by the characters and their psychological.

Psychology is the study of mind and behavior. It encompasses the biological influences, social pressures, and environmental factors that affect how people think, act and feel. Psychology relates to literary works because they touch the same things in their relationship. This study adopts the theory of Bernhardt (1953:3), i.e., psychology is a science that scientific studies actual events. Bernhardt also mentioned the aims of psychological study in his book (1953:7), psychology is seeking to discover what particular conditions produce a given type of activity so that eventually the psychologist will be able to control and direct human activity by controlling this condition. The individual nature of a person is usually caused by human motivation. Human motivation can be divided into five classes of human motives, and those are; the appetites,

wants, emotion, feeling and attitude, and social motives (Bernhardt 1953: 45-48).

This study aims to analyse the relation between psychological aspects and conflicts experienced by Nicole Barber in *Marriage Story* movie. Nicole Barber as a main character, raised and born in Los Angeles. After her married with Charlie Barber, she moved to New York because Charlie is a director of a theatre in New York. In her marriage, Nicole felt her life was stressed and couldn't feel the happiness she has to deserve. One of the arguments with her husband that led to a breakup was the decision of where they wanted to live together. Where at this time she wanted a divorce from her husband. Her desire for a divorce is influenced by her psychology.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

All the data of this study were taken from *Marriage Story* movie, written and directed by Noah Baumbach. This movie was chosen as the data source because it shows the insidious nature of divorce, how a couple who still care about each other will do things they would never think. The data were about the relation between their psychological and conflict that happened between them.

The data were collected by the documentation method, and the nature of this research is library research. Furthermore, the technique used in this study is a note-taking technique, which started with searching and download the movie on Netflix as the source of study. Then the process is continued by watching the movie intensively, listening to the dialogue, reading the movie script, finding out the statement that belongs to the intrinsic study in this case the data based on the need for analysis.

A descriptive qualitative analysis was applied in analysing this study. The data collected were analyzed the conflict

happened in the characters based on the conflict theory by William Kenney (1966) and Karl S. Bernhardt (1953). The data were presented using informal method consisting of paragraph, sentence and dialogues.

III. DISCUSSION

Psychology have an important role in analyzing literary works, by looking from the psychological perspective, from the perspective of the author, the character, or the work itself. As for the category in psychology of Bernhardt (1953), this psychological analysis consists of the appetites, wants, emotions, feeling and attitude, and social motives of the characters, as presented below:

3.1. Appetite

Appetite is constructed that they need make themselves felt in such a way to initiate activity that will eventually satisfy them. Not only is an appetite productive of activity, but it produces the kind of activity that habitually results in the satisfaction of appetite (1953; 44). Human needs food to eat, rest from activity and sexual expressions.

Data 1

(00:27:22 – 00:28:18 in Nora's office)
After crying, Nicole finds her voice and gains momentum then she starts to feel better, the tears start to dry up and she becomes more powerful. Nicole tells Nora about her love story. She talks about her ex fiancé, Ben. After her engagement with Ben, she moves to New York and meets a space movie director. The conversation flows from Nicole's career to her love story with Charlie.

Nicole :

Afterwards, I was introduced to the cast and this bear turned out to also be the director. He did not really know

who I was- or he did, or he figured it out later- and that was it. He started talking to me. And I talked back- and the dead part was not dead, it was just in a coma. And it was better than sex, the talking.

Although the sex was also like the talking. Everything is like everything in a relationship, do you find that? We spent the whole night and next day together, and I just never left. And to be honest, all the problems were there in the beginning, too. I just went along with him in his life because it felt so damn good to feel myself alive. In the beginning I was the actress, the star, so that felt like something. People came to see me, at first.

In this conversation, Nicole has an appetite of sex to from her love story. It could be analyzed from quotation "*And it was better than sex, the talking. Although the sex was also like the talking.*" Nicole considers talking to her crush is more fun than having sex. Although for her, sex is the same as talking. Psychologically, Nicole thinks that sex is something important and fun for her. Nicole tells Nora about how she falls in love with her Charlie. Although there were some problems in the beginning, she decides to never leave the relationship. Because at the beginning she thinks everything is so fun when is in love. This can be analyzed from the quotation "*And to be honest, all the problems were there in the beginning, too. I just went along with him in his life because it felt so damn good to feel myself alive.*" In this scene, Nicole looks excited to tell about her past.

Data 2

(00:29:00 – 00:29:25 in Nora's office)

In this conversation, Nicole tells Nora what makes her fall for Charlie and decides to live together with him. Nicole

shares about her point of view of seeing Charlie at first sight.

Nicole:

He was so smart and creative, it didn't matter. I would tell him things at home, in private, and then they would work their way into public conversation, into his work and for a while that felt like enough. I like him would find an idea of mine worth using or a comment of mine worth repeating. And then I got pregnant. And I thought "having a baby will be ours, really ours." And it will also really be mine".

Psychologically, Nicole falls in love with Charlie, with the way he thinks and how he responds to her storytelling. Nicole feels that Charlie really appreciates her and her life can be very happy. At that moment, her passionate love turns into a passion for bearing children. She imagines how happy her life would be when she has children. It can be analyzed from the quotation *"He was so smart and creative, it didn't matter. I would tell him things at home, in private, and then they would work their way into public conversation, into his work and for a while that felt like enough. I like him would find an idea of mine worth using or a comment of mine worth repeating. And then I got pregnant."* It is the appetite of love.

3.2 Wants

Wants refer to the things people would like to but do not absolutely need for survival. Wants are the foundation of universal needs and are found in different ways in each person. However, wants are modified by situations and the patterns of change when people make decisions to solve their problems.

Data 3

(00:24:54 – 00:25:07 in Nora's office)

While discussing cases that Nora has previously resolved for her clients, Nicole says what she wants after her divorce.

Nicole:

Oh, I don't want money or anything, he doesn't have money anyway, he puts it all back into the theater. I used to think I gave TOO much away. I just want it to be over. I just worry... you know we weren't going even to use lawyers. So, I don't want to be too aggressive. I'd like to stay friends.

Nicole just wants her life without Charlie. She doesn't want anything else like money, especially since Nicole knows Charlie has no money. All of Charlie's money has been used for his theater. The problem about finance in this family is also one of the reasons Nicole wants a divorce. Nicole just wants to live without Charlie, but she doesn't want to be an enemy for Charlie after this. This can be analyzed from the quotation, *"Oh, I don't want money or anything, he doesn't have money anyway, he puts it all back into the theater. I used to think I gave TOO much away. I just want it to be over. I just worry... you know we weren't going even to use lawyers. So, I don't want to be too aggressive. I'd like to stay friends."* In this scene, Nicole expresses it calmly.

Data 4

(00:40:03 – 00:40:12 in Sandra's kitchen)

Charlie comes to Sandra's house, Nicole's mother, to pick up Henry because it is the time for Henry to be with his father. Charlie comes bearing good news that he has won the MacArthur grant. Before Charlie comes, Nicole has asked Cassie, her sister to

give Charlie the divorce papers from Nicole. But Cassie was unable convey that, and the situation becomes awkward. Then Charlie asks Nicole about it directly and Nicole tries to explain it.

Nicole :

I want a ... I don't know I'm trying to say this as undramatically as possible. I want an ENTIRELY different kind of life.

Nicole says that what she wants is to get away from Charlie and have a different life. In this conversation it seems that Nicole does not want to elaborate on the topic they are discussing. It can be analyzed from the quotation, *"I want a ... I don't know I'm trying to say this as undramatically as possible. I want an ENTIRELY different kind of life."* The way Nicole says, *"I'm trying to say this as undramatically as possible"* shows that she is too tired with this problem and wants to solve this as soon as possible.

Data 5

(00:23:22 – 00:23:47 in Nora's office)

When Nora asks Nicole about how she lives, Nicole starts crying because she cannot bear her problem. To divert Nicole's grief, Nora begins to tell stories about her life. Nora tells of her life with her ex-husband, and now she lives happily with her new boyfriend. Then, Nora asks Nicole where she want to live.

Nicole :

Well, I'm here now, obviously, and I don't know if this show will be picked up, but It feels like home. It is home It's the only home I've known without Charlie.

Now, Nicole lives in Los Angles. But she does not know where she would stay after her show finish. From the beginning, Nicole has felt comfortable

living in LA, but problems arise when Charlie doesn't want to live in LA. This is one of the most important issues leading to their divorce. Because it causes hatred, Nicole only wants to live without Charlie. It is analyzed from the quotation "Well, I'm here now, obviously, and I don't know if this show will be picked up, but It feels like home. It is home It's the only home I've known without Charlie." Psychologically, Nicole wants live far from Charlie and finding for the comfort place for her without her ex-husband. This quotation can be categorized as the wants of human motivation. From this data it can be seen that Nicole considers the source of the problems in her life and the reason what makes her life unhappy is Charlie.

3.3 Emotions

Emotions express how emotional experiences direct activity. Moods are closely related to action. Besides being an affective coloring of activity like the feelings to which they are closely related, moods exert an influence on the course of our thoughts and the direction of our actions (1953:107).

Data 6

(00:14:41 – 00:15:12 in Barber's house)

Nicole and Charlie just arrive home. Charlie sits on the living room sofa and tries to strike up a conversation. Nicole notices Charlie's gesture and asks what he wants to talk about. Charlie comments about Nicole's show in the theater before.

Nicole: Good night, Charlie.

After the conversation is over, Nicole goes to her bedroom and bids Charlie good night, to close their discussion. Nicole wants to make sure she is okay with Charlie's criticism. The emotions of Nicole's can be analyzed from this scene

when Nicole leaves Charlie and goes to her bedroom. Nicole holds back his tears and walks to the bed. Without changing her clothes, she sleeps on the bed and bursts into tears until she falls asleep. An emotion experienced by Nicole is sadness because Charlie cannot appreciate her acting. Charlie constantly criticizes her, but Nicole does not want to debate it with her husband. Then she chooses to accept the criticism and cries alone.

Data 7

(00:28:20 – 00:28:55 in Nora's office)

After Nicole tells Nora about her love life, Nicole continues to talk about her career as an actress in Charlie's theatre. Nicole shares that there were problems at the beginning of her relationship with Charlie.

Nicole :

But then the farther away I got from that and the more the theatre company got acclaim, I had less and less weight. I became "Who?" "Oh, you remember, that actress who was in that thing that time." And he was the draw. And that would have been fine, but I got smaller. I realized that I didn't really ever come alive for myself, I was just feeding his aliveness.

Psychologically, Nicole feels as if she was happy to be an artist that everyone knows. However, as the theater became popular, Nicole's name becomes vaguer and is forgotten. Nicole feels that she is becoming increasingly marginalized and her role in the theatre less and less critical. Nicole realizes that she isn't enjoying life. She just forces his life to look happy. It can be analyzed from the quotation, *"And that would have been fine, but I got smaller. I realized that I didn't really ever come alive for myself, I was just feeding his aliveness."* In this

scene, Nicole is seen expressing her disappointment and trying to hold back her tears.

3.4 Feelings and Attitude

All of individual have feelings and attitude of approach to every experience that they tend to repeat the activity. Every human experience is not only from one aspect. So, human feelings have two present feelings of pleasantness or unpleasantness, and they make decisions with their accompanying attitudes of approach or withdraw that are important to human motives.

Data 8

(00:30:42 – 00:31:54 in Nora's office)

Nicole shares her story with Nora about how her relationship with Charlie started. She appears to enjoy telling the story. But when she starts telling stories about how she felt in her early marriage, she begins to tear up. She cannot hold back her emotions in expressing the feelings she has been holding onto.

Nicole :

So, this pilot came along, and it shot in LA and it paid so much and it was like there was a little life-line thrown to me "Here is a bit of earth that's yours." And I was embarrassed about it in front of him, but also, it felt like "This is who I am, this is what I'm worth and it's stupid, but at least it's mine." And if he had taken me in a big hug and said "Baby, I'm so excited for your adventure and of course I want you to have your own piece of earth of yours." Then we might not be getting divorced. But he made fun of it. And was jealous, like he is. BUT then he realized about the money and told me I could funnel it back into the theatre company. And that's when I realized that he truly didn't see me. He didn't see me as something separate from

him. And I asked him to say my phone number. And he didn't know it. So, I left.

The data that collected shows that in this scene, Nicole feels that Charlie doesn't understand her feelings and never supports her. It can be analyzed from the quotation, *"And if he had taken me in a big hug and said 'Baby, I'm so excited for your adventure and of course I want you to have your own piece of earth of yours.' Then we might not be getting divorced."* Nicole also says, *"And that's when I realized that he truly didn't see me. He didn't see me as something separate from him. And I asked him to say my phone number. And he didn't know it. So, I left."* Nicole feels her husband just makes fun of it and never really takes her feelings seriously, thus influencing Nicole's attitude. It is an unpleasant experience for her and she tends to discontinue that experience because she realizes she is not happy in this marriage. So, Nicole decides to file for divorce.

3.5. Social Motives

Social motives are obviously beyond our power to cope with the situation to others, to some ideas or some decision seems to be the natural and satisfying course.

Data 6

(00:33:13 – 00:33:23 in Sandra's kitchen)

Nicole is going to sue Charlie for divorce. She asks her sister, Cassie to give Charlie the letter. Cassie and Sandra are nervous and try to make sure Nicole's decision.

Cassie : You should check.

Sandra : In case we change our minds.

Nicole : I'm not going to change my mind.

The social motives of Nicole's self-assertion can be analyzed from the quotation "I'm not going to change my mind" It can be categorized as a self-assertion because Nicole tries to show her family that she is sure of her decision and has no reservations about it. She is sure with her feeling right now. She will not show Charlie her loss.

IV. CONCLUSION

Marriage Story movie is not just a divorce story. It is the story of two people who love each other now going through a process that demands their hatred. It is the whole story of a marriage. This film also shows how a person falls in love, persists with his choices, controls his emotions, and remembers the kindness of his partner.

The psychological aspect has an important role in affecting how the characters in Marriage Story bring up the conflict and handle a conflict. The aspect that guiding Nicole Barber is the aspect of human motivation; those are appetites, wants, emotions, feeling and attitude, and social motives.

At first, Nicole feels passionate when she meets and falls in love with Charlie at first sight. She wants to get married, have a baby, and to spend her whole life happily together. Nicole's appetites were the first reason to encourage marriage and are willing to sacrifice for his marriage. Nicole also has the emotions she keeps when she feels like she cannot really enjoy her own life. She fights alone in her marriage and feeds her husband's selfishness. The feelings and attitude that Nicole feels stem from her feelings of being belittled by her husband. Nicole feels that her husband does not really care about her voice. Nicole is too fixated on her husband, so she cannot be herself. Nicole's social motives are also influential in the divorce conflict. Nicole does not seem to

want to lose the divorce and she also wants to win custody of her child.

The most affecting human motivation to the conflict that happened in her life is affected by her wants. The biggest reason Nicole Barber wants to divorce is that she wants to live far away from her husband. The wants of Nicole Barber

had a relation with the internal conflict that was going on in herself before. The reason Nicole wants a divorce from Charlie, is not only because of her complicated marriage but the biggest reason for her divorce is because she wants to.

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