

THE ANALYSIS OF MAIN CHARACTERS DIMENSIONS AND MORAL VALUE OF *GONE GIRL* BY GILLIAN FLYNN

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Abstract: This article analyzes the main characters' dimensions and moral value in a novel, "*Gone Girl*" by Gillian Flynn based on the theory about character dimensions, according to Lajos Egri and several literature experts. This article contains the analysis of the main characters, Amy Elliot Dune and Nick Dune, the analysis of the characterization, and the moral value and the implementation in real life. The analysis is based on the characters' behavior in the novel.

Keywords: character, character dimensions, moral value, and marriage life

INTRODUCTION

In this life, everyone has their own conditions and cannot be equated with each other. It can be changed depending on the conditions, situations, environment, and people's treatment of others' lives, especially if it happens continuously. However, everyone has a different way to think and act to face also solve their problems. It can affect the result of changes, like it can be better or worst than before.

Being aware of this symptom can help to prevent and reveals the changes. Based on the information, the symptom is physical symptoms and emotional symptoms. Physical symptoms usually begin with changes in sleep patterns and appetite and affect a person's health if it happens continuously. The emotional symptom usually begins with stress; it becomes worst and makes them depressed (Kohli, 2020).

According to (Widyasari, 2017, p.16) literary works like novels, poetry, and other works usually are created towards the author's conditions and situations in their environment, experiences that ever happened, or their imagination. In this novel, the author created it based on the experience of bad situations in America.

"*The Gone Girl*" is one of the works of Gillian Flynn that was published by Crown Publishing Group in the United States in 2012. "*The Gone Girl*" describes Amy as a beautiful and gorgeous woman who was a psychopath. This side appears when she wants to get revenge on his husband, Nick. As a husband, Nick is cruel, irresponsible, and immoral. The author chose this topic because the main character and also plot in the novel "*The Gone Girl*" is very interesting to analyze since it has an unexpected plot and twist in character.

METHOD

The data of this paper was taken from the novel by Gillian Flynn entitled "*Gone Girl*." This novel is chosen as the main source because it can help us to fulfill the need for data in this paper. The data was collected by several steps such as reading and understanding carefully, relating the topic from the novel with other sources, and note-taking.

The collected data then was analyzed descriptively. The qualitative method is used in this paper to analyze the main character's personalities first. After that, the personalities are classified based on its physiological, sociological, and psychological dimensions of the main character. In the last step, the collected data was used to determine the moral value and to compose how to achieve successful marriage life considering some aspects in *Gone Girl*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Main Character Analysis

a. Character

Character in the story can be rendered as an individual or types such as race, specific creatures, etc. (Klarer, 1995, p17). Character is the aspect of the story that decides where the story goes. The character can also be described as one of the tools for the author to decide the story's plot. According to Klarer (1995, p17), there are two types of character. Klarer explains the two types of characters are flat character and round character. A flat character is a type of character that never changes from the beginning of the story until the end of the story. A round character is a type of character that is complex and can change throughout the story.

In a story, characters generally divide into two roles. The two roles are the protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the round character and has the biggest impact on the story. The protagonist also usually refers to the hero in the story. The antagonist is also a round character and has the biggest impact on the story. However, the antagonist usually refers to the villain, and the role is to stop the protagonist's goal. According to Tarigan (1993, p.76), there are three types of character based on its position. Tarigan explains the types of characters based on position is the main character, a secondary character, and supporting characters. The main character is a character that has the main role in the story and decided how the story will go. The secondary character is a character that is usually related to the main character and has the biggest impact on the main character. A supporting character is a character that supports the main character in a story.

b. Characterization

Characterization can define as the process by the author to reveal the true character of a character in a fictional work. In addition, it will help the reader to understand more about a fictional character (Bennet & Royle, 2004, p65). The information we may get from characterization varies, for example, appearance, gender, marital status, occupation, hobbies, and so on. The author can reveal it in two ways, which are directly (direct characterization) and indirectly (indirect characterization). Direct characterization is how the author describes the characteristic of a character to the reader directly without any interference. For example, "*The ugly woman spoke first...*" (Flynn, 2020, p36). On the other hand, indirect characterization is when the author reveals the characteristic implicitly. According to Burroway (2000, p54), there are 4 different elements in indirect characterization, they are:

Speech

The word that the character says can be identified to understand their characteristic. We can also identify by paying attention to the way they speak. For example, if the character's voice is stutter, we can say that this character is shy, nervous.

- Thoughts

Character's mind is another aspect we can use to find out the characteristics. This aspect is the hardest to identify. However, if we manage to understand it, we will be able to read the author's mind

- Action

The way that the character acts in the story can reveal the characteristic of a character. We can judge the personality of the character's behavior. For example, let us say a man gives a homeless person food. From that, we can conclude that the man is kind and care to each other.

- Look

An outfit is also considered as indirect characterization. The choice of clothes or any kind of appearance can be used to conclude characteristics. For instance, there is a woman who wears lots of jewels. We can conclude that she really likes glamorous things.

According to Egri (1987, p135), there are three dimensions of character that the author must take a look at to be able to complete the perfectness of the character. Those three are:

- Physiological Dimension

If we break down the word physiological, we will get the word 'physical.' According to Merriam-Webster, the word physical means relating to the body. Therefore, we can conclude that the physiological dimension is related to the physical appearance like the body, hair color, skin, and so on

- Sociological Dimension

Sociology is the scientific study that focuses on the social relationship between people in a group (Doda, 2004, p5). To conclude, the sociological dimension is about society, political, culture, relationship, etc

- Psychological Dimension

The term psychology means scientific study about mind and human behavior (Lally & Vallentine-French, 2018, p7). For instance, the psychological dimension is connected with ego, anger, happiness, mentality, sadness, and many more.

Analysis Of Main Characters' Personalities

a. Amy Elliot Dune

Physical dimension refers to the appearance of a character. Amy Dune describes as a gorgeous woman with a beautiful face and white skin. The social dimension refers to the background of the character. Amy is a well-known writer because of her amazing work called *Amazing Amy*. She is the daughter of the wealthy psychologists. Psychological dimension refers to the personalities of a character. Amy is clever, cunning, and also a psychopath. This indicates that Amy has multiple personalities created from her environment. According to Bliss (1980), Multiple personalities is a syndrome when a person self-hypnosis himself and creating another personality. This means that Amy did self-hypnosis to herself without realizing it due to her environment. In Amy Case, her family and her husband are the reason why Amy has multiple personalities.

Her first characteristic is that she is a very clever woman. She really likes games relating to mind games, and that is why she always makes a treasure hunt game with Nick on their wedding anniversaries. Another masterpiece of Amy's cleverness is when she sets up the plan where she wants to trap Nick for killing her. Amy prepares everything she needs perfectly. Not even the police can solve the problems that Amy makes. However, her moves are ruined by Greta, her neighbor in the middle of exile, because Greta robs Amy's money. This shows how Amy has multiple personalities where she can play as a "Good Wife" and a professional killer. Amy's personality is cunning. Amy buys a lot of things by using Nick's credit card. That makes Nick in charge of debt of up to 117 thousand dollars. Amy tricks Nick when he is drunk and does not even pay attention to what Amy is doing. Amy even fakes her pregnancy to make her plan perfect.

The last personality and also the one that very different from other personalities is psychopathic. Amy already has two victims of her act. Both of them were Amy's ex-boyfriend when she was still in college. The first victim is Tommy O'Hara. Amy back then prosecuted Tommy for raping her, but it was just Amy's plan to get rid of him, and she was successful in doing it. The next victim is Desi Collings. Desi was Amy's classmate, and they also had a loving relationship before. However, Amy told Nick that she had to break up with Desi because he had a mental illness that made him insanely wanted Amy. While in the middle of Exile, Amy's plan is disturbed by Greta, who robs her money. Knowing that she was in a terrible situation, she contacts Desi to ask for help. Desi, who still loves Amy, accepts her request and wishing that he can rebuild his relationship again with Amy. However, Amy then changes her plan because her previous plan is failed. She uses Desi as her way out as if he is the one who kidnaps Amy. Amy then kills Desi as the proof for self-defense and manage to come back to Nick.

b. Nick Dunne

The second character is Nick Dunne, who is Amy's husband. From the physical dimension, he is a handsome and very charming man. From the social dimension, he was a writer until he lost his job. Then he decided to open a bar and also work as a college professor. From the psychological dimension, He is smart, cruel, infidel. Talking about the first of his personalities, as a former writer, Nick is very Genius as a person. This characteristic is shown in the script when Nick and Amy always their wedding anniversary by doing a treasure hunt with Amy as the hint maker and Nick as the hint seeker. Nick has to solve all of the

clues to find the treasure from Amy. Another proof is shown when Nick tries to figure out how Amy manages her action to be gone. He gathers all of the clues he gets from their anniversary, and after he gets enlightenment from the clues, at that moment, he knows that he gets trapped by his own wife as if he has murdered Amy. Not only these, he still shows more of his intelligence in the story. In this case, it is Nick's turn now to bait Amy to come. He tells the media that he really loves Amy and wants her to come back again. He promises that he will change and be better for Amy. In the end, his effort was a success, and Amy decided to go back again to Nick because she cannot hide anymore.

Nick's other personality is cruel and evil as a husband. As we know, the role of a husband in a family is as a breadwinner. However, almost all of the income in the family came from Amy. She even buys a bar for Nick to be able to work. Yet, the one who takes control of the bar is not Nick, but his twin sister Margo. Nick right now only uses Amy for sex whenever he wants, and he will ignore Amy at the house. When Amy says to Nick that she wants a baby, Nick refuses his wife's wish—telling that it is not the right time for the baby. After that, they argue with each other about it, and Nick ends up hurting Amy, which shows that he is cruel. The last of Nick's personalities is infidelity. The really bad thing about Nick in this story is that he is cheating behind Amy. This is proven when a woman named Andie comes to Nick in the middle of the night when he is resting at Margo's place. However, a carcass will always smell rotten, and Margo caught Nick that he is cheating. Nick then tells Margo everything about this relationship. This thing makes Nick's condition in public become worse. Andie then spits the truth between her and Nick. She is still young and cannot maintain the pressure she has.

The problems in their household start when Nick loses his job as a writer. Back then, from 2007 to 2009, there was an incident called The Great Recession. Quoting from investopedia.com, The Great Recession is the downfall of the economy in America that made many places have to dismissal lots of employees, and Nick is one of the victims of The Great Recession. Being jobless for a long time, Amy is affected. She is annoyed when Amy sees Nick does nothing in a home. Because of that, they often argue about almost everything. The Great Recession is also affecting the divorce rate in America that also happens in Nick and Amy's life. Based on Divorce Magazine, the divorce cases in America in the year 2009 was about 840.000 cases. Beside Nick being jobless, his infidelity also affects their marriage with Amy that makes Amy wants to trap him.

Moral Value And How To Achieve Successful Marriage Life

In a novel, we can find a certain message that we mentioned as a moral value. Moral value is a combination word of morals and values. Based on Merriam Webster Dictionary, moral is a thing that relates to principles of right and wrong in behavior. Value can define as something interested and something that we are looking for. Therefore, we can conclude that moral value is a skill to decide which one is right or wrong, and it has something interesting that we are looking for. Moral value in a novel is a message that contains an interesting lesson, and we can learn from it. Moral values are classified as four characteristics, such as the moral value relates to responsibility; the moral value relates to pure heart, obligation, and formality. According to Dr. Griffin (2014), there are also three categories of moral value. The first is Moral value based on good things; it means that this moral value is only recognized as valuable. The second category is right, which means that moral value has the right interpretations and is associated with law, obligation, fairness, justice, and equality. The last category is a virtue that is an intellectual trait related to human activity, and it is important to cultivate certain desirable traits of character and mind.

Every story always has a message that the author wants to share with the viewer. *Gone Girl's* novel is a description of how a marriage relationship is both tragic and ironic. *Gone Girl* tells the story of a happy marriage relationship but ends horribly for both Amy and Dune. *Gone Girl* also tells the viewer about factors that occurred in marriage life. The first is about how the relationship seems very fine, but it is very problematic. In the story of *Gone Girl*, Nick and Amy try to look so happy with their marriage that their relationship can be said to be relationship goals. It is true that at the beginning of their marriage, they were very harmonious, but over time many factors led to a mismatch between one another. It also often happens in the modern-day household. It is done by top artists who don't want their household problems to be known to the public. They will show the public that their marriage is happy and has never been any conflict. They

will act in public and show that they are a harmonious and very romantic couple. Pretending to look happy happens because of a change in attitude that has happened to their partner. But they don't want to show it, usually happens because, before marriage, the couple will only show the best attitude to captivate their partner's heart. After married, they will show the true nature that they kept hidden during their relationship. In this case, there are two possibilities, they will forgive and accept the change in attitude, or they cannot accept the attitude and end up in divorce. In Amy and Nick's case, the behavior change that happened to Nick was unacceptable to Amy, so Amy did everything she could to keep Nick behaving the way she wanted.

The next factor that can cause problems in marriage is financial factors. In the novel *Gone Girl*, an economic problem occurs when Amy and Nick lose their jobs. Financial problems make Amy feel sick because Nick becomes very lazy and does not make changes. In the real world, economic factors play an important role in marital harmony. Daily needs will increase and even more than usual. While still single, men only focus on fulfilling personal needs, but when married, men must meet the needs of their wives and children. When a man does not have a proper job, it will difficult to fulfill his daily needs. Apart from that, financial management is also important for their relationship. If the husband does not have sufficient income, the wife must be wise in dividing the money to be spent. When the wife cannot manage finances in the household, the husband does not have a stable income, then the possibility of a dispute is strong in their relationship. It often happens and is done in real life. Usually, it can lead to divorce.

Another factor is infidelity that often occurs in domestic relationships. In the novel *Gone Girl*, Nick has cheated with his student, Amy finds out about it. Cheating occurs because one partner feels bored. It is common in a marriage relationship, but what distinguishes us is how we deal with this to not interfere with their relationships. Marital infidelity is classified as several activities such as cheating, emotional connections that are beyond friendships, having an affair, internet relationships, extramarital relationships, and pornography use (Blow and Hartnett, 2005). In the modern-day household, there are many cases of infidelity that we find around us. The causes are very diverse, but the cause of affairs that often occurs is saturation. The saturation of a partner is very human, but this is only temporary and will fade over time if we can overcome it. If we can't handle it, then what happens is we will commit adultery. When an affair occurs, this is known to our partners. It will cause a very complicated conflict. Most people think that cheating cannot be forgiven because it has violated a very sacred marriage promise. But some of them can forgive infidelity. They will think that it never happened when the cheating spouse apologized sincerely. In *Gone Girl's* case, Amy, who found out that Nick was cheating on her, felt betrayed, so she took revenge on him.

That explanation shows that married life, once again, is not simple. In fact, it is complex. There are also some households that appear to be fine, but it is very complex inside. Therefore, people need to brood over before deciding to enter the marriage life. If not, the marriage life will be ruined and ended up divorce. There are several reasons that trigger divorce between husband and wife. One of the reasons is the different perspectives on marriage. Different Perspectives happen because both husband and wife are from different families and education (Gunarsih, 1993, p.76). Therefore, a marriage decision is not easy and needs contemplating. After males and females already convinced themselves to enter marriage life, their next challenge is to create a successful marriage life. From *Gone Girl*, we conclude points that make a successful marriage life: (1) Love, (2) Sex Life, and (3) Honesty.

Love is a crucial part of marriage. When the husband and wife love each other, they can overcome every problem that they will face. Love is also a basic and the core part of marriage that can lead to many good aspects that will help achieve a successful marriage life. With love, husband and wife can build trust between them, accept each other completely. In *Gone Girl*, we can see that Amy and Nick seem to love each other. However, they do not have enough commitment to each other. This is the reason why both of them can grow the trust feeling between each other.

Sex life is also an important part of marriage life because it is one way to show our love in marriage. However, it is not just about the body, but by doing intercourse, both husband and wife have devoted themselves completely, including body and soul. Healthy sex life is based on love, not based on lust. In *Gone Girl*, we can see that Amy and Nick's sex life is not healthy. From Amy's perspective, she believes

that Nick just uses her to satisfy his lust. We can also see that Nick often do intercourse with Amy wherever and whenever he wants and then leave her. No wonder Amy feels that she is just a doll for Nick to satisfy his lust only.

Honesty in marriage life came from Love. Honesty is one of the important parts to achieve a successful marriage. If a husband and wife open to each other and do not hide anything, faith will grow in the marriage life. However, to grow faith in marriage, life takes a long time, but if a husband and wife can do that, they will achieve a successful marriage life. From honesty, husband and wife become open to each other and can communicate easily. Communication is also important in marriage life. A husband and wife can understand each other if they can communicate appropriately. Whenever a husband and wife have a problem, they always have each other back because of good communication and honesty. In *Gone Girl*, it is obvious that Amy has a trust issue with Nick. Nick also hides the truth behind his secret relationship with another woman. Both Amy and Nick also cannot communicate well with each other because of the lack of honesty between them. This is the reason why their relationship appears to be one-sided, where Nick takes all the decisions in their marriage life.

From the points of how to achieve a successful marriage life, we can conclude about the norm of marriage. In marriage life, a couple needs to pay attention to the 3 points of how to achieve a successful marriage life. The norms of the marriage are: (1) A marriage should be based on love from the couple, not because of the people around them. (2) In marriage life, both husband and wife have to be devoted to each other to grow the honest and faith feeling to each other. (3) A marriage life should not be one-sided. Marriage is about two people, husband, and wife, to overcome their problems in their marriage life, including making a decision.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of character and moral value in *Gone Girl*, there are several conclusions for the analysis of *Gone Girl's* character and moral value.

Amy analyzed based on physiological, social, and psychological dimensions. Amy's physiological dimension is a gorgeous and beautiful woman. In the social dimension, Amy was born to wealthy parents. She is also a well-known writer. In the psychological dimension, Amy has multiple personalities. She can play a "good wife and daughter" role and also play as a professional criminal.

Nick is also analyzed based on the physiological, social, and psychological dimensions. Nick's physiological dimension is a handsome and charming man. In the social dimension, Nick was a writer and owner of a bar. In the psychological dimension, Nick is a smart but also a cruel and infidel person.

Gone Girl's main focus is on marriage. Therefore, the message or moral value is about marriage. From the character analysis, we can conclude about the problems that happen in a household. The problems are financial, domestic relationships, and different perspectives. From *Gone Girl* also, we can find the solution to achieve a successful marriage life. The moral values are a marriage should be based on love, husband and wife should be devoted to each other, and taking decisions together.

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