

Psychological Conflict Reflected by Margaret as The Main Character on “Big Eyes” Movie: A Psychoanalytic Approach

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ABSTRACT

Everybody can suffer psychological conflict, whether consciously or unconsciously. It usually happens when someone faces difficulties and finds it difficult to choose among several options. Psychological conflict can also arise when a person lacks strong guiding principles. Big Eyes movie tells about psychological conflicts experienced by Margaret the main actress as a painter. Margaret faced many struggles for hiding all of her husband's untruth. This paper analyzed psychological conflict reflected by Margaret as the main character on Big Eyes movie and Margaret's personality in facing her psychological conflict. The theoretical framework of analysis was Psychoanalytic approach by Sigmund Freud. Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were two kinds of psychological conflicts faced by the main character, Margaret, they are pressure and unconfident. Margaret got pressures from her husband because she knew everything about her husband's popularity and his untruth. Margaret felt unconfident because she had not rational thinking. She trusted her husband's saying too much, so her husband dominated her easily.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict not only always happen with another people in society, but also may happen with the people's character versus themselves or it can be said psychological conflict. Conflict cannot stand alone because it can't deliver without characters. The development of a character's personality also depends on conflict. Psychological conflict is the kind of conflict that significantly shapes a character's personality. Psychological conflict is a struggle a person has with themselves, their conscience, their sentiments, or their guilt, or simply trying to figure out what to do (Damayanti, 2016). Internal conflict and psychological conflict have the exact definition. Everyone has the potential to encounter psychological conflict, consciously or unconsciously. It usually happens when someone faces difficulties and finds it difficult to choose among several options. Psychological conflict can also arise when a person lacks guiding principles. As a result, he or she struggles to decide whether to satisfy both desires and those of others.

Psychological conflict is often used by authors of literary work to built their story because the sciences of psychology and literature go hand in hand. The treatment of people and their responses, experiences, perceptions of the world, desires, fears, conflicts, and resolution; individual and societal concerns, using a variety of concepts, methods, and approaches, is closely related to the treatment of people in literature. Psychology is the science of mental life, including phenomena and their conditions... phenomena are sensations, desires, perceptions, reason, decisions, etc. (Ladd, 1887).

Movie directors often use psychological conflict in their movies to build their characters in their story. One of directors that reveals the psychological conflict of a person is Tim Burton in his movie entitled *Big Eyes*. This movie is based on the true story, Walter Keane, one of the most successful painter in 1950 until in the beginning of 1960. He got the success because taking credit for her wife's painting.

Big Eyes is a good and well-known movie. It was nominated in Oscar award in 2015. In the same year, this movie got five awards, namely Globe Award for Best Actress, Globe Award for Best Actor, BAFTA Award for a Leading Role, BAFTA Award for Best Production Design, and Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay. Those awards were achieved because of its quality. *Big Eyes* is a biography and drama movie. It tells us about psychological conflicts experienced a wife and her husband, Margaret, the main actress as a painter. Margaret had to struggle in hiding all of her husband's lying. Her dream actually is not like what her husband want. Then, other interesting psychological conflicts appear when she get many pressures from husband. This movie presents the main character having psychological conflicts during the story. The position of the main character is interesting when she can overcomes the problems she faces.

Big Eyes is a 2014 American biographical drama film directed by Tim Burton, written by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski, and starring Amy Adams and Christoph Waltz. It is about the relationship between American artist Margaret Keane and her second husband, Walter Keane, who, in the 1950s and 1960s, took credit for Margaret's phenomenally popular paintings of people with big eyes. The film had its world premiere in New York City on December 15, 2014, and was released in the U.S. by The Weinstein Company on December 25, 2014. It was met with generally favorable reviews, with particular praise given to the performances of Adams and Waltz and performed moderately well at the box office, grossing \$29 million worldwide against the budget of \$10 million.

In this case, the researcher chooses the movie entitled "*Big Eyes*" because the main character created by the author is a good model as wife. As a wife, woman exactly have to obey all of her husband wants but if his wants or his attitude are excessive, we must stop it. In this movie, Margaret do some actions well to overcome her psychological conflict. Sometimes the people who have psychological conflict cannot overcomes their problem because of many reasons, such as weak, afraid, unconfident, etc, will do an extreme action like ending their life if they give up. But it is not happen with Margaret, she does not give up to face her psychological conflict because she gets support from her child. From the explanation above, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the kinds and causes of psychological conflict faced by Margaret as the main character in "*Big Eyes*" movie?
2. How is Margaret's personality in facing her psychological conflict in *Big Eyes* movie based on psychoanalytic approach?
3. How do Margaret overcomes her psychological conflict in "*Big Eyes*" movie?

2. METHOD

This research belongs to descriptive research. According to Cresswell and Sogunro (2001), qualitative research is an interviewing approach that relies on creating a detailed and comprehensive word picture of the informant to comprehend social or human concerns. As a result, the researcher concludes that qualitative research involves briefly describing a real-world situation to corroborate the facts based on the note. The movie *Big Eyes* was the subject of the study. Tim Burton is the director of this film. Tim Burton's *Big Eyes* movie's script and image were two examples of the data of this study. The writer divided the data source into two categories: primary data and secondary data source. The primary data source of the study was the *Big Eyes* movie directed by Tim Burton. The secondary data source was another source related to the primary data source.

Data sources were details regarding the movie. The techniques used for gathering data include watching a movie several times until the author recognizes the information or data to be analyzed, reading the script, browsing the internet to find several information and articles related to the research, taking notes on the data, and taking images of essential parts, organizing the critical data related to the research and developing them into a pleasing unity, and drawing conclusions based on the data analysis.

When analyzing data, researchers employed descriptive qualitative methods. Data reduction, data display, and a conclusion were the three steps of technical qualitative data analysis based on the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data reduction means the process of selecting, identifying, classifying, and coding the data that are considered important (Marshukin, 2014). To do the research, researchers reduce data by selecting each action and utterance based on relevant theory. Subsequent is data display which is a compressed and organized collection of information from which to draw conclusions and

take a note (Marshukin, 2014). By doing the research, the researchers organize data in tables or charts to make research easier. The last step is conclusions. After processing the data, the researcher consults the research question formula to select, identify, and focus the data, and the result is data mapping. A researcher can conclude the display of data that a researcher has discovered after conducting a study.

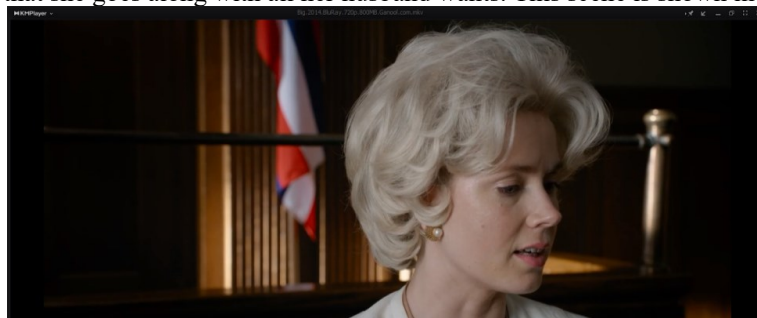
3. RESULT(S) AND DISCUSSION

The results are the answers for research problems. In analyzing *Big Eyes* movie, the writer classified it into three parts which appropriate with the research problem. The first, the writer analyzed the psychological conflict that are faced by Margaret. The second, the writer analyzed Margaret's personality in facing her psychological conflict in *Big Eyes* movie based on psychoanalytic theory. and the last the writer analyzed the action of Margaret to overcome her psychological conflict based on psychoanalytic theory

1. The kinds and the causes of psychological conflict that are faced by Margaret

a. Pressure

Margaret gets pressures from her husband (Walter) to not to tell anyone about the secret of big eyes painting. Her husband dominated her. Her husband will rave and rant if Margaret does not fulfil his wants so she lets him to take credit for the big eyes. She is scared because she does not have any choices so that she goes along with all her husband wants. This scene is shown in 01.30.08



The second pressure happened at the restaurant, it is shown in minutes 01.04.51. Here, Margaret always gets a treat from her husband, if she tells anyone about the truth, he will have taken out her.

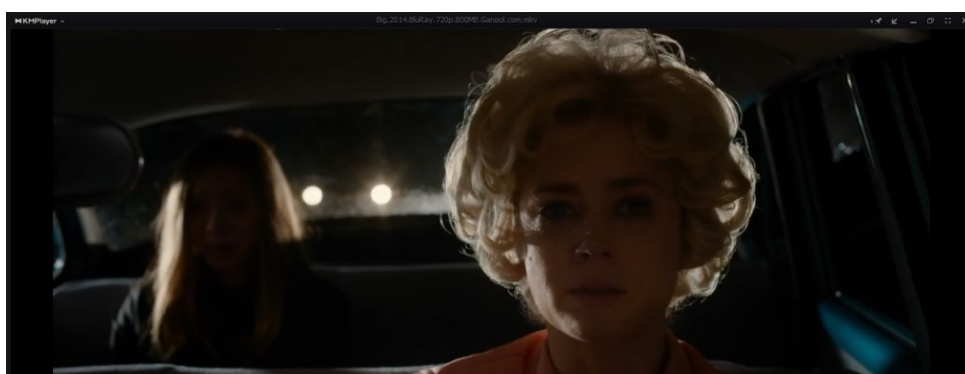
b. Unconfident

Margaret does not think rationally. In scene 01.30.34, it is shown that she feels unconfident with her arts, she just believes that people do not take woman's art seriously. So, her husband dominated her easily. She feels weak and cannot leave and support herself and her daughter. She just believes what her husband saying. He said that nobody would buy the big eyes painting without his personality.

2. The Way Margaret overcomes her psychological conflict in Big Eyes Movie

a. Margaret leaves her house and her husband.

She walks out with her daughter to Hawaii by car (minutes 01.17.14). She does it because she cannot tolerant anymore what her husband have done to her and her child. Margaret feels afraid to him, because he almost kills her and her child. Walter gets angry about what happen to him. He is in unconscious condition because he drinks alcohol. So, he cannot control his emotion.



b. Margaret divorced her husband

Margaret thinks that she must be separated with his husband. She has to stop that marriage. She feels anxiety about her husband will do another extreme action to her and her child if she still maintain the relationship. Margaret realizes that her husband just love himself not her and her daughter (scene 01.18.56)

c. Margaret tells the truth about her husband to Big Lolo, a a broadcaster at KHNA Radio in Hawaii.

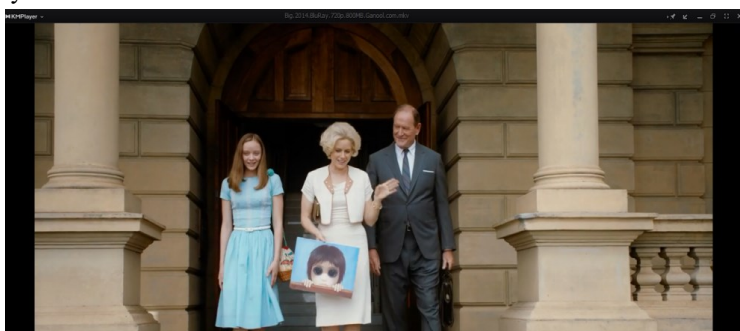
Margaret decides to declare the truth about her husband (Walter Keane). She tells three things to Big Lolo (shown in scene 01.23.20). The first, Margaret tells that her and her husband is no longer married. Second, she tells that Walter is not a painter. He has been taking credit for my painting for ten years. And last, she tells that she is the only painter in the family.

d. Margaret submits a suit to Walter Keane

At U.S Federal District Court Honolulu, Margaret struggle for her right. She wants to prove who is the real painter of Big Eyes children. She gives the real evidence to people in the federal court (scene 01.30.21). To clear this thing up, the judge asks to Margaret and Walter to paint on that moment. Margaret almost finished her art, but Walter did not do anything. And he just said that he was waiting for the inspiration coming to him.



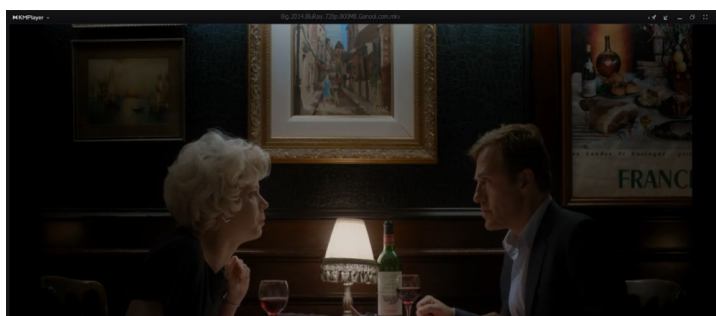
Finally, the jury found in favor of Margaret Keane on all points. She wins on charges of defamation, emotional distress and damaged reputation. In another side, Walter Keane just pretends getting sick with his shoulder so he does not paint anything on his canvas. It explains clearly that he is not painter of big eyes children.



3. The Analysis personality of Margaret in facing her psychological conflict in Big Eyes Movie

In *Big Eyes* movie, Margaret's first *id* can be shown when she hides all of the truths about big eyes painting. She keeps silence to cover all of her husband mistakes because actually her family needs the money from the result of painting to fulfill the necessities. She does not tell anyone that big eyes painting is not her husband's work.

Margaret's second *id* can be shown when she says that she lets her husband killed her. Her *id* considers that dying is better than alive under pressure. All of the pressures that are given by her husband is so hard for Margaret. She does not have any friends and even she has lied her child because of him (scene 01.05.01).



Margaret's ego can be seen when she get confuse between defending the marriage with her husband then get pressured everyday by him or getting threats then leave him. And then her ego decides to leave him. Margaret walks out from the house with her child and they decide to live in Hawaii (shown in 01.15.01). While, Margaret's superego can be seen when she decides to tells the truth about her husband to the world that all big eyes paintings are not his works (scene 01.23.26). He is just taking credit for it for ten years and he is also not a painter. Her superego considers that dishonesty is not good to do and it also has broken her believe. So, she decides to be brave for telling all the truths about her husband and big eyes painting to the world and fight for it in the court.

Based on the results above, the psychological conflict reflected by Margaret as the main character were not easy to be faced by her. As long as she married with her husband, she gets many pressures from her husband. So, everyday she faced many struggles in her life. First, Margaret lied her daughter. So, Margaret feels guilty because she never did it before. Second, Margaret feels uncomfortable with the situation when she is just spending the time at her painting room to fulfill her husband wants. She paints all day, so she cannot spend time together with her daughter. Third, Margaret feels sad because she actually wants her paint or work can be known by other people. But it is impossible to do because her husband of course will not support her. She just wants to show proudly her painting when people ask her "which one is yours". The last, actually Margaret feels regret about the situation that happen to her. Even, she also already has hated herself, because she lets her husband to take credit for big eyes. Margaret paints the big eyes because she gets inspiration from her child and she paint it with her emotional feeling. So, it likes losing her child when her husband takes it from her. Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found the types and impact of psychological conflict that was experienced by the main character. Then the researcher compared the result of the research that has been found of this research to both previous studies found in "a psychological analysis of the main charact

Commonly, both of them discussed the psychological conflict that occurred to the main character. The first previous study shows factors caused by internal (psychological) and external conflict of the main character while the second previous study found types of bullying and impacts of bullying. The main difference between both this research and the second previous study is that this research analyzes psychological conflict that occurs in victims of piracy hostage while the second previous study analyzes psychological conflict that occurs in victims of bullying.

Psychology is a discipline that learns about the behavior of humans, both individually and concerning their environment. Here, the behavior is the personality that is visible or invisible, whether conscious or unconscious. On the other side, psychology is a study of human behavior that was applied in analyzing the personalities of humans or the personalities of characters involved in the movie. In the literature, most writers use psychological analysis to analyze a person's character or writer or the paper that is related to psychoanalytic. Analyzing text, psychoanalytic theory can be used to interpret the hidden meaning in the text, or to better understand the writer's intent (Lye in Nolen & Arianto, 2020). (McLeod, 2019). He divided the aspect of psychologist into three level; id, ego and superego.

Literary psychology is a multi-discipline that consists of literature and psychology. Literary psychology focuses attention on issues related to the psychological elements of fictional characters in literary works. These human aspects are the main subject of literary psychology because psychological aspects exist in people. Literature and psychology have a very strong relationship in that they both deal with people and their reactions, perceptions of the world, unhappiness, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts, and reconciliation, and they touch individuals and society through methods and approaches to different concepts. Literature becomes an interesting study material that involves the characterization/personality of characters, writers of literary works, and readers. Thus, that is the main cause of the birth of new science known as literary psychology. Literary works benefit from the psychology related to success, expressing its atmosphere, and bringing readers into the psychological dimension of human reality. Psychological and literary research focuses on fantasy, emotion,

and the human soul. The purpose of literary psychology is of course to understand the psychological aspects of literary works.

The movie is one of the most literary works. The movie is a very important mass communication medium to communicate a reality, one of which tells about the reality of society. A movie is a synthesis of social, psychological, and aesthetic phenomena, and is a document composed of stories, images, text, and music. Make movies in a multi-dimensional and complex way. Literary work is a form of appreciation created with high artistic value. According to (Wellek & Warren, 1954) literary works are included in works formed from imagination.

The characters in the film are related to people's psychology. Many factors affect human psychology. These are personal factors in personal factors and situational factors. Psychology comes from the individual, including biological and psychological partners. In terms of situational factors, psychology comes from outside the individual, including society, culture, time, technology, etc. (Rakhmat in Fitriani, 2019). In a literary work, the character is an important role to build the story (McLaughlin, 1989). The main character is a character who has a big part in a story, almost the whole story is filled by the main character (Sayuti, 2000). According to (Nurgiyantoro, 2007) characters in a story can be distinguished based on their role in a story, character appearance, and character.

The plot is one of the intrinsic elements in literary work. The plot is built from the important events in a particular story (Dibell, 1988). Throughout a plot not only when and where the events in the story happen, we can know, but also what kinds of the atmosphere the events in the story. In other words, we can say that the plot is a series of events in a story. In most stories, these events are caused by conflicts experienced by the main character. Talking about the plot means we are talking about the actions or events that are usually resolved at the end of a story that can be a happy or sad ending.

The people in this life have to interact with each other as a consequence of being a civilized and multi-motivated organism (Moskowitz in Lubis, 2018). Conflict is one of the most important elements in the story. We can say that the conflict is the heart of the story, without conflict the story does not have energy. Conflict occurs because of differences in thought or ideas and it makes stories interesting to read (in Purnami, Sosiowati, & Darmasetyawan, 2016).

Conflict frequently associated with fighting, quarrels, and wars means that the conflict occurs among more than one person and can come from a group or country. However, conflict can also happen to a person, called internal conflict or inner conflict, or psychological conflict. A psychological conflict is a conflict that arises when people make difficult decisions. Sometimes, as human beings, we are bound to face situations in life, and we must decide whether this is an easy decision or a difficult decision. That is caused by considerations that can lead to the appearance of the inner conflict of the individual itself which then triggers the appearance of psychological conflict. Conflict is a turning point in which a person has had trouble achieving a certain psychological quality. Sometimes it refers to a psychosocial crisis, this can be a moment of vulnerability and strength since people work towards success and failure (Hidayat, 2016). Based on the state, the researcher can say that psychological conflicts are of internal importance not only of neurosis, but also to psychosomatic diseases, sexual deviation, and functional psychosis

The conflict is divided into four types, there are (1) approach-approach conflict, which occurs when an individual is presented with two undesirable alternatives, (2) avoidance-avoidance conflict which occurs when an individual is presented with two undesirable alternatives, and (3) approach-avoidance conflict which occurs when an individual presented with two undesirable and desirable alternatives at the same time (Kurt Lewin in Pratami, Johan, & Purwaningsih, 2016). Based on the state above, psychological conflict divided into three kinds, there are: The approach-approach conflict. This way occurs when an individual is presented with two desirable alternatives, that only one alternative can be acquired. Undesirable alternatives are termed positive aims. In other words, two powers are encouraged in the opposite direction, as in the example of people who are faced with two choices that are equally liked. The avoidance-avoidance conflict. This happens when a person wants to get away from or avoid two unwanted alternatives. Undesirable alternatives are termed negative aims. In other words, two powers are obstructing the opposite direction as the example people who faced with two choices that are equally disliked. The approach-avoidance conflict. This happens when a person sees the same goal in both a positive and negative sense. In other words, two powers encourage and obstruct that occur from one goal, for example, people who are faced with choices at the same time contain elements that they like and do not like.

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, it could be concluded that psychological conflict is something that often happen in human life. Psychological conflict can influence the person's behavior. Psychological conflict can happen when someone chooses the wrong thing in life, so it makes he or she can not face his or her life peacefully. It

is because he or she feel guilty, sad, uncomfortable, unfree, etc. The main character, Margaret, is one of the example of someone who faced psychological conflict because she chooses the wrong choice. So, she always feels uncomfortable, sad, and guilty in her life. The kinds of the Margaret's psychological conflict are pressure and unconfident. She gets the pressure from her husband (Walter). Her husband gives her some threats to not to tell anyone about the truth of big eyes paintings. And she feels unconfident to fight her husband so she can not do anything beside fulfill her husband wants. The writer just find two causes of the psychological conflict that faced Margaret because both have a big influence in the main character behavior.

Many struggles happen to Margaret but she can overcomes all her problems. These are the way she overcomes it, firstly, she leaves her husband and divorced him. Second, she tells the truth to all people and the last, she submits a suit to her husband. And finally, she wins on charges of defamation, emotional distress and damaged reputation. Based on psychoanalytic theory, psychological conflict happen because id, ego, and superego work unbalanced but in the end of the story, Margaret's superego can do its work to resolve Margaret's psychological conflict with telling all the truths. Margaret's superego consider that she has done the wrong thing with keeping silence about the truth and all her husband attitude is included into crime. So, it is not appropriate with norms anymore.

From Margaret experiences, there are some benefits to take. As a human, he or she should always be honest in everything. Saying the truth is always bring happiness and it makes his or her life peaceful and also avoided from guilty feeling. Beside that as a human, he or she should be brave to tells the truth even in difficult situations. When there is something wrong, do not cover it but show it. The last benefit, as human especially for an artist should be confident with her or his arts. Becoming different one does not mean his or her art is bad. It probably make her or his art is an unique one. No one can know the other's future. As long as if someone always try and do a new thing, it exactly can produce something. Do not let anyone to take credit for someone else arts. The ability of Margaret as an unique painter leads her becomes a good model as a painter.

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