

Conference Paper

Main Characters' Conflict in Mishaal Bint Fahd's Film *Death of a Princess*

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Abstract

This research is analyzing the main characters' conflict in Mishaal Bint Fahd's film "Death of a Princess". The objectives of the study are to describe the kinds of conflict found in the "Death of a Princess' Film" and to state the kinds of conflict described in the "Death of a Princess'Film". One of the theories of conflict is proposed by Nurgiyantoro (2010) stating that main characters' conflict' are used to clarify meaning, to provide vivid example, to emphasize, to stimulate associations and emotions, to give life to inanimate objects, to amuse, or to ornament. The study is conducted by means of descriptive qualitative method proposed by Moleong (2013) suggesting that such a method is appropriately done to investigate social phenomena as found in the film. The results show that there are two kinds of conflicts faced by the main characters: external conflict and internal conflict. Conflict between the protagonist and others characters, conflict between the protagonist and society and conflict between the protagonist and culture are the ones included in the external conflict; while self-sacrifice for her love, love and affection, and faithfulness are included in the internal one.

Keywords: conflict, society, culture

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1. Introduction

The writer wants to analyze a documentary film, *Death of a Princess* written and directed by Antony Thomas. *Death of a Princess* is a British 1980 drama documentary produced by ATV in cooperation with WGBH in the United States. The drama is based on the true story of Princess Misha'al, a young Saudi Arabian princess and her lover who had been publicly executed for adultery. There are positive and negative aspects in the story. The positive aspect of this story is Saudi Arabia still uses some aspects of their religion to make the regulation for their country that is Islam. Religion is the most important thing for them. They are willing to do anything for religion's sake. But the negative aspect of this story is, even they say that the regulation made is based on

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religion but some other regulations are made based on politics' sake. Some of them used religion just to make women under controlled of the men. In the theory they said women could do anything but the reality was different.

The story does not just tell about love and conflict but it also tells about Saudi Arabia's cultures, regulation, and women's role in that country. From these aspects, it can be found some good and bad moral values in that story that the writer can describe in life portrayed and also the gender differences in Saudi Arabia. In this story the writerr found that their regulation is still bad and it will influence to the character of the men of Saudi Arabia especially the way the men treats the women. They will underestimate women and still follow the culture that women just stay at home and raise the children. From this story, it is seen that the way of thinking of Arabian is still conservative. They are not fair with women.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conflict

Conflict in the story especially in the film is very important because without conflict the film does not live and the way of the story in the film is felt static. Moskowitz (1969: 50) states that people in this life must interact with each other as the consequences of being the civilized and multi motivated organism. In line with the interaction between people, then, Kenney (1966: 334) describes that people usually faces a conflict. It is a situation when two or more incompatible needs, goals, or courses of action compete, causing the organism to feel pulled in different directions with an attending sense of discomfort.

Furthermore, Kenney (1966: 32) adds that related to Personal Awareness, a person with a conflict is not directly blocked from the chosen goal, but must choose among alternative goals. Moreover, Kenney (1966:71) explains that some outside factors, as people, childhood, the situation out of the organism, that are causing the conflict are stated by Freud (as cited by Ruch: 1967:21) that man's emotional problems are products of an inevitable internal conflict between his instincts and the censoring action of the ego and superego.

2.2. Outer conflict

Outer conflict indicates conflicts affecting two or more parties in the physical world (Nurgiyantoro, 1990: 122). Outer conflict is the conflict between two persons or group,

in one of which the hero is the kind person. Outer conflict may also place between a person and force beyond that person. The outer conflict is always won by the end the opposite group is always the loser.

The outer conflict is mostly found in the Greek and modern tragedy. In Greek tragedies, the heroes like unequal battles with the faith and destiny that drives them relentlessly on to their fate. Outer conflicts are those obstacles that prevent a character from achieving an outer goal. In modern tragedy, the heroes fight for the hopelessness, the battles with the society like its age old customs, convention and rules.

According to Nurgiyantoro (1990: 121) outer conflict can be divided into:

2.2.1. The conflict between character and others characters

This type is the most obvious form of conflict. It is when a character in a book struggles with another character in the book. This can be in the form of arguments, conflicting desires, opposing goals, physical confrontation or emotional dilemmas.

2.2.2. The conflict between character and society

When the character is repressed by society and not by a specific character, the conflict takes place between that character and society. One example of conflict between society and the main character is *Frankenstein*, in which the monster has no respite from the judgment and horror expressed by all of society, leaving him loveless and despondent. Sometimes conflict between character and society is reflected through literary metaphor, as in *Animal Farm*. The main conflict in this story is between the exploited classes and the segment of society that exploits the main characters.

2.2.3. The conflict between character and nature

Sometimes all the characters in the book are good guys and the conflict in the book is between all the people and forces of nature that are out of the character's control. For example, in the stand and andromeda strain, people are pitted against viruses that rage out of control, wiping out large portion of the population.

Character struggling internally with him/herself.

This type of conflict usually called as internal conflict or inner conflict. When a character struggles with moral dilemmas, emotional challenges or desire he or she deems unsavory, the conflict is with the character's own soul or conscience. In crime

and punishment, the main character struggles with his inability to forgive himself. Just because conflict is internal does not make the conflict any less compelling or exciting.

As stated above, the researcher recognizes that external conflict may be classified into three groups, they are: conflict between man versus man, conflict between a man versus his environment or social force (community, school, church, workable, society, etc.) and conflict between man and God. However, the conflict between characters and other characters appear with their own images and attitudes which may lead them into a conflict. Many popular fictions are based on this conflict.

The conflict between character and society is in which a character's, or group of main character's: main source of conflict is social traditions or concepts. It is a struggle between man and social value in his society. In this kind of conflict, the character can come into conflict with the moral principles of society such as traditions, customs, laws, moral codes and accepted beliefs. A struggle against society occurs when a character is at odds with a particular social force or condition produced by society, such as poverty, political revolution, a social convention or set of values.

The conflict between character and nature place is a character against forces of nature and also means a character has from himself separated from nature. It is also strong about struggling for survival in remote locales. In this case the character faces a problem with some force of nature such as cold, storm, radiation. The world seems to be outside, and people seem to be strangers in this world. The world is not going to be reconciled, if they are not going to obey it laws. Because of a conflict of our individuality with the universal nature, people suffer various pains hunger and thirst, heat and cold and death. The conflict between character struggling internally with him/herself. In this case, the character faces a problem with a force such as worry, angry, or confused.

2.3. Internal conflict

According to Nurgiyantoro (1990: 122), internal conflict is a struggle between competing elements within the character, aspect of his/her personality may struggle for dominance. These aspects may be emotional, intellectual and moral. For example: an "emotional" conflict would occur if the protagonist chooses an unworthy lover over someone who is devoted. An "intellectual" conflict could entail accepting or rejecting one's religion. A "moral" conflict might pose a choice between honoring family or country. Such conflict typically leaves the character indecisive and agitated. When such conflicts are resolved, the resolution may be successful or unsuccessful.

3. Research Method

Research design is a way how the writer conducts his research. Research itself as any form of systematic and arranged investigation to organize facts or gather data, and is often related to a problem that has to be solved. Moleong (1999: 64) states a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. This research utilizes a qualitative approach to analyze the data. This research also takes content analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 213); to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within a text or sets of text to discuss certain data. It is used to quantify and describe Main Characters' conflict.

4. Discussion

4.1. External conflict

4.1.1. Conflict between the Protagonist and others Characters

This is the most common story conflict. Conflict may arise in every kind of relationship, from friction between a character and their overbearing parent to conflicts between protagonist character and the others.

Death of a Princess told the story of a young Saudi princess who was publicly executed for committing adultery. She forgot who she was— a royal princess, a married woman. (Thomas, 1988: 1)

From the above quotation, it is clear that there is contradiction between Mishal (as a granddaughter of Muhammad bin Abdulaziz, who was an older brother of King Khalid) with the parents. Mishal has boy friend (Mulhallal) as a nephew of Ali Hassan al-Shaer, the Saudi ambassador. She is executed because she has loved a man out of the family and on the other side her parents have prepared her partner who has the same level with their family, a royal prince. This shows that the protagonist has got conflict with her own family, as she chooses a man of her own choice. Surely a conflict arises as she is stated to be a bad kid, standing against her own family especially her parent and such an act is a disgraceful thing among the royal families.

4.1.2. Conflict between the protagonist and society

The values and customs by which everyone else lives are being challenged. The character may come to an untimely end as a result of his or her own convictions. The character may, on the other hand, bring others around to a sympathetic point of view, or it may be decided that society is right after all.

Here, in this film the kingdom of Saudi Arabia faces problems indirectly with the society because one of kingdom family has done adultery (Mishal with Mulhallal). It makes her family becomes shameful and it must be given responsibility for the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He thought she had besmirched his honor publicly. He had to prove to everyone that he was still [Arabic], the fearless one, that he had the balls to take away the life of his favorite granddaughter in order to save the image of his honor publicly. (Thomas, 1988: 17)

The above quotation shows that her grandfather makes a shame by the action of Mishal, but the law must be done although she is a royal family in Saudi Arabia. He wants to prove and show to public whoever does the adultery in his country, will get the heavy punishment. He wants the law of Islam to be realized for every mistake done by the society.

Saudi Arabia is one of the religious countries in this world. It means that every mistake done by the society, should be rewarded by punishment according to the law of Islam.

4.1.3. Conflict between the protagonist and culture

This external conflict exists when characters struggles against the behavioral of their culture and government.

The researcher finds conflicts between protagonist and culture in Saudi Arabia, although according to the researcher their culture is not fair for the women. Saudi Arabia is a deeply religious country, conservative,, and family oriented. Many attitudes and traditions are centuries-old, derived from Arab civilization. There are many limitations on behaviour and dress strictly enforced both legally and socially, often more so than in other Muslim countries.

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited, for example, and there is no theatre or public exhibition of films. Saudi Arabia is the "only modern Muslim state to have been created

by jihad, the only one to claim the Quran as its constitution”, and the only Arab-Muslim country to have escaped European imperialism.

There are some regulations and cultures that have been defined in this film; the differences of men and women and how they treat women in their country and the role of women in that country.

“I can feel why she did this. As a Palestinian, when I was deprived of all these things, of my homeland, of everything that belonged to me, I had the feeling of revolt. I wanted to expressed it. In the first place, I thought somebody would listen to me, but there was no way. I tried over the years to make sometimes that I was going to explode. So and I am sure she came to that point herself. She had no other expression, except to die.” (Thomas, 1988: 15)

From quotation above, the researcher concludes that Saudi Arabia is still not fair with women. They still make limitations for women. Arabian women cannot express their true feelings and thoughts. It is not a good attitude. Every person has the right to express their thought, regardless of men or women. Human being has the same right in this world. Arabia is really conservative country. They say it is their cultures and regulations; it is how their religion teaches them. Women are always under men’s command. But from my perception even men’s level are on the women, women have right to live as they want.

“What do you know about the husband?

The type who’d like his wife to stay at home and raise many, many children. That wasn’t her kind of life, so she refused to live as his wife.” (Thomas, 1988: 16)

The quotation above tells about the princess Misha’al’s husband. From the quotation, the researcher concludes that Saudi Arabia is still a conservative country. They still believe that women have to stay at home and raise the children. No work, no travelling, and just stay at home. But it is so different from the princess opinion. She is wild and loves freedom. It is hard for her to live like her husband’s demand.

From the researcher’s point of view, it is a bad culture and will be affected to morality. Women have to do whatever they want. They have to go out, meet people and talk with them, find some news, be creative, and etc. But being caged up like that, is just the way to limit their move and space.

4.2. Internal conflict

4.2.1. Self-sacrifice for her love

Self-sacrifice is also called self-denial and self-abnegation. Referring to altruistic abstinence, self-sacrifice is the willingness to forgo personal pleasures or undergo personal trials in the pursuit of the increased good of another. According to Atkinson, (1985:68), self-sacrifice is the act of giving something that you want to have or keep in order to help someone else. Other meanings of self-sacrifice is sacrificing one's interests, desires, etc as for duty or the good of another. Various religions and cultures take differing views of self-sacrifice, some considering it a positive trait and others considering it a negative one.

In *Death of a Princess*, there is a princess who has done self-sacrifice. This film tells about a true love of Arabian Princess, Princess Misha'al. She and her lover have been publicly executed for adultery. She does self-sacrifice for the greatest thing of her life, it is love. She is fiery-tempered, a bit wild, brave with a free soul and cheerfulness.

"Now, the only other way that the accused can be condemned is out of her own mouth, by saying three times in front of a court of law, "I have committed adultery." Three times.

Well, that girl stood before the court. She was asked and she said, "I have committed adultery." Well, immediately the king stopped the proceedings. He loved her. He summoned her to his private rooms. "Do you realize that if you admit your guilt for a second and a third time, I can't save you, your grandfather can't save you. Go back. You only have to say one thing, that you will never see this boy again. Please."

Well, she went back to that court and she said, "I have committed adultery. I have committed adultery." Three times. In five seconds, she had condemned herself and the boy." (Thomas, 1988: 5)

By the quotation above, it can be seen how much she loves that boy. She is willing to sacrifice her life by saying "I have committed adultery" three times. As it knows, if she denies all the accusations she will be saved. But her love is deeper rather than her willingness to live. She chooses to die with her feeling rather than live but denies the truth that she really loves that boy.

She does not want to live without that boy and she cannot imagine how that boy's life will be if she saves her life. That is why she does this sacrifice because she knows even she denies it, her life will be numb. She knows they will control her and limit

her freedom and it is not life if she cannot do anything that make her happy. This is a very brave action. She does not care what would happen next and she just follows her feeling.

The character of Princess Misha'al teaches us about a good moral. She shows us that true love still exists in this whole wide world. It does not have to follow all the regulations if they think they are right. Loving someone is not a mistake. Everyone has chance to express their feeling. By analyzing Princess Misha'al character, the researcher also knows that she is really brave. She is willing to sacrifice her life just because of a boy. She bravely opposes all the Arab Saudi's regulations. This self-sacrifice is done for the certain purpose. No matter what will happen next, if it is right, a person does not ever doubt to oppose it even it needs to sacrifice life.

4.2.2. Love and affection

Love is described as an abstract thing found in every man and woman's life (Atkinson, 1985:90). It cannot be separated from human life. Love has been old already and even historians do not know how long it will live. In other words, those who have great feelings of love actively perform everything they can in order to realize love. If you love someone, you must have a very strong feeling of affection towards them and feel romantically attracted to them and they are very important to you. You must feel their happiness is very important to you and usually show this feeling in the way you have towards them.

When two people get to know each other well, they begin to understand one another better than ever before. They may love deeply for one another and each one cherishes and protects the other. The experience of these feelings is indication of love. So from the explanation above the researcher finds that this love and affection is found in Princess Misha'al's character. In this film, she shows how much she is in love with her lover even she is a married woman. She knows that it is not right to love another man but she still does it because she cannot control her feelings toward that boy.

"Well, she saw him here on television. He was playing a guitar, and that was fantastic to her. It just took her. So she sent to him a note through her chauffeur, telling him that an important letter was waiting for him in a boutique. It's an old trick, but he wasn't a prince or someone accustomed to these sort of games, just an ordinary boy, a student at the university. And there she was, a royal princess." (Thomas, 1988: 28)

From the quotation above the researcher concludes that this is love for the first sight. She is brave to approach that boy first by sending him the note through her chauffeur. She shows how much love and affection she has for that boy even she knows that there are always consequences of what she does. It shows how big her love and affection for that boy.

She does not care the status of that boy and just gives all her life and feelings towards the boy she has just met. No matter what will happen in future, she will face it together with that boy. As we know it is difficult to find someone like her in this world. Almost just one percent of that kind of person who wants to sacrifice life just because of love. But from the the religion's side it is not a good moral. Actually, it is bad behavior.

4.2.3. Faithfulness

Faithfulness is the concept of unfailingly remaining loyal to someone or something and putting that loyalty into consistent practice, regardless of extenuating circumstances. It could also mean keeping to one's promises no matter what the prevailing circumstances are. Literally, it is the state of being full of faith in the somewhat archaic sense of steady devotion to a person, thing or concept.

From this explanation above about faithfulness, the researcher decides that Elsa Gruber has this personality in hers. Elsa Gruber is employed as a nanny by the princess's grandfather for 18 months. She comes from London and works in Arabia. There she meets the princess, the cheerful and a bit wild princess. They become intimate and share about anything often. They are just like sisters. One day, Christopher comes to Elsa's apartment to find the facts. She has warned him not to be curious about this story because it is too dangerous.

"You tell your story and I'll tell mine. Then we'll see who's the prize idiot. I've already told you too much. You just tell your people to get off their backsides and work on that contract.

I had a rotten damned family. That was the first family I ever had. I was treated like a queen down there-looked after, provided for, taken round the world. What more do you want? I adore the way I've been treated, and that's what I'm going to write about in my book. My book is not going to be about the princess. She's just there to get attention." (Thomas, 1988: 12)

The quotation shows how faithful Elsa is. No matter what happen she would not talk anything that will give a shame on princess's family. They just like a family to Elsa. She

appreciates how they treat her when she is in Arabia. It is a good moral. She teaches us how to return the favor; no matter who they are, no matter what the social statuses, no matter what education they have reached. If they ever help us we should not ever forget their kindness. We have to return the favor from the deep of our heart. And if we think we can help them more than what they have done for us, we have to do it. We should not doubt to do good.

5. Conclusions

After analyzing the conflict faced by Mishal the protagonist in the “*Death of a Princess*” film, it can be concluded that this film does not just show us about the conflict but also the cultures and regulations in Saudi Arabia. This film is really interesting. It tells about women’s role and privilege in that country. Besides, it also tells about the power of love of Princess Misha’al who is brave to sacrifice her life for the one who she loves. This documentary film tells about public execution done for a certain interest.

The conflicts found in this film, are the external conflicts: conflicts between the protagonist with other characters, with the society and with the culture, whereas the the internal conflicts are self sacrifice, love and affection and faithfulness. Most of the characters give a positive effect for our life, that is how to be a positive human being in this whole wide world. It shows us that to be positive is our choice. If the one wants to be a good person he will good.

Then it is also exposed from the film, in matters of morality, that every human being has the same right in this world. Culture and regulation are not made to endanger people; instead through culture and regulation, the welfare of the people should be uplifted.

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