

RADICAL FEMINIST STRUGGLES AS SEEN IN NICOLE OF

A MARRIAGE STORY AND SIMIN OF A SEPARATION

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor

Degree in English Literature



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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Atas pertimbangannya, saya ucapkan terima kasih

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“Stay being humans

Understand humans

and Humanise humans”

-KH. A. Mustofa Bisri-



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DEDICATION

This graduating paper is dedicated to my beloved parents and sister.

My dearest people who support and trust me.

And all the readers.



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better improvement. I hope this graduating paper may be useful to other researchers interested in this topic.

Wassalamualaikum Wr. Wb.

Yogyakarta, 15 March 2022

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By: Tsuqaefah Sofyan Tsaubak

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to find out the similarities and the differences in the act of self-awareness in the *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movie. This research focuses on the female characters, Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A separation* movie. Nicole and Simin have something in common: both of them are fully aware of the actions in response to the oppression and tyranny they have experienced. Both of them choose the path of divorce as a form of their act of self-awareness. However, because *Marriage Story* is an American movie, and *A Separation* is an Iranian movie, they both deal with their divorces in different ways. *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* are both movies depicting divorce in family life as a result of tyranny and injustice by spouses; the female protagonists in both movies divorce in order to attain women's emancipation. The radical feminist theory of Rosemary Tong is used by the researcher to analyze Nicole and Simin's self-awareness. This theory exists because knowledge of women's oppression empowers it. The theory of radical feminism focuses on increasing women's self-awareness of their oppression. In addition, the researcher uses comparative literature theory to analyze the similarities and differences between the *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movie. This research uses the descriptive qualitative method. The result of this research shows that female characters in both movies are struggling to achieve women's emancipation by choosing the path of divorce.

Keywords: *divorce, radical feminism, self-consciousness, women's struggle*

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Oleh: Tsuqaefah Sofyan Tsaubak

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan persamaan dan perbedaan tindakan kesadaran diri pada film *Marriage Story* dan *A Separation*. Penelitian ini berfokus kepada karakter wanita Nicole dalam *Marriage Story*, dan Simin dalam *A Separation*. Nicole dan Simin memiliki persamaan dalam melakukan tindak kesadaran diri atas opresi dan ketidakadilan yang dialaminya. Keduanya sama-sama memilih jalan perceraian sebagai bentuk tindak kesadaran diri mereka. Tetapi keduanya memiliki cara perjuangan yang berbeda dalam perceraian karena *Marriage Story* adalah film yang berasal dari Amerika sedangkan *A Separation* adalah film yang berasal dari Iran. *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* merupakan film yang menceritakan tentang perceraian dalam kehidupan rumah tangga karena adanya opresi dan ketidakadilan yang dilakukan oleh para suami, tokoh perempuan dalam kedua film tersebut melakukan perceraian untuk mencapai pembebasan perempuan. Peneliti menganalisis kesadaran diri pada Nicole dan Simin menggunakan teori feminis radikal oleh Rosemary Tong teori ini ada karena diberdayakan oleh kesadaran akan penindasan perempuan. Teori feminisme radikal merupakan teori yang fokus pada membangun kesadaran diri wanita akan penindasan wanita. Peneliti juga menggunakan teori sastra banding untuk melihat persamaan dan perbedaan dalam film *Marriage Story* dan *A Separation*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil analisis dari kedua film tersebut adalah karakter Nicole dalam film *Marriage Story* dan Simin dalam film *A Separation* berjuang untuk menuju pembebasan perempuan dengan memilih jalan perceraian.

Kata kunci: *feminisme radikal, kesadaran diri, perceraian, perjuangan perempuan.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Divorce is usually caused by conflicts that appear in the domestic life, a husband and a wife choose their divorce way as a solution to their problems in their domestic life that cannot be dealt with anymore. There is also a husband or wife who chooses divorce as a form of self-liberation because during their marriage the wife or husband always gets oppression in any form from another party. As happened to Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation*, they choose to divorce as a form of their awareness because of the oppression that their husband did. Simin is an Iranian woman and Nicole is an American woman, they went through different divorce procedures.

In this research, the researcher chooses *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies as the object of this analysis because there are the injustice and oppression experienced by the main female character in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. Nicole, the woman's character in the *Marriage Story* demands a divorce from her husband because she is cheated by her husband, Charlie and she realizes that her life is always controlled by her husband Charlie. *Marriage Story* is an American movie that was released in 2019 and directed by Noah Baumbach. *Marriage story* tells about divorce in Charlie's and Nicole's domestic life. The background of *Marriage Story* is in Los Angeles and New York, but Nicole demands a divorce from her husband in Los Angeles. While *A Separation* is an Iranian movie that was

released in 2011 and directed by Asghar Farhadi. *A Separation* tells about divorce in Nader's and Simin's domestic life. The woman's character in *A Separation*, Simin, divorces her husband because she is aware that her husband treats her unfairly and she is worried about her daughter. At first, Simin's request for divorce is rejected by the court, even her husband, Nader agrees to the divorce, because according to the judge Simin's reason for divorce is just a small problem. Simin and Nader want to move abroad for Termeh's future, they want the best environment for her daughter, but Nader cancels it with the reasons that he has to take care of his father who has an Alzheimer disease, but Nader's father is used to being taken care of by Simin. The second divorce is filed by Simin because she is worried about her daughter who has suffered because of Nader. That is why Simin divorces Nader so she can separate from Nader and take care of her daughter, Termeh. *A Separation*, a movie taken in Iran is about the domestic life in Iran. The women's characters in both movies are facing and solving problems in their domestic lives. They are aware of the oppression that their husbands do, so they struggle to get their rights.

In relation to feminism, Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation* struggle for divorce upon the men's oppression are categorized as radical feminism. Radical feminism introduces and announces the women about self-consciousness (Tong, 2009:48), self-consciousness means raising the awareness of the women. Radical feminism exists because it is empowered by the awareness of the woman that has been oppressed. In the words of Tong, women's oppression is more crucial than other human oppression, furthermore, the man controls all over women's life,

including women's identity, women's regard, women's rights, It has to be eliminated (Tong, 2009:49). Radical feminism activists have called themselves revolutionaries instead of reformers because they want to fix the woman's condition by changing the social system by eliminating male supremacy in all contexts. Patriarchy must be overthrown on the way to the liberation of women, not only in political and legal structures but also in social, cultural, religious, and family contexts (Tong, 2009:2).

What have Nicole and Simin done belong to radical feminism. It can be shown in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies, Nicole and Simin struggle to break out from the supremacy that their husbands do because they are aware of the oppressions that their husbands do. Nicole and Simin are the women who do not depend on their husbands, they can take care and provide for themselves. That is why they choose divorce as their awareness. Those movies have different backgrounds, by comparing both of those movies using comparative theory one can find the similarities and differences in the oppression and struggle that have been done in Nicole and Simin as characters.

The comparative theory is usually used to compare a literary works with one another. According to Rene Wellek, the relationship between two or more literary works is studied in the comparative literature (Wellek & Warren, 1949), comparative literature aims to see the differences and the similarities between two literary works and to find out the cultural diversity of literary works from one another because the literary works that being compared have to come from different countries. In the words of Endraswara, comparative literature is a study of

comparing literature works in a country with another country (Suwardi Endraswara, 2014). The aims of comparative literature are not to give the impression or judge that one side of the literary work is better than the other side because each literary work has its characteristics or styles depending on the background of the author, the background of the place, the culture, the history, and the circumstance, all of literature are seen as the equal and same level. Therefore, by comparing two literary works or more, one can understand the text and context in each literary work.

The reasons why the researcher chooses Nicole and Simin as characters in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* are because they have similar cases with different resolutions. The awareness that Nicole and Simin do, make them choose divorce as the way toward women's liberation. Further, those movies come from different countries, *Marriage Story* is an American movie while *A Separation* is an Iranian movie that shows a Moslem family. Therefore, Nicole and Simin must go through the different divorce processes.

1.2 Research Question

This research focuses on the characters of Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation*. Therefore, the researcher aims to discover the answers to the problem: "How are Nicole's and Simin's struggles for their divorces as their radical feminism action portrayed?"

1.3 Objective of Study

The objectives of the study in this research are to distinguish the similarities of the cases in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* with the different resolutions and find out how radical feminists form in Nicole and Simin as characters in the movies.

1.4 Significance of Study

The significances of this research are first, hopefully, this research can be understood by the readers about the women's awareness of radical feminism. Second, this research can be a reference for the other researchers who want to write and study radical feminism in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* or study radical feminism in other object analyses.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher has not found the research paper that discusses divorce in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* as an object. However, the researcher has found some researches that apply the same theory or a similar case about women's struggles.

The first is a graduating paper entitled Women's Struggle against Discrimination of Gender and Sexuality as Portrayed in The Genesis and Al-Mujadalah by Ali Jafar from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (2015). His paper discusses women's struggle to get their rights in marital relations in Genesis chapter 38 and the Quran chapter 58, it shows the main figures in Ali Jafar's research recognize that they felt oppressed and discriminated against by their husbands. He used radical feminist theory and Islamic feminist theory to analyze the object, it has

the same theory as this research which is radical feminism, but it has a different object from this research, the researcher uses the movie as an object of this research.

The second journal entitled *Women's Struggle Against Patriarchy: An Analysis of Radical Feminism Through Nadia Hasimi's A House Without Windows* was written by Naili Syiva Fauzia and Anik Rahayu from the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. Her journal was about the struggle of the women's characters in the novel *A House Without Windows* which begins with raising self-consciousness. Naili used the radical feminist theory to analyze her research.

The third review has the same theory as this research, the journal entitled *Radical Feminism in Eka Kurniawan's Novel Beauty is A Wound* was written by Thesya Widya and Asnani from Sumatera Utara Islamic University. This journal discussed women's oppression during Japanese colonialism in the novel *Beauty is A Wound*. Dewi Ayu the woman's character in the novel is forced to work in prostitution to have sex with Japanese soldiers. To analyze this novel, Thesya and Asnani used radical feminism theory.

The fourth review is a graduating paper entitled *Class Struggle as Seen in Black Panther and Sunan Kalijaga Movie (A Comparative Analysis)* by Irwan Febriyansah from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University 2016. His paper discusses class struggle as seen in the characters of KillMonger in *Black Panther* and Raden Mas Sahid in *Sunan Kalijaga* movies. Both characters have similarities in their motivation and their background and they have differences in their struggles. Raden Mas Sahid is struggling to get equality for the poor society, while

Killmonger is struggling to get equality for himself. This paper uses the comparative theory to see the similarities and differences. It has the same theory as this research which is a comparative theory, but with a different objects analysis.

This paper is different from the research above that analyzes novels and sacred texts using radical feminism theory, because this paper uses the movies as an object in analyzing radical feminism. Furthermore, the distinguishes this research from other researches is that the women's character in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies chooses the divorce way as a form of self-consciousness in radical feminism.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

The researcher uses radical feminism and movie theory to analyze the movies, and also comparative theory to see the similarities and differences in both movies, which aims to examine the depiction of radical feminism in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. This research will focus on the woman's characters in both movies because the researcher has found the realization of the woman's characters in both movies that they have already been oppressed by their husband.

1.6.1 Radical Feminism Theory

Radical feminism is a view of feminism, that proclaims achieving equal rights for women by eliminating male supremacy in all contexts is important. Patriarchy must be overthrown on the way to the liberation of women, not only in political and legal structures but also in social, cultural, religious, and family contexts (Tong, 2009:2). Thus, radical feminists do not believe or deny the systems

or structures in society related to women's oppression. However, changing the system that is related to women's oppression is very difficult. It has been interpreted by Alison Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg that the most difficult form of oppression to eliminate is women's oppression because it is often not to be realized by some women (Tong, 2009:49). Radical feminism exists because it is empowered by the awareness of women's oppression. To raise the self-consciousness about feminist thoughts among women, radical feminists do the consciousness-raising, they support women by sharing their individual experiences with other women, these experiences contain the oppressions that often occurs in their life. In the words of Tong, women's oppression is more crucial than other human oppression, furthermore, the man controls all over women's life, including women's identity, women's regard, women's rights is more crucial, it has to be eliminated (Tong, 2009:49).

Radical feminism also agrees that sexism is one of the deepest human oppressions. Radical feminism is divided into two parts, radical libertarian feminists and radical cultural feminists. They have different views on how to fight sexism. First, radical libertarian feminists claim that better women become androgynous; the person who personifies to be both feminine characteristics and masculine characteristics, so that they can lead their lives in their way because only having a feminine gender identity tends to limit the women. Feminine gender identity tends to limit the women's evolution to become fully human persons (Tong, 2009:50). Second is radical cultural feminists, who claim that better women become fully female or feminine, they should be proud to become strictly feminine with

their nature. Radical cultural feminists say, women should be proud to show the forms of values and virtues and their nature that are culturally related to women (sharing, peace, life, interdependence, joy, trust, absence of hierarchy, and emotion), and the women should try to become the men (Tong, 2009:50).

1.6.2 Comparative Theory

Comparative literature theory is done by taking two literary works or more. According to Endraswara, comparative literature attempts to connect one literary work to another, how the influence between two literary works, and what can be taken and what is given in literary works (Endraswara, 2014:2). There are several perspectives in analyzing comparative literature, it aims to find the goals in analyzing using comparative literature. Endraswara says, there are four perspectives in comparative literature. First, the research with a comparative perspective focuses on the study of the text in the literary works that will be compared. Second is the research with historical perspectives, which focus on the values of history in the background's relation to those literary works. The third is the research with a theoretical perspective, it is focused on criteria, theory, genre, and rules in various kinds of literature. Fourth is the research with an interdisciplinary perspective, the character in this research has discussed the relation of context in literature with religion, science, and literature itself (Edraswara, 159-160:2014). Those perspectives can be used to simplify the researcher's goals in analyzing comparative literature.

1.6.3 Movie Theory

Next, the researcher uses movie theory *mise-en-scene* by Amy Villarejo as supporting theory in this research. In movie analysis, *mise-en-scene* means “put into the scene” and everything seen on camera includes cinematography (Villarejo, 2007:28). This theory discusses everything that shows in the movie, so this *mise-en-scene theory* can help the audience to understand the intent and purpose of the movie, the characters in the movie, and the conditions depicted in the movie because *mise-en-scene* theory has several components contained in it. According to Villarejo, there are 6 elements in the *mise-en-scene*, setting, hair and makeup, costume, figure behavior, and lighting (Villarejo, 2007:29). To show these elements require cinematography. Elements of *mise-en-scène* and cinematography are inseparable because everything that is "put into" the shot is recorded by the camera (Villarejo, 2007:36). This cinematography is the framing and placement of the camera because, from the placement of the camera, the image can be analyzed in terms of the distance between the placement of the camera and the object. Villarejo describes several types of techniques in framing (Villarejo, 2007: 38).

- a. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which one can barely distinguish the human figure.
- b. The long-shot (LS), in which humans are distinguishable but remain dwarfed by the background.
- c. The medium-long shot (MLS), in which the human is framed from the knees up.

- d. The medium shot (MS), in which we move in slightly to frame the human from the waist up.
- e. The medium close-up (MCU), in which we are slightly closer and see the human from the chest up.
- f. The close-up (CU), isolates a portion of a human (the face, most prominently).
- g. The extreme close-up (ECU), we see a mere portion of the face (an eye, the lips).

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative method. According to Cresswell (1994), “A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.” Thus, the qualitative method is the research that is descriptive, and analyses the data such as the words, the action, and the expressions in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The source of the data in this research is using primary and secondary. The primary data used are the *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies, *Marriage Story* is an American movie whereas *A Separation* is an Iranian movie. The secondary sources in this research are the website, article, book, and several data related to this research.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

There are several data collection techniques that are used by the researcher. First, the researcher watches and compares the two movies *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. After that, the researcher collects all of the data in both movies that relate to the answer to the problem in this paper. The data consist of the plots, the dialogues, and the picture of scenes. Last, the researcher puts all data and matches with radical feminism.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

There are several steps that the researcher uses to analyze the research. First, the researcher watches and collects the dialogue and scene in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* that shows self-consciousness. Second, the researcher classifies the action of self-consciousness in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. Then, the researcher compares those two movies by looking for similarities and differences in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. The last, the researcher concludes the analysis.

1.8 Paper Organization

The research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that consists of the background of the study, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, literature review, method of study, theoretical approach, and paper organization. Chapter two is the explanation of the plot, character, and setting in the movies. Chapter three are discussion and analysis of *Marriage Story* and *Separation* movies by using Radical Feminism theory and comparative literature analysis. Chapter Four consists of the conclusion from the analysis.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher concludes that Nicole's and Simin's struggles for their divorces are portrayed as radical feminist actions. By using radical feminism theory by Rosemary Tong, the researcher finds the self-consciousness that shows in the women's characters in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation*. Therefore, radical feminism raises the self-consciousness about feminist thought among women for the oppression and injustice.

Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation* is the women that want to be free from the oppression and injustice that they get from their husbands. Nicole in *Marriage Story* wants to be free from the life control and oppression that her husband does during their marriage. While Simin in *A Separation* wants to be free from the injustice that her husband does and also she wants to protect her daughter that suffers because of Nader's problem. Nicole and Simin have aware of the oppression and injustice that their husband does, it shows a self-consciousness toward radical feminism. Nicole and Simin do the act after developing their self-consciousness. They have the same act after developing a self-consciousness, that is divorce as the last act of their self-consciousness. Before they choose the divorce way Nicole in *Marriage Story* does several acts after she develops self-consciousness. First is achieving her dreams after a long time her life is controlled by Nader during their marriage. The second is looking for her husband's infidelity after Nicole is cheated on by Nader, and the last is filing a divorce after all the oppression and life control that she gets from Charlie. While Simin in *A Separation* does protect her daughter after she is aware about her daughter's safety is threatened because of her husband's problems. Afterward, she is filing a divorce after all the injustice and life control that she gets from her husband, Nader.

Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation* have different struggles in their divorce. Nicole in *Marriage Story* is struggling in her divorce with hiring a

good lawyer because Nicole wants to get her justice after the divorce. Simin in *A Separation* is struggling in her divorce by persuading Nader to give her child custody because it is very difficult to get child custody for a mother in Iran. The researcher uses comparative literature to see the difference and similarities in the character of Nicole in *Marriage Story* and Simin in *A Separation*.

4.2. Suggestion

The researcher analyses *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* which tells about a divorce in the domestic life as the way to the women's liberation by using radical feminism theory, focusing on the female characters in both movies. The researcher realizes that this research is far from the perfect graduating paper. Thus, the researcher suggests that future researchers may apply another theory to explore the issues in *Marriage Story* and *A Separation* movies. These movies can be analyzed by the future researchers by using Islamic feminism, masculinity, and power relation depending on the perspective.



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