

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I applied several theories and explanations related to my study. These theories underlie my research, such as intrinsic and extrinsic literary approaches theories. I used the intrinsic approach to elaborate Wanda Maximoff's character through the characterization, the plot, and the setting. Afterward, I used an extrinsic approach to elaborate on the concept of each of the five stages of grief which was popularized by Kübler-Ross. Furthermore, this chapter also provides a comparison between the previous related study and my research.

2.1. Screenplay Theory

A screenplay is defined as a blueprint for a film, movie, or even a drama that defines the narrative structure, characters, and dialog. It is not merely about writing sequences but also about constructing a compelling narrative where each element, such as plot, theme, and characters, cooperates to create drama and significance. Moreover, other experts such as Dennis and Joseph in their book *The Art of Watching Films*, say that most directors used to consider the screenplay as a rough outline for a movie and forced their feelings for the narrative structure on it, expressing themselves creatively in the overall formation of the movie (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:323). Therefore, according to James Bang, the screenplay is considered an unfinished story that needs to be developed and finally appears on a screen to be fully manifested. The screenplay also serves as a great tool for communication as it could deeply engage the audience or readers (Bang, 2022:2).

2.2. Intrinsic Approaches

The intrinsic approach to literature emphasizes a thoughtful and detailed analysis of the text itself, focusing on its internal elements and structure. This approach involves a comprehensive examination of various elements such as characterization, plot, setting, and theme.

2.2.1. Characterization

Aristotle points to a character as something that enables us to understand the kind of people portrayed. Since the tragedy follows the action, the tragedy is mainly focused on the characters in motion. These characters represent the people in the text, reflecting everyday life, and they are complicated individuals whose emotions and experiences bring to life the main and central themes of the drama (Betti, 2011:13). According to Petrie and Boggs, characters must seem genuine, relatable, and worth being concerned about as well. In most cases, characters in a story are trustworthy in all the same ways that the story is trustworthy. Furthermore, they correspond to the rule of probability and necessity (reflecting observable external truths about human nature) (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:49). Additionally, they align with certain internal truths (the way we wish humans could be), or they are made to look real through the convincing art of the actor. In this context, there are various ways for you to analyze the character according to Petrie and Boggs, which follows:

2.2.1.1. Characterization Through Dialogue

Characterization through dialogue refers to the ways in which a character's personality, feelings, and motivations are expressed through their words of choice. Word choice, tone, accent, and speaking patterns are all related to their characterization. For example, if a character chooses to use short, harsh sentences, it could indicate impatience or anger. Meanwhile, a character who chooses a calm and considered way of speaking may seem thoughtful or self-controlled. Additionally, dialogue can express a lot about a character's insides (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:50).

2.2.1.2. Characterization Through Internal Action

Characterization through internal actions focuses on how a character's thoughts, feelings, and mental states shape who they will eventually become. This focuses on their emotional or psychological journey, as the actions are based on the influence of their subconsciousness. For example, a character who is secretly struggling with a lack of self-

confidence or introverted may express a nervous facial expression or nervous body language that defines their struggles. This internal conflict allows the viewer to comprehend deeper aspects of the character's motives and personality (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:51).

2.2.1.3. Characterization Through External Action

Characterization through external actions focuses on the ways in which a character's attitudes, decisions, and physical actions express their personality and motivations. These actions provide a piece of knowledge about their values, emotions, or intentions and the character is conscious of the actions they made. For example, a character who always helps others with no hesitation can be portrayed as unselfish and good-hearted. Their external actions, such as offering support, show who they are without the use of much dialog or explanation (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:52).

2.2.2. Plot

Storytelling in its various forms, whether short stories, novels, plays, or movies, depends crucially on a well-formed dramatic structure. This structure is the purposely planned arrangement of elements in a way that makes the greatest emotional, intellectual, or dramatic effect. Dramatic structure on the other hand can follow a linear or nonlinear pattern, according to the author's purpose. Despite the approach, either structure includes four key elements: exposition, in which the context of the story is introduced; complication, in which conflict arises; climax, the ultimate moment of tension in the story; and dénouement, in which the narrative is finalized (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:44).

According to one of the legendary screenwriters Ernest Lehman, as cited by Petrie and Boggs, movies commonly follow a linear and chronological structure which is divided into three acts. The first act introduces the characters and sets up the main situation of the story. The second act develops this situation, leading to increasing conflict and significant challenges. Finally, the third act focuses on resolving the conflict and dealing with the problems. This three-act structure

functions as the primary framework for many narratives, leading the progression from setup to resolution. These elements are discussed as follows:

2.2.2.1. Exposition

Exposition, the beginning phase of a narrative, functions to introduce characters, develop their relationships, and place them in a believable time and setting. Thus, this basic part is crucial, as it sets the ground knowledge for the audience's understanding of the world of the story and the dynamics that will push the plot ahead (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:44).

2.2.2.2. Complication

Complication is the second phase of a narrative which functions as a crucial aspect to build and sustain the dramatic tension. Thus, Conflict, once introduced, develops in clearness, intenseness, and significance through the narrative. Commonly, this phase is considered the longest phase throughout the story as it increases the audience's emotional investment (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:44).

2.2.2.3. Climax

The third phase is called climax, and the climax is known when the complication has reached its point of maximum tension along with the two opposite forces facing each other at a breaking point of physical or emotional action. At the climax, the conflict is resolved and then followed by a short period of calm (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:44).

2.2.2.4. Dénouement

The Dénouement is the fourth phase of how the story is built. This phase refers to the final part of the film's dramatic structure, where the conflict has been resolved and the audience can see the consequences or the result of the action of the character (Petrie & Boggs, 2012).

2.2.3. Setting

As cited in the book *An Introduction to Drama*, Betti states that the setting, or '*mise en scène*,' in a theater production refers to all the visual elements on stage, including the scenery, the property, and other physical features. The setting also refers to the time and location in which the play takes place. The setting serves an essential role in storytelling, as writers frequently use it to represent symbolic aspects of a character's personality or emotional condition. Additionally, the setting represents a character's perspective by providing insight into their internal thoughts and attitudes towards their environment (Betti, 2011:18-19).

According to Petrie and Boggs, the setting refers to the time and place in which the story of a film takes place. Because of the complicated relation of the setting within the different elements of the story such as plot, character, theme, conflict, and symbolism, the setting may often seem unnoticeable or underestimated. Meanwhile, it is a crucial element in any story and makes an essential contribution to the theme. The effect of the setting on the story being told should be carefully analyzed and because of its important visual function, the setting should also be considered a powerful cinematic element (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:82). In this context, there are various ways for you to analyze the setting according to Petrie and Boggs, which follows:

2.2.3.1. Setting as Determiner of Character

According to this interpretation, character, predestination, and fate are defined by external factors, including descent and surroundings, suggesting that freedom of will is illusory. By considering the surroundings as the primary factor, we are driven to examine how the surroundings build character. Historical factors such as background, geographic location, social and economic position, and the norms of society shape a character's behavior. These surroundings' impacts can be significant enough to serve as more than just a background but instead become an essential part of the narrative structure and themes of the movie (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:84).

2.2.3.2. Setting as Reflection of Character

The surroundings in which an individual or person lives may offer the audience clues to understanding his or her character. This is particularly applicable to those aspects of the surroundings where the person has some level of control. Let's say, the scenery shows a minimalist, dreamy, and cozy cottage with some colorful roses around it, which may suggest the setting of a happy married couple along with their bright future. The audience needs to be aware of the interaction between the surroundings and the character, regardless of whether the setting serves as a shaper of the character or just a reflection of it (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:84).

2.2.3.3. Setting to Create Emotional Atmosphere

Within certain particular films, the setting serves an essential role in shaping a prevailing mood or emotional atmosphere. Thus, this is particularly obvious in such genres as horror, science fiction, and fantasy films, for instance, Alien films, also the popular Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, and James Cameron's *Avatar*. Moreover, these captivating and atmospheric settings crucially contribute to the sense of disbelief. The setting not only strengthens the emotional tone of the movie but also heightens the tension and nerve, matching the overall movie aesthetically. In addition, the setting provides genuineness to the narrative and characters, which engages the audience even more (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:86).

2.2.3.4. Setting as Symbol

A setting in a movie may bring intense symbolic meaning when it symbolizes more than just a physical location, but also an abstract idea linked to that place. For instance, in Agnieszka Holland's adaptation of *The Secret Garden* (1993) and Steven Soderbergh's *Bubble*, which was filmed entirely in a small town on the border of Ohio and West Virginia, which has a symbolic meaning. Another notable example is the garden in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, where the 'fantastic' garden symbolizes a perspective of the world based on primitive sustainability. The garden

represents the idea that humans are portrayed as predatory creatures who live in a savage environment ruled by the laws of the jungle, where the strongest dominate in a never-ending struggle for survivability (Petrie and Boggs, 2012:86).

2.2.4. Theme

The theme is the central and abstract concept of a work. The themes express the main ideas, which may be clear or unclear and may be various or more than one in a story. Themes contribute to the development of the main plot or subplots, but they are not simply a summary of the story. Since literature reflects everyday life, its main themes often deal with significant public and personal experiences, such as love, death, freedom, authority, revenge, or hope. Basically, any subject of life can be a theme in literature (Betti, 2011:18).

2.3. Extrinsic Approaches

The extrinsic approach refers to elements that influence literary work from outside the text, yet still contribute to the narrative. This approach can cover various aspects, including economic, political, and psychological factors, the author's background, and certain norms within the literary work itself. In this research, I will use a psychological approach, specifically Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief, to examine how these stages are represented in the film script 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' (2022).

2.3.1. Psychology

In the book "On Becoming a Person," Carl Rogers offers deep insight into psychology, presenting it as a tool for understanding and encouraging personal growth and self-actualization. He argued that psychology should not be seen simply as a static field focused on the diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems; instead, psychology is a dynamic and evolving process that captures the complexity of human experience. Rogers believed that individuals are not fixed beings, but are always in a state of becoming, engaged in a lifelong journey of self-exploration and growth. This perspective highlights the importance of recognizing the potential that

lies within each individual, encouraging them to work towards achieving their fullest capabilities (Carl R. Rogers, 1961:379).

2.3.2. Psychology of Literature

Literary psychology is an interdisciplinary branch that connects psychology and literature (Endraswara in Minderop, 2018:59). The study of literary psychology is essentially about exploring the human mind from the inside. While this “inside” aspect can be subjective, which may make it seem challenging to some literary scholars, but it's beneficial. It allows us to understand the depths of the human psyche, which is wide and complex. The range of possible interpretations is endless. The attraction of literary psychology comes in the exploration of human problems that reflect the workings of the psyche. Literature not only reveals the author's psyche but can also represent the experiences of others. Authors often include their own life experiences in their works, which resonate with the experiences of many readers (Minderop, 2018:59).

In addition, the process of understanding psychological literary theories can be followed in three steps: firstly, through understanding psychological theories and then analyzing a literary work. Secondly, by determining a literary work as the object of research, then determining the psychological theories that are considered to be relevant to the research. Lastly, by simultaneously finding the theory and the object of research. Furthermore, it shows that the text displayed through a technique in literary theory can reflect a concept of psychology presented by a fictional character (Minderop, 2018:59).

2.3.3. Five Stages of Grief

Grief is a universal experience that all humans go through, but the emotional journey it takes varies from one person to another. To gain a better understanding of this complex reaction to loss, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross developed the Five Stages of Grief model, which has become one of the most recognized frameworks in psychology. Created to help articulate the emotions experienced by terminally ill patients, the theory has been broadly applied to different types of loss, such as bereavement, trauma, and major life transitions. Although it has been

researched extensively in psychology and literature, it has not been studied in an academic setting. Therefore, the implementation of the Kübler-Ross model in my research provides a new perspective on emotional processing through literary analysis. By exploring these five stages, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, this research attempts to explain how grief is portrayed in Wanda Maximoff in the "Doctor Strange in The Multiverse of Madness" movie script (2022) yet enhancing our understanding of the human psyche.

According to the book entitled “On Grief & Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through The Five Stages of Loss”, which was developed and popularized by Kübler-Ross and her partner, Kessler, the stages of the grieving process are tools to help us frame and identify what we might be feeling, but the grieving process is not a stop on a linear timeline in grief, but rather it is because not everyone goes through these processes (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:21).

The process of the stages of grieving has often been misunderstood for a long time. Since the stages of grief developed, many people have misunderstood the concept, as Kübler-Ross and Kessler say that the stages were never meant to help organize messy emotions into organized packages (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:21). These stages of grief are a response to loss that many people have, but the resulting response is certainly different because each person faces a different phase of loss. As it is said, our grief is as individual as our lives (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:21). Therefore, there is a development of the stages of grieving as follows:

a) Denial

Denial in the book “On Grief and Grieving” is a stage where a person refuses to believe something or reality that has in fact happened before their eyes. For someone who has lost a loved one, the first stage that emerges is the denial stage which will help us to give a moment until the pain returns (Kessler, David and Kübler-Ross, 2005:23). In this stage, a grieving person’s world feels meaningless and much more complicated than before. At this stage, a person usually starts asking questions such as, “Is this real?”; “Is he gone?”; “Is this all a lie?”. But, this stage of denial helps us to reduce

our feelings of grief and there is value in the denial stage. It is a natural way to release ourselves from grief (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:23).

b) Anger

The stages of anger described by Elisabeth and David are those where we start to feel angry or upset about what has happened. In this theory, people's anger can emerge in different ways, a person can feel angry either with himself for not being able to prevent the death of his loved one or even the person feels angry with the person he loves, for not being able to take good care of himself so that he must leave forever (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:24). Even, people's level of anger can reach a level where they start to doubt the existence of God's power, such as "*Papa* just died, why would God be so heartless?" or "I feel like God is really against me, why?" (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:24).

As mentioned in the book, anger is an important stage in the healing process. There are many other emotions behind anger, and one will experience them later in life, but anger is the emotion we manage most often (Kessler, David and Kübler-Ross, 2005:24).

c) Bargaining

The following stage is the bargaining stage, as explained in the book "On Grief and Grieving" At this stage, a grieving person begins to consider what happened to their loved one by making an offer either offering something with themselves or to God (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:28). The usual offer in this stage is usually something like; "if only I could have prevented *Papa's* death". The bargaining stage can even change at any time, perhaps first one starts offering that one's loved one can still be given a chance to live, then later one says "God, why don't you just take my life?"; in other words, one starts offering to God that one should die instead of one's loved one (Kessler, David and Kübler-Ross, 2005:30).

d) Depression

The next stage after the bargaining stage is the depression stage. According to Elisabeth and David, this stage is when a person begins to feel that life has no meaning anymore, feels empty, and life begins to feel hard to live if someone we love is no longer by our side (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:30). Thus, they also underline that this stage of depression is not part of a mental illness, but this stage is a stage that is naturally experienced by most people who are grieving. It feels strange and odd if someone does not feel depressed when they lose someone (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:31).

e) Acceptance

The last stage in this theory is the acceptance stage. The stage of acceptance finally emerges in a person but it is not that the person accepts and feels better about what has happened, but rather accepts and makes peace with the fact that our loved ones are physically gone and the reality we live in is a permanent reality, which we cannot change, nor can we reconstruct (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:34). As it is also said, a grieving person does not want to accept the existing reality, but in the end can accept it. This stage of acceptance is also the final stage of recovery for a person to continue their life story without their loved one (Kessler and Kübler-Ross, 2005:37).

2.4. Previous Related Study

In my research, several previous studies have been studied by previous researchers related to using the same theoretical approach but with different research objects from my research object. The previous study by Nurjanah (2023) analyzed the main character in the novel titled “A Grief Observed” by C.S. Lewis, which used the five stages of grief theory. In the findings, she showed that the main character, Lewis, manages the stages of grief from denial to acceptance after the loss of his wife (Nurjanah, 2023). Previous research by Yohanes and Audrey (2023) who used the same theoretical approach, examined a novel entitled “How to Make

Friends in the Dark” by Kathleen Glasgow. The findings show a reflection of the process of the stages of grieving or “Journey of Grief” from denial to acceptance which is reflected in the main character in the book named Tiger who has not been able to accept the death of his mother (Subianto and Winardi, 2023).

Another previous study by Wiandri (2022) analyzed the function of the point of view of the main character to portray five stages of grief in the screenplay titled “*Senandika Lara*”. In the findings, after the loss of her father because of COVID-19, the little girl had to describe her journey of grief from denial to acceptance (Wiandri, 2022). Moreover, the study by Syam dan Asyrafunnisa (2023) analyzed the same figure in my study, Wanda Maximoff, as they analyzed Wanda’s depression in Doctor Strange in The Multiverse of Madness Movie Script. In the findings, they showed that Wanda experienced the 5th type of depression “Symptomatic Depression” (Rifqi et al., 2023). Another study by Kamila (2021) analyzed the main character, Oskar Schell from the novel “Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close” by Jonathan Safran Foer, who experienced all the stages of grief which is from denial to acceptance after the loss of his father in the tragedy of 9/11 (Kamila, 2021).

The case study report by Osmer in her study about the demonstration of the five stages of grief in the WandaVision TV series, which is the previous incident before Wanda loses her children in the sequel. The study found that Wanda in WandaVision artfully demonstrates Kubler Ross’s five stages of grief throughout the series from episode 1 to episode 9 (Osmer, 2021). Another study report by Anna Drabik analyzed the loss of an enemy in Brooklyn Nine-Nine, which explores the sense of mourning between the hostile characters named Holt and Wuntch. Holt’s natural response to the death of Wuntch made him go through levels of grief as he still mourned her loss in the name of a “star-crossed hater” (Drabik, 2024).

According to the previous related study above, the similarity of my research and previous researchers is that these previous related studies discuss the implementation of Kubler-Ross’s five stages of grief theory. Meanwhile, the differences between my research and those previous related studies are that those grieving people only experience grief once and gradually show progress at the end,

on the other hand, the character in my research, Wanda Maximoff, shows regress rather than progress, as she had to experience grief multiple times, emphasizing the cyclical nature of the grieving process. In addition, no one has conducted research that discusses the cyclical nature of grief. So, I conducted research with the “Doctor Strange in The Multiverse of Madness” movie script (2022) to prove the cyclical nature of grief yet still related to the previous studies that used the model of five stages of grief.

