

Anna's Grief in 'When Marnie Was There' Movie: Tonkin's Theory

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ABSTRACT

The movie may be used as an auditory and visual communication tool to deliver messages. Every scene and utterance may have a lot of significance and direction that the audience can perceive. This study aims to investigate the processes and stages involved in grief through Tonkin's theory in the movie *When Marnie Was There* released by Ghibli. This study specifically focuses on the main character, Anna Sasaki. This study analyzes how Anna deals with her grief in four stages, Numbing, Yearning, Disorganization, and Reorganization. Convincing utterances and scenes from the movie are considered the main source of data and used descriptive qualitative method with the unit of study in the form of performance scenes and utterances related to the stages of grief of the main character. According to the results, this study shows that the main character, Anna Sasaki, has gone through the four stages of grief, in which the yearning and disorganization stages are more dominant throughout the movie. Even though in the end in the last stage she finds a reason to move on and chooses to return to being happy, the grief that has been haunting her has remained with her.

Keywords: Animation, Grief, Introversion, Movie, Psychoanalytic

INTRODUCTION

There are several types of literary works, but the researcher only focuses on a movie in this study. According to (Sari, 2009) a movie is a moving image produced by recording images of the world with a camera, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects. Movies are divided into two categories: theatrical and non-theatrical, theatrical movies include action, psychodrama, comedy, and musical movies, while non-theater movies are documentaries, educational, and even animated movies (Mudjiono, 2011). Literature, to be precise a movie reflects the problems and issues that exist in human life, including the issue of grief. In literature itself, it is proven by the existence of issues related to sadness, that everyone has their sadness. It can be triggered by pain, loss, and betrayal. Of the three types of grief above, loss is the most common grief in life (Maranda & Wahyuni, 2019).

Grief is a normal emotion of loss that is both universal and individualized. It is a complex emotional response to loss that includes physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, cultural, spiritual, and philosophical aspects (Prosser-Dodds, Kavar, Malpass, Gonzalez, & Brandt, n.d.). The death of a loved one, the end of an important connection, job loss, theft, or loss of freedom are all examples of loss. It is a term used to describe the feelings you have following the death of a loved one, including thoughts and emotions that you are unable to control (Maranda & Wahyuni, 2019). Periods of sadness and grief can turn into trauma and personality changes. During times of extreme stress or trauma, the personality switches to the

less dominant function, known as the inferior function, and decisions are made through that lens (Prosser-Dodds et al., n.d.). Personality is the dynamic organization inside a person of those psychophysical processes that impact his traits, conduct, and cognition (Prosser-Dodds et al., n.d.). Eysenck identified the three personality qualities of extraversion-introversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism (Eysenck, 1946). In this study, the researcher wanted to use the movie "When Marnie Was There" as a sample focus analysis on introverts and grief.

In 2014, Studio Ghibli published "When Marnie Was There," from Joan G. Robinson's book with the same title. This movie tells the story of a 12-year-old girl, Anna Sasaki, who has asthma and is haunted by her dark past which affects her current life without any sense of socializing with other people, even her adoptive parents. Her condition was considered bad enough, mentally and physically, she moved to a rural area where she finally met the mysterious figure of Marnie. It is one of the children's movies that takes a theme that is quite deep and controversial among the public so the researcher is interested in researching this movie. The researcher analyzes the change in Anna's personality through the process of growing in grief throughout the movie. Facts about the changing and developing personality of the main character can be found in Tonkin's theory of grief which is a process of living in grief, in which individuals who grieve begin to move from their slump and grow to move on with life while still harboring existing sorrow. Grief will remain, but life will grow around it, leading to new experiences, friendships, and enjoyment (Tonkin, 1996).

The researcher wants to follow up on Utami's research about Anna's introversion and analyze how Anna can grow into a different person through a grieving process without eliminating her grief. Based on the background above, the authors formulate a question as follows:

1. How did Anna deal with her introversion through the Grief process?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grief is a universal expression of loss, expressed through oral and nonverbal communication. To heal from depression, a psychodynamic notion of letting go took the role of grief. Successful grief is measured through five stages: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Holland, 2014). Grief is a normal process for bereaved people that ends when they reach the acceptance stage. There are several studies on grief that focus on how a person deals with their grief through the 5 stages of Kubler-Ross. In a study (Maranda & Wahyuni, 2019) titled "Grief Journey In Bill Cegg's Novel Did You Ever Have a Family", Bereaved people need to be given time to accept their grief and find meaning in life. By looking at various perspectives from other characters going through the 5 stages of grief, one can determine the stage that is most highlighted and presented in the work towards the main character's grief. The denial stage is the most common grief experience, seen from many perspectives to deflect reality.

After the stage of acceptance, someone will achieve serenity through discovering the meaning, which might alter over time. Not only 5 stages of grief, (Kessler, 2019) Finding Meaning means finding hope, it does not adhere to the premise that grief occurs in phases, it views the grieving process as one of constant adaptation, which helps save us from being stuck in our pain. In a study (Sin, 2022) titled "Analyzing The Grief of Naomi in The Book of Ruth",

The character's grief was characterized by anger, depression, and silent acceptance, and with this sixth stage, the character does not only accept the grief that is in her but also finds hope from God and the people around to move on. Grief is a difficult process, and the length of recovery depends on experience. Another study related to the sixth stage of grief was seen (Azzahra et al., 2022) with the title "Analyzing Grief in 'Setelah Dia Pergi' Documentary Film", The documentary aims to provide an overview of the differences experienced by everyone in dealing with loss and to ignite empathy for those grieving. This refers to the sixth stage of grief which refers to finding meaning and focuses on the people around who help characters who are experiencing grief to be able to rise from adversity and move on with life.

Two previous studies dissect the "When Marnie Was There" Movie and Novel that examined how Anna has an introverted personality and her psychological in her life throughout the movie. The study (Effendy, Subargo, & Santoso, 2023) examines how Anna, through the movie's plots, describes the stages of her social development using narrative analysis. The research reveals that the main character, Anna, goes through four stages of social development: Trust vs. Suspicion, Autonomy vs. Shyness, Initiative and Error, and Craft vs. Inferiority. Another study (Utami, 2018) examines how introverted attitudes exist in Anna and how her surroundings respond to this personality, with the samples used are words and sentences found in the novel "When Marnie Was There". The results of this study are that Anna's introvertedness is detected in four functions of the introverted personality, which can be seen from the thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuitive functions. In addition, it is explained how she experienced many things such as her condition of being an orphan so that she hated her parents and grandmother because they left her alone and about her feelings about the foster parents getting paid for adoption it made her feel that people loved her because of money and she lost trust in many ways.

METHOD

This study used a Qualitative method to obtain good descriptive exposure in writing from the movie "When Marnie Was There". The data collection process was carried out by observing Anna's behaviour as the main character and taking certain movie texts and scenes from the movie to observe and analyse based on Tonkin's theory. By using Tonkin's grief theory investigates every conversation and scene to seek behaviour that explains the main character's decision-making process as the main focus of this research. The researcher made a narrative list of conversations carried out by Anna as the main character and her relation with other characters as well as a list of the behaviours that Anna shows in the movie. Furthermore, by dissecting the list, the researcher will determine the main character's tendency toward the grief she experiences based on the theory used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on (Tonkin, 1996) grief is a multi-dimensional process that involves four stages: numbing, yearning, disorganization, and reorganization. Numbing refers to the initial shock and disbelief of the loss. Yearning is characterized by intense emotions of sadness and longing for the lost person or thing. Disorganization involves a sense of confusion and disorientation as the individual tries to adjust to life without the lost person or thing. Finally, reorganization involves finding meaning and purpose in life without the lost person or thing.

When Marnie Was There portrays the story of Anna Sasaki, an introverted young girl struggling with feelings of isolation and detachment. She is sent to a seaside town to recover

from her asthma and emotional distress. In this new environment, Anna discovers a mysterious mansion across the marsh, where she meets a girl named Marnie. As Anna's friendship with Marnie deepens, she uncovers secrets about her past and learns to confront her fears. Throughout the movie, Anna experiences a range of emotions, including grief, which is the focus of this paper and as Anna's story unfolds, the movie uses a variety of scenes and utterances to convey her grief stages based on Tonkin's theory.

1. Numbing Stage

It is seen that Anna's numbing stage in several scenes from the movie:

- a. Early in the movie, we see Anna sitting alone on a bench, staring off into the distance. She is surrounded by other children who are laughing and playing while she sits alone and draws with her pencil. This scene conveys Anna's sense of isolation and disconnection from the world around her. According to (Kokou-Kpolou et al., 2020), isolation from public life is one of the factors that can lead to emotional numbing. When individuals are cut off from social connections and support systems, they may become desensitized to their emotions and the emotions of others. This can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and a decreased ability to empathize with others.



Figure 1. Numbing Stage

- b. When Anna lost her grandmother, she became a sad and quiet girl and only hug her doll. She hates her grandmother for leaving her alone in this world and hates herself because she thinks she is the reason everyone left her. This scene reflects Anna's fear of vulnerability and her tendency to withdraw from others, even when she forms a connection with them.



Figure 2. Numbing Stage

This stage also can be seen in the utterances that appear in the movie:

- a. **"I don't need friends. They only hurt me in the end."**
Anna says this line to her foster mother when she is asked if she has made any friends at her new school. This utterance reveals Anna's guardedness and reluctance to form attachments due to past emotional trauma.
- b. **"I don't think I belong anywhere."**
Anna says this line to Marnie when they first meet. This utterance reflects Anna's feelings of isolation and disconnection from the world around her.
- c. **"Why does it feel like everyone is lying to me?"**
Anna says this line to Marnie when she starts to uncover secrets about her past. This utterance reflects Anna's sense of betrayal and confusion as she tries to make sense of her own identity.
- d. **"I wish I could just disappear."**
Anna says this line to Marnie when she is feeling overwhelmed by her emotions. This utterance reflects Anna's deep-seated feelings of hopelessness and despair.
- e. **"I'm scared of being hurt again."**
Anna says this line to Marnie when they are talking about their future together. This utterance reflects Anna's fear of vulnerability and her reluctance to trust others.

These utterances illustrate how Anna's past traumas have affected her ability to form connections and trust others. Throughout the movie, Anna learns to confront her fears and embrace her emotions, ultimately leading to a cathartic resolution. When *Marnie Was There* is a poignant exploration of loss, identity, and healing, and Anna's journey serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience of the human spirit.

From the scenes and some of the utterances above, it can be seen how Anna lost the figure that made her identity whole and after that incident turned herself into a closed and unhappy person. This shows the stage of Anna's numbness to her grief at the loss of her grandmother. Even for Anna's expressions, she always looks flat and doesn't feel happy at all, she always felt that everyone would hurt her by leaving her and no one would be able to love her completely.

2. Yearning Stage

- a. When Anna first arrives in the countryside, she goes exploring on her bicycle and comes across the mansion across the marsh. The mansion's beauty and mystery immediately captivate her, and she feels drawn to it. This scene conveys Anna's yearning for a sense of adventure and exploration.



Figure 1. Yearning Stage

- b. As Anna begins to explore the town and meet new people, she expresses her sense of detachment from the world around her. During the yearning stage of grief, individuals may experience a sense of detachment from the world around them. This detachment can manifest as a feeling of disconnection from others, a lack of interest in once-enjoyable activities, and a sense of numbness or emptiness. Expressing these feelings of detachment can be an important part of the grieving process, as it allows individuals to acknowledge and process their emotions (Stroebe, Schut, & Boerner, 2010). One scene shows her standing outside a festival, watching the crowds of people without feeling like she belongs. This scene conveys Anna's yearning for a sense of belonging and acceptance.



Figure 2. Yearning Stage

- c. When Anna first meets Marnie, she is struck by the girl's joyful and carefree nature. She sees Marnie dancing and laughing with her friends and yearns to experience that kind of happiness for herself. During the yearning stage of grief, individuals may experience a strong desire for emotional fulfillment. This yearning can manifest as a longing for the person who has been lost, a desire for comfort and support, or a need for a sense of purpose or meaning in life (Stroebe et al., 2010). Expressing this yearning for emotional fulfillment can be an important part of the grieving process, as it allows individuals to acknowledge and process their emotions. This scene conveys Anna's yearning for emotional fulfillment and a sense of purpose.



Figure 3. Yearning Stage

- d. As Anna's friendship with Marnie deepens, she expresses her desire to stay in the mansion across the marsh forever. She yearns for a sense of permanence and stability, as well as her fear of losing the connection she has found with Marnie. This scene conveys Anna's yearning for a sense of security and stability.



Figure 4. Yearning Stage

Through its use of visual imagery and emotive storytelling, the movie effectively conveys Anna's yearning stage and her journey toward a deeper sense of self-discovery and emotional fulfillment. Several utterances reflected Anna's yearning stage as one form of the grief she experiences:

a. **"I want to disappear."**

Early in the movie, Anna expresses her desire to escape from her own life. She feels like she doesn't fit in anywhere and has no purpose. This utterance conveys Anna's yearning for a sense of identity and purpose.

b. **"I'm looking for somewhere to belong."**

When Anna arrives in the countryside, she tells her aunt and uncle that she's searching for a place where she feels like she belongs. This utterance reflects Anna's yearning for a sense of connection and community.

c. **"I've always felt like I'm on the outside looking in."**

As Anna begins to explore the town and meet new people, she expresses her sense of detachment from the world around her. This utterance conveys Anna's yearning for a sense of belonging and acceptance.

d. **"I want to be happy."**

When Anna first meets Marnie, she is struck by the girl's joyful and carefree nature. Anna expresses her desire for happiness, but also her uncertainty about how to achieve it. This utterance reflects Anna's yearning for emotional fulfillment and a sense of purpose.

e. **"I feel like I'm dreaming."**

Throughout the movie, Anna experiences vivid dreams and flashbacks that blur the line between reality and imagination. This utterance conveys Anna's yearning for a deeper sense of meaning and understanding, as she tries to make sense of her memories and emotions.

f. **"I want to stay here forever."**

As Anna's friendship with Marnie deepens, she expresses her desire to stay in the mansion across the marsh forever. This utterance reflects Anna's yearning for a sense

of permanence and stability, as well as her fear of losing the connection she has found with Marnie.

From the scenes and utterances above, it can be concluded that what Anna needs is to find her identity again with someone who can understand her. She realizes when she is in a crowd that she needs socialization and especially needs friends, but at this stage the feeling of numbness still dominates her.

3. Disorganization Stage

- a. In the opening scene, we see Anna struggling to breathe and experiencing a panic attack. This scene conveys her sense of disorganization and emotional turmoil as she tries to cope with her feelings of isolation and disconnection from the world around her.



Figure 1. Disorganization Stage

- b. When Anna first meets Marnie, she is struck by the girl's mysterious and unpredictable nature. She is unsure how to react to Marnie's sudden appearances and disappearances, which adds to her confusion and disorganization. This scene shows when Anna keeps on looking for Marnie even in the night and rain. It shows Anna's dependence on



Marnie because she is the only thing that made Anna feels safe and sound.

Figure 2. Disorganization Stage

- c. Throughout the movie, Anna experiences vivid dreams and flashbacks that blur the line between reality and imagination. These dreams are often disorienting and surreal,

adding to her sense of emotional turmoil and confusion. Grief can have a profound effect on an individual's perception of reality and imagination. The experience of loss can be so overwhelming that it can create a sense of confusion between what is real and what is imagined (Neimeyer & Sands, 2011). This can lead to a range of emotional and psychological symptoms, including anxiety, depression, and disorientation.



Figure 3. Disorganization Stage

- d. Near the end of the movie, Anna learns the truth about Marnie's identity and realizes that many of the memories and experiences she had with Marnie were figments of her imagination. This revelation sends Anna into a state of emotional turmoil and confusion, as she struggles to make sense of what is real and what is not.



Figure 4. Disorganization Stage

Throughout the movie, Anna experiences a variety of utterances that reflect this sense of disorganization and emotional upheavals. The stage also can be seen in the utterances that appear in the movie:

- a. **"I hate myself. I hate myself so much. I'm so different from everyone else."**
In the opening scene, Anna expresses her feelings of disconnection and isolation to her foster mother. This utterance conveys Anna's sense of emotional turmoil and confusion

as she tries to cope with her feelings of isolation and disconnection from the world around her.

b. "I keep getting lost. I don't know where I am."

As Anna begins to explore the town and the countryside, she expresses her sense of disorientation and confusion to her foster mother. This utterance adds to her sense of disorganization and instability.

c. "Who are you? Why are you here?"

When Anna first meets Marnie, she is struck by the girl's mysterious and unpredictable nature. This utterance conveys Anna's confusion and disorientation as she tries to understand Marnie's true intentions.

d. "What's happening? Is this real?"

Throughout the movie, Anna experiences vivid dreams and flashbacks that blur the line between reality and imagination. She often expresses her confusion and disorientation in these moments, this utterance adds to her sense of emotional turmoil and confusion.

e. "Why are you doing this? What do you want from me?"

As Anna's friendship with Marnie deepens, she begins to experience feelings of jealousy and confusion. She expresses her uncertainty about their relationship, this utterance conveys Anna's sense of disorganization and emotional instability as she struggles to understand the true nature of their friendship.

f. "Who am I? What's real and what's not?"

Near the end of the movie, Anna learns the truth about Marnie's identity and realizes that many of the memories and experiences she had with Marnie were figments of her imagination. She expresses her sense of confusion and emotional turmoil at this moment, this dialogue conveys Anna's sense of emotional disorganization and instability as she struggles to make sense of what she has experienced.

The utterances in *When Marnie Was There* effectively convey Anna's sense of emotional turmoil and confusion as she tries to navigate the complexities of her own grief and emotional trauma. She lashes out at others, particularly her foster mother, and becomes withdrawn and moody. From the scenes and utterances above, it can be seen how Anna is struggling for herself even though there are several scenes where she tries to socialize or mingle with other people and the panic attacks and asthma she experiences recur. It can also be seen how Anna has difficulty distinguishing between reality and her subconscious, so this causes her to become confused and seem disoriented.

4. Reorganization Stage

In the reorganization stage of grief, individuals begin to accept their loss and start to reorganize their lives without the person or thing they have lost.

- a. Another scene that reflects Anna's reorganization stage is when Anna's foster mother, Yoriko, returns to take Anna back to Sapporo. Anna is greeted warmly by her mother who tells her the truth about her adoption. This scene shows Anna that she is not alone and that there are people in her life who care about her. It also represents a new beginning for Anna, as she begins to reintegrate into her life after her journey of grief by accepting her foster mother. Reintegrating into life after a journey of grief is one of the signs of accepting the past and is part of the reorganization stage. It can be a challenging process, but it is an important part of the grieving process and can help individuals find a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives (Stroebe et al., 2010).



Figure 1. Reorganization Stage

- b. When Anna goes to the abandoned mansion to confront the truth about Marnie, she finds a diary that Marnie had written. In the diary, Marnie expresses her feelings of grief and loneliness. This scene shows Anna that she is not the only one who has experienced loss and that others have gone through similar experiences. It also allows Anna to understand Marnie's perspective, which helps her to accept the truth and move forward with her life.

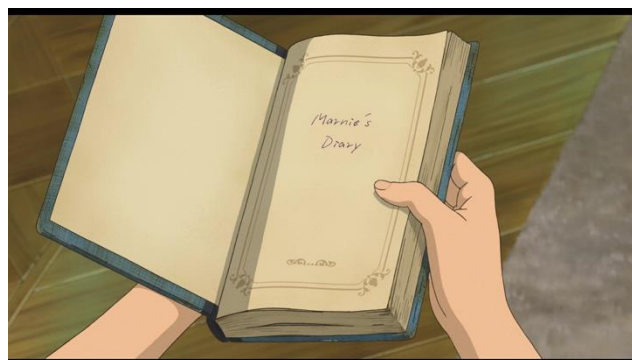


Figure 2. Reorganization Stage

- c. Throughout the movie, Anna expresses her feelings through her artwork. In the reorganization stage, Anna's artwork begins to change, reflecting her acceptance of her past and her willingness to move forward. In one scene, Anna draws a picture of Marnie and herself holding hands. This drawing represents Anna's acceptance of her relationship with Marnie and the impact that it had on her life.



Figure 3. Reorganization Stage

- d. At the end of the movie, Anna went back to Saporro with her mother and she waves goodbye to her friends, Sayaka and Toichi. This scene reflected that Anna has dealt with her past, accept to live with it, and tried to open herself to the world. She changed for herself.



Figure 4. Reorganization Stage

The utterances in the movie reflected:

a. "I'm so happy to see you!"

The dialogue appears when Anna's foster mother greets her warmly when she returns from her time with Marnie. This utterance shows Anna that she has people in her life who care about her and are happy to see her. It also represents a new beginning for Anna, as she begins to reintegrate into her life after her journey of grief.

b. "It's time to go home."

Marnie says this to Anna when she is about to leave the mansion for the last time. This dialogue represents a sense of closure for both Anna and Marnie. It shows that they have both accepted the reality of their situation and are ready to move forward with their lives.

c. "We'll always be friends, won't we?"

Anna says this to Marnie in a dream sequence. This utterance represents Anna's acceptance of her relationship with Marnie and the impact that it had on her life. It also shows that Anna is ready to move forward with her life, but will always cherish the memories of her time with Marnie.

d. "I'm sorry I didn't trust you."

Anna says this to Marnie when she finally discovers the truth about her identity. This utterance represents Anna's acceptance of the truth and her willingness to move forward with her life. It also shows that Anna has learned from her past mistakes and is ready to trust others again.

The scenes and utterances above show Anna's growth and development as a character, as she learns to trust others and create new memories. *When Marnie Was There* effectively portrays the reorganization stage of grief through its use of utterances, and character development. She reaches the stage of reorganization, which is evident in her decision to visit the silo, and realizes that Marnie was not a real person but a manifestation of her subconscious. This realization allows Anna to find closure and move on from her grief. She accepts that Marnie was a part of her imagination and that she can continue to cherish the memories of their time together. Anna's journey of grief is a powerful reminder that, while grief is a difficult and painful process, it is possible to find acceptance and move forward with our lives.

CONCLUSION

When Marnie Was There effectively portrays Anna's journey through the stages of grief based on Tonkin's theory. Based on the analysis in this movie, captures Anna's numbing stage through scenes of isolation and withdrawal, as well as utterances that reflect her guardedness and reluctance to form attachments. The yearning stage is conveyed through Anna's desire for connection, belonging, and emotional fulfillment, depicted in scenes of exploration and her utterances expressing her longing for happiness and a sense of identity. The disorganization stage is portrayed through Anna's emotional turmoil, confusion, difficulty distinguishing reality from imagination, and utterances that reflect her disorientation and sense of not knowing who she is. Finally, the reorganization stage is depicted through scenes and utterances that show Anna's acceptance of her loss, her ability to find meaning and support in her relationships, and her willingness to move forward and reintegrate into her life.

Throughout the movie, Anna's journey illustrates the complexity and multidimensionality of grief, as she experiences a range of emotions and undergoes personal growth and healing which are the four stages shown up in the scenes and utterances. *When Marnie Was There* serves as a poignant exploration of loss, identity, and the power of friendship and acceptance in the process of grief.

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