

BETRAYAL OF LOVE ON PROTAGONIST IN ALEX MICHAELIDAS' NOVEL *THE SILENT PATIENT*

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Abstract

This research is entitled betrayal of love on protagonist in Alex Michaelidas' novel *The Silent Patient*. This study focuses on the effect of the betrayal of love on protagonist. The data used in this study is obtained from the quotation in the novel. Collecting data is based on the theory, understandings, and explanations of betrayal of love. These are put forward by experts such as Fitness and the American Psychiatric Association. This study also uses the love theory of Stenberg. These theories are useful for providing understanding and explanations of betrayal and love related to research problems. In analyzing this research, qualitative research method was used. The result shows that there are four effects of betrayal of love on the protagonist in the novel *The Silent Patient*. They are revenge, loss of trust, loss of integrity, and betrayal trauma. Each of the effects contains three data and they are analyzed based on the theory.

Keywords: *betrayal; integrity; love; protagonist; revenge; trauma; trust*

1. Introduction

Stenberg (1986: 119-120) in *A Triangular Theory of Love*, states that love has three components of love, namely intimacy, passion, and commitment. While betrayal is an element of society. In social life, betrayal consists not only of betrayal of the state, but the experience of betrayal often occurs in relationships with family, partners, and friends. A betrayed person will suffer from the consequences of the act of betrayal, most often a loss of trust, and even worse, abandonment. Rachman in Oeing (2017: 3-4) states that betrayal is a deliberate omission by a trusted person. Some of his acts are unfaithful, infidelity, dishonesty, and the disclosure of dangerous confidential information. These actions will make the person feel very hurt.

In reality, cases of betrayal in the form of infidelity are increasingly occurring in society. Cases like this are not taboo anymore; in fact, it is not uncommon for them to become viral on social media. In literary studies, betrayal is a commonly used in literary element, which is also used in works of fiction such as films and TV series. It is often associated with or used as a plot twist. This is where literature functions as a medium for depicting humans in society and various problems in their lives.

This novel tells the story of Alicia Berenson. She is accused of murdering her husband when he is shot several times in the face. Alicia is on the scene with the gun lying next to her and with a stiff face. After that, she does not want to speak a word, not

even to defend herself. As six years have passed since the tragedy, she keeps her mouth shut and will not speak to anyone. Then, he is taken to a mental care facility called The Grove. Alicia gets acquainted with Theo Faber, who acts as the therapist treating her. Theo Faber is quite obsessed with Alicia's case and wants Alicia to talk. After a long time of interaction, Alicia is shocked by the fact that Theo is closely related to the tragedy of her husband's murder. This behavior is motivated by Alicia's shock at the infidelity and betrayal of her husband which is revealed on the night when the tragedy occurred. The story and the theme itself become the biggest reason why the researcher wants to do some analysis because this novel contains a lot of plot twists and psychological learning. The theme of betrayal is a case that often occurs in the community and it is not uncommon for it to become hot news or viral on social media. Regarding the novel, Alicia's act of killing her husband and Theo's obsession with closely related to betrayal, and this will be analyzed carefully in this study. Therefore, this study is to find out about the betrayal of love on the protagonist in Alex Michaelidas' novel *The Silent Patient*, and this was the focus of analysis in this study.

2. Literature Review

Betrayal is one of the problems that exist in human social relations. Acts of betrayal can occur in every type of relationship such as social, romantic, and friendship and it cannot be separated by age, gender, or social status. In this sub-section, the researcher summarizes and describes the definitions of betrayal by several experts. Macquarie in Fitness (2001: 2) defines the term "betrayal" into several meanings, namely surrendering something to the enemy, revealing secrets, deceiving or misleading, disloyal, unfaithful, abandoning, and disappointing expectations (himself or others). According to Fitness (2001: 2), betrayal can occur when a person sacrifices the interests of others for his own sake. In other words, this behavior implies that the traitor considers his/her needs more important than the needs of the partner or relationship. On the other hand, traitors have behaviors that do not care about the continuity of their relationship and do not respect their partners.

According to American Psychologist Associations Dictionary of Psychology (2022), betrayal is any act that violates the expectations and trust of one partner towards another. The term betrayal is usually associated with infidelity, but it can be interpreted more broadly to include acts such as lying, unfaithfulness, intentional harm breaking promises, and disclosing secrets to others. Betrayal can evoke strong emotions in the victim. The impact is very dangerous because usually, the victim will immediately cut off the relationship. Alternatively, if the traitor apologizes, the victim can cultivate forgiveness that allows the relationship to continue. Oeing (2017: 3) states that acts of betrayal can occur at macro and micro levels. The macro level is in the form of fraud to companies, people, or educational institutions, and micro-actions in the form of infidelity in intimate relationships or breaches of confidentiality in employment or service relationships. Relationships with family, friends and romantic partners can give people some of their greatest happiness, they are also the source of some of their most painful pain. When someone is in a relationship with another person, he definitely expects confidence, hope, trust, and loyalty in the relationship. However, not everyone can keep these expectations, some may violate them, and the violation of such expectations is called betrayal.

Betrayal of love is a traumatic event that causes considerable suffering to the victim. This action has several effects on the victim, including revenge (Fitness, 2001:

12), loss of trust (Oeing, 2017: ii), loss of integrity (Drevitch, (2021), and betrayal trauma (Reyes, et al (2021).

3. Research Method

In conducting research, a research design is very necessary because it can be useful as a guide for every step carried out in research so that it is more logistical and systematic. Creswell (2014: 41) defines research design as a research framework, plan, or procedure that includes collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

This study used qualitative research methods. Creswell (2014: 42) qualitative research is an approach taken to understand the meaning given by individuals, groups in society, or humanity. The process of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing comes from documents, text, images, or tables. Therefore, this research method is very suitable for analyzing the problem in this study because humans are the main object in data collection.

4. Discussion

The discussion contains an analysis of the betrayal of love on the protagonist in Alex Michaelidas' novel *The Silent Patient*. The researcher collects data based on the theory, understandings, and explanations of betrayal of love, put forward by experts such as Fitness (2001) and the American Psychiatric Association (2022) and use the love theory by Stenberg (1986). These theories are useful for providing understanding and explanations of betrayal and love related to research problems. Based on the research problem, the researcher discusses the effects caused by betrayal. The effects include revenge, loss of trust, loss of integrity, and betrayal for love.

4.1 Revenge

Revenge is an act of hurting or injuring another person because of feelings of hurt or mistakes made by someone. This is a response from the victim to maintain his self-esteem. Just as if someone feels betrayed, revenge is one way to get back at them. Revenge as the effect of betrayal of love to the protagonist will be analyzed through the data below.

Alicia held me in her gaze, a cryptic smile on her lips. She didn't speak.

"Tell me why you started talking again."

"You know the answer."

"Do I?"

"Because of you."

"Me?" I looked at her with surprise.

"Because you came here."

"And that made a difference?"

"All the difference—it made ... all the difference." Alicia lowered her voice and stared at me, unblinking. "I want you to understand—what happened to me. What it felt like. It's important ... you understand."
(Michaelidas, 2019: 252).

The data above explains Alicia's revenge on Theo. It is done in a way, Alicia started to speak again. People do not know the truth behind the tragedy. They accuse, berate, vilify and say that Alicia is a mad woman who suddenly kills her husband. In

fact, there is a reason she does that, and people will not know because Alicia never Her goal is to tell the truth, and restore her self-esteem. She also wants Theo to feel the same pain and to experience as she does.

4.2. Loss of Trust

Trust means acknowledging one's honesty and ability and believing that the person can live up to expectations. In social or personal relationships, trust is the basic and most important thing. However, if someone who is trusted then betrays that hope, the victim will lose his trust and will find it difficult to trust others again. Trust is one of the important points in maintaining a marriage. When partners trust each other, there will be a sense of security, comfort, and can share positive values with each other. As experienced by the protagonist, Alicia, as the effect of the betrayal she received from Gabriel, her husband, she tends to develop negative perceptions and finds it difficult to trust others anymore. This can be proven through the quotation below.

"Alicia made no effort to interact with patients or staff, remaining withdrawn and isolated and for the most part, the other patients had left her alone. If people don't reply when you speak to them and never initiate conversation, you soon forget they're there. Alicia had quickly melted into the background, becoming invisible."
(Michaelidas, 2019: 45).

The effect can be determined through the actions of Alicia who is difficult to approach and no longer wants to trust other people. The quotation above also shows that while living in Grove, Alicia never tries to mingle with other patients or with the hospital staff. She prefers to be alone and isolated. As a result, other patients do not want to approach her and are not even aware of her presence. This behavior is the result of the loss of trust experienced by Alicia. The reason is, she thinks that no one would help and believe what he said, so it is better for her to shut up and seclude himself. The lines quoted above show the effect that Alicia feels as the result of love.

4.3. Loss of Integrity

Integrity is a self-image that can be seen in daily behavior and actions. Simply, integrity is honesty which is a principle, and is always upheld. One of the characteristics of someone with integrity is positive thinking. Integrity can also be interpreted as someone who has the ability to radiate authority and honesty. In a marriage integrity is important. Integrity in marriage means honesty, sincerity, and loyalty to your partner. However, when a person loses integrity, he will lose the credibility and trust of his partner. Regarding the explanation above, as a result of the betrayal she experienced, Alicia lost her integrity and identity. This can be seen from the quotations below.

If you told me this broken shell had once been the brilliant Alicia Berenson, described by those who knew her as dazzling, fascinating, and full of life— wouldn't have believed you. I knew then and there I'd made the right decision in coming to the Grove. All my doubts vanished. I became resolved to stop at nothing until Alicia became my patient. There was no time to waste: Alicia was lost. She was missing
(Michaelidas, 2019: 34-35).

4.4 Betrayal for Trauma

The trauma of betrayal is a type of trauma that refers to the emotional pain and distress that occurs when a trusted and loved person violates someone's trust. The most common effects are anxiety and depression. One of the outcomes of betrayal trauma is PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Regarding the novel *The Silent Patient*, Alicia experienced several PTSD symptoms as a result of the trauma of betrayal she experienced, including intrusion symptoms, mood and cognitive change symptoms, and avoidance symptoms.

“During the trial, the judge took a dim view of Alicia’s persistent refusal to speak. Innocent people, Mr. Justice Alverstone pointed out, tended to proclaim their innocence loudly—and often. Alicia not only remained silent, but she showed no visible signs of remorse. She didn’t cry once throughout the trial—a fact made much of in the press—her face remaining unmoved, cold, Frozen.”
(Michaelidas, 2019: 19)

The quotation above shows the effect that Alicia receives as an effect of the betrayal of love. The effect is that Alicia shows mood and cognitive symptoms characteristics as a result of betrayal trauma. One of the characteristics of mood changes is numbness. Numbness is the most common mood change shown by Alicia. As a result of the trauma she experienced, Alicia is always alone and quiet, whereas before, she is a cheerful, authoritative, and talkative girl. She also experiences cognitive changes, namely silence. One of the characteristics of cognitive changes shown by Alicia i.e., she is unable to understand, react and make decisions in the trial.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of the effect of betrayal of love on the protagonist in the novel *The Silent Patient*, the researcher finds four findings. They are:

1. There are four effects of betrayal of love on the protagonist in the novel. They are revenge, loss of trust, loss of integrity, and betrayal trauma.
2. Through the analysis, Alicia takes revenge by shooting Gabriel, confronting Theo, and starting to speak again to restore her dignity and reveal the truth.
3. Loss of trust can be shown from Alicia’s actions i.e., difficulty trusting people and difficulty building a new relationship, difficulty trusting Theo, and loss of trust in Gabriel.
4. Loss of dignity can be proven through Alicia’s behavior i.e., losing her identity and authority, feeling humiliated, and thinking she does not deserve a positive relationship and does not deserve being loved.
5. Betrayal Trauma can be shown from Alicia's behavior i.e., her emotional reactions towards Theo, her change of mood after trauma, and her avoidance of all the things related to the trauma.

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