

## PAT'S FAILURE IN HANDLING CRISIS AND THE HEALING PROCESS IN QUICK'S *THE SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK*

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### Abstract

This research aims to identify crisis on certain stage of development on Pat, the healing process that is occur on him, and the impact of his failure on his marriage.

This research is a qualitative research employing content analysis method. The data of this research are expressions taken from Matthew Quick's *The Silver Linings Playbook* which have correlation with the objectives of the research. The data collection is conducted by reading the source of the data comprehensively and taking some notes of important expressions which is related to the topic.

The findings of the study conclude that Pat's trauma is a result of his failure on the step of intimacy vs. isolation of his psychosocial stage of development. His failure on his marriage with Nikki affects his next stage of psychosocial development. Thus, to be able to continue the next stage of development, Pat has to deal with trauma healing.

**Keywords:** trauma, psychosocial, failure marriage, trauma healing process, stage of development, The Silver Linings Playbook.

### INTRODUCTION

As social beings, human beings live in groups, form societies and create an environment. Societies and environment allow them to share knowledge, affection, and skill. Growing up is one of human's nature process begin with birth and end with death. Within the process, there are some steps that will be experienced by someone; they are childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. These three main steps will lead someone to be mature with the background of culture, character and background. As a result, someone will reflect what he or she got during their growing up process as their behavior. If one of those steps is failed, it might damage their personality because society and environment have a big role in building people's personality.

“Personality is the set of psychological traits and mechanism within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptation to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments” (Larsen & Mayer, 2007: 1). Through personality, someone can be distinguished from others because personality reflects his or her identity.

Personality and experience are related to each other. Experiences in childhood give a big impact toward someone's personality. For example, a caregiver, who gives attention and affection to a baby, will give a good impact for the baby's personality in future. Otherwise, someone will have problems regarding to his or her personality which is called as personality disorder.

According to Zimmerman (2010), a personality disorder is a condition when people cannot adjust themselves in normal conditions such as society, new environment, and also in a foreign place. Erik Erikson (1950), is one of psychoanalyst who believes that a person with personality disorder might have had problem with their early stage of developmental stages. Erikson evolves the eight developmental stages that will affect person's psychological growth. Psychosocial analysis is a branch of psychology that concern on social and historical factor in a person personality. This study is well known proposed by Erikson who describes stages of development to include all of the human's life time as an extended of Freud's work ( Fleming, 2004: 1) Psychosocial theory believes that human's psychology affected by the stage of development, they are infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescent, young adulthood, adulthood and old age. Erikson believes that human being must pass eight stages of psychosocial development throughout their life-cycle.

Erikson introduces eight stages model of psychosocial development which focuses on the influences of the surrounding social environment into individual's personality and behavior. Erickson states that every stage of development has its crises as the challenge of every step to be dealt with. Erickson believes that "these crises of the ego presented challenges to one's individual identity" (in Fleming, 2004: 3-4). Every stage in the stages

of development needs to be completed by a person to create a healthy personality to live in society. However, if a person fails to complete a stage; it can damage his or her ability to complete the next stage of development. Thus, the balance outcome is necessary to have a healthy personality development. According to Fleming (2004) the stages of development covering every stage in human's life from infancy up to old age.

However, someone with interference on one of the stages will encounter with a personality disorder. A personality problem is not only found in the society, but also in literary world. Literature is a representative of life since it reflects the human life. Literary work depicts many issues happened in real life. According to Siswanto (1993: 19), as the result of human's conscious contemplation and imagination that someone knows, avoids, feels, responds and imagines, literary work delivered to the public through language as the medium. The issues in certain literary works have similarities to the conditions in the human's real life, outside of literary work itself. There are so many writers who have written about personality problems. One of them is Mathew Quick, an American writer who wrote a novel entitled *The Silver Linings Playbook*, which presents Pat as the main character who deals with a personality disorder.

*The Silver Linings Playbook* is a novel that depicted adulthood life in Philadelphia.

The novel was chosen as the object of the study because Pat encounters a problem that leads him to be a psychologically ill person. Moreover, the novel depicted failed marriage that commonly happens on life in general. The reason for conducting this research is related to the people's low degree of awareness toward the impact of a trauma on failure toward someone's personality.

"Trauma is defined as a physical or psychological threat or assault to a child's physical integrity, sense of self, safety or survival or to the physical safety of another person significant to the child" (Vermont in Moroz, 2005: 2). Trauma is a result whenever a person feels threatened, helpless and scared which could destroy his or her sense of safety. Trauma is a psychological disorder as a form of emotional experiences that hurts and causing an impact on mental and physical in continuously.

Moreover, the researcher wants to conduct a study to reveal the process of how Pat suffers from traumatic events, to identify in which stage of psychosocial development that Pat is unable to handle the crisis and to reveal the impact of Pat's marriage failure in the past toward his personality.

In this research, the researcher is interested to identify in which stage of psychosocial development Pat is unable to handle the crisis, to reveal Pat's healing process on his trauma, and to reveal the impact of Pat's marriage failure toward the next stage of his psychosocial development.

This research is limited and all related to Pat as a character in the novel entitled *The Silver Linings Playbook*.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To conduct this research, the researcher employed qualitative research method. Qualitative research presented as narrative or textual description on a study of particular phenomenon (Vanderstoep and Johnstone, 2009: 7). Qualitative research is suitable for this research since the data used are words, phrase, clauses, and paragraphs which are used to identify the identity crisis of Pat, as the object of the research. The description of the data also used to obtain deeper understanding about a psychosocial crisis using Erikson, psychosocial theory.

In collecting the data, the researcher took four steps. The research data were taken by reading the novel carefully and noticing every detail that would be analyzed. In this research, the first step that the researcher does is, close reading to Quick's *The Silver Linings Playbook*. The second step was re-reading the novel comprehension and taking notes of the data from the novel. Then, the researcher interpreted the data from the novel and categorized the data in order to answer the research questions. The last, the researcher identified the data based on each categorization.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To present the finding comprehensively, this chapter divides the chapter into three parts.

### **Stage of Psychosocial Development that Pat is Unable to Handle His Crisis**

Pat is identified as trauma sufferer that experienced failure on his marriage life. Pat is a young adulthood who enters intimacy vs. isolation stage on Erikson's theory (1950). He is experiencing isolation as his failure to build intimacy. Isolation is a common problem for those who are not able to experience intimacy during his age.

So I kiss the picture again, feeling the cold flatness of the glass, leaving a kiss-shaped smudge, which I wipe away with my shirt. **“God, I miss you so much, Nikki,”** I say, but the picture is silent, like always.

(Quick, 2010: 87)

In the quotation above, it is clearly seen that Pat is talking to the picture of his wife since it is not possible to meet his wife. Loneliness can be distinguished in the paragraph as Pat suffers from isolation. To reduce his lonely feelings, Pat always stares at his wife picture and communicates with it. Isolation on Pat happens as it is impossible for him to meet his wife. According to de Jong Gierveld et al (2011), a divorced person is more often found to experience intense loneliness. Moreover, those who are living alone and underdeveloped place. After the divorce that he never knew, Pat lived in psych hospital

which he could not be able to see how the outside world is.

Pat feels isolated not only after his wife divorced him, but also during his life with his wife. Pat also feels the isolation when he is mocked by Nicky's friends because of his different interest. Thus, to make his wife and their friends interesting with him, later on, when he thinks that they going to meet again, he tries to follow them on what they interest to such as reading literature. Through this way, he hopes that he is able to talk about the same topic with Nikki's friend so he will not be mocked as he will get some knowledge about literature, like other Nikki's friends do.

Easily hurt by criticism also one of the isolation symptoms. It also happens to Pat, as the isolator that he easily gets mad toward something he undesired. Some critiques from the people around easily hurt him and triggering trauma on himself. The paragraph above shows that Pat is sensitive toward critique that caused him to get mad.

Mom says he needs time to get used to my living at home again, which I am happy to give him, especially since I am sort of afraid to talk with Dad anyway. **I remember him yelling at me the only time he ever visited me in the bad place, and he said some pretty awful things about Nikki and silver linings in general.** I see Dad in the hallways of our house, of course, but he doesn't look at me when we pass.

(Quick, 2010: 85)

After his homecoming, in the earlier week, the relationship between Pat and his father is

not really good. His dad seems to ignore him and refuse to talk to Pat, while Pat himself also afraid to start to talk to his father. It is mentioned that his father once yelled to Pat when he was visiting Pat in the hospital for the first and the last time. That bad experience drives Pat to have such a fear to build communication with his own dad. A critique accused to him will trigger him to displeasure. Although it happens some time ago, he still remembers what things make him uncomfortable with it. For him, as trauma survivor, things that hurt his feeling will last in his mind and easily recall about it.

### **The Process of Pat's Healing on Trauma**

Trauma happened to Pat as he found his wife was cheating with another man is considered as the source of his psychological trauma. In this case, Pat afraid that he is going to lose his wife since he never realized that both of him and Nikki, his ex-wife, are divorced. The recovery process that he does, helps him to achieve the fact that meeting Nikki is something impossible because she is now living with another man as husband and wife. The process of recovery also helps him to achieve himself as someone who has undergone a horrible experience that made him sent to mental hospital. Thus, the healing process on him also involving some people who had involved on his trauma. However, every person that involves on Pat's trauma will give effect on his trauma recovery differently.

Mom says he needs time to get used to my living at home again, which I am happy to give him, **especially since I am sort of afraid to talk with Dad anyway. I remember him yelling at me the only time he ever visited me in the bad place, and he said some pretty awful things about Nikki and silver linings in general.** I see Dad in the hallways of our house, of course, but he doesn't look at me when we pass.

(Quick, 2010: 2)

In the paragraph above, the person who brings a big influence on his trauma healing is dominated by his father. His father refuses to talk to Pat and prefers spending his time in his study room instead of getting along with his own son.

In a normal family, a father will be happy to see his child back home after they were not seeing each other for a long time. However, it seems that Pat's father does not pay any attention to Pat's existence in the house which creates a non-harmony relation between father and son. A good relationship between father and son is important to build an ideal family. The role of a father is important for his son to help his son's understanding of manhood. According to Lamb (in Allen and Dally, 2007: 26) children development outcomes is indirectly affected by his or her father due to father function is supporting practically and emotionally the role of mother. In this case, his father seems reluctant to support Pat. In Pat's case, the communication between him and his father is not going well since his father keeps ignoring him and rejecting the existence in the house.

To be a mentally healthy person, Pat has to undergo four steps of healing process. Recovery is the main goal for people who have experienced trauma. Recovery will help a survivor to live in the present without being overwhelmed by the thoughts and feelings of the past. According to Zetterberg (2010: 21) there are several stages recovery on trauma healing. They are, safety and stabilization, remembrance and mourning, reconnection, and reconciling.

In safety and stabilization step, trauma survivor needs to find out which part of life that need to be stabilized and the way it is accomplished could help him or her to recover to be a normal person. However, trauma survivor needs to feel safe due to a person that affected by trauma tends to feel insecure by people around him, even with themselves.

In this step, Pat also helps himself to feel safe from things that he does not like.

“So,” he says. “The Kenny G song really got to you. I can’t say I’m a fan either, but ...” **I close my eyes, hum a single note, and silently count to ten, blanking my mind.** When I open my eyes, he says, “You want to talk about Kenny G?” I close my eyes, hum a single note, and silently count to ten, blanking my mind.

(Quick, 2010: 3).

By closing his eyes and trying to “clear his mind”, Pat also contributes helping himself to be stable. Humming also helps himself to reduce his anger caused by the trauma to the song. Calming himself to prevent anger whenever someone mentions

about things he hates helps him to control himself from anger.

In the step of remembrance and mourning, Pat involves himself to tell the detail of the story of every bad moment he experienced to his therapist. This step helps him to integrate his memory of trauma and the present time.

“A few months ago I agreed to give Nikki some space, and she agreed to come back to me when she felt like she had worked out her own issues enough so we could be together again. So we are sort of separated, but only temporarily.”

(Quick; 2010: 3)

This recovery contains the step of collecting memories of what had happened in his past time. In the paragraph above, Pat, helps by his therapist, is trying to tell what he feels and remember about his problem.

As a therapist, Dr. Patel’s job is trying to make Pat realizes that talking about his problem is a necessity since they have to know what problem that bothers him so much.

Reconnection healing step helps Pat who is dealing with trauma since he is not able to meet his wife. Reconnection helps him by understanding his life before the trauma happens. Commonly, trauma will disturb one’s feelings and emotions that cannot be controlled. Thus, some more upsetting events or feelings will be more dominant to the person who has trauma. As a trauma survivor, it is easier for Pat to remember unpleasing memories that happened on the past as it is

explained on the quotation "Mom says he needs time to get used to my living at home again, which I am happy to give him, especially since I am sort of afraid to talk with Dad anyway. I remember him yelling at me the only time he ever visited me in the bad place, and he said some pretty awful things about Nikki and silver linings in general" (Quick 2010: 87). Moreover, people who have experienced trauma tend to feel lonely, being isolated and find themselves difficult to get along with others. Thus, reconnection is needed due to develop mutual trust and build relationship with other people.

There are two types of reconciling in Pat's trauma healing. They are; reconciling with his surrounding and reconciling the past. Reconciling with family is the very first step to be done. Family reconciliation can bring joy, healing and renew home atmosphere although bringing reconciliation in the family need emotional work and willingness from each family member. Reconciliation entangled trust and involvement both two people or more who have been damaged the relationship before. A person who plays role in reconciliation will contribute to this process to achieve the restoration.

The researcher found that reconciling the past that happens on Pat is his willingness to let the person that he really wanted to be with, happy with her own life. It indicates that he already accept himself and the situation who was once became something that makes him feels uncomfortable.

### **The Impact of Pat's Marriage Failure toward the Next Stage of His Development.**

Marriage occurs in two mature persons who start to develop and involve him or herself to further step of human development. According to Erikson, middle adulthood is a stage where an adult is considered to have an ability to care for another person. Moreover, adult also has a role in widening their responsibility to take care of the next generation to bring new ideas (Feist and Feist, 2009: 260).

Failure in developing family is also experienced by Pat, as he experiences failure in his intimacy stage. Unlike people on his age, Pat has failed in build his own family has not got his own children. Yet, the failure that he experienced during this step affect his psychology.

I have to admit that Emily is a cute kid, and I instantly understand why Ronnie has written me so many letters about his daughter—why he loves her so much. **I start to think about having children with Nikki someday and I become so happy that I give little Emily a kiss on the forehead, as if she were Nikki's baby and I was her father.** And then I kiss Emily's forehead again and again, until she giggles.

(Quick, 2010: 15)

From the quotation above it could explain that Pat starts to decide to have a child with Nikki. According to him, a happy marriage can be seen in Ronnie's family. Ronnie is having a good marriage live with Veronica and he is able to nurture Emily as

their children. Pat thinks that nurture a child will be a rewarding experience for his marriage lives with Nikki. However, since the divorcement happened in his marriage life, Pat will not be able to have children with Nikki which is mean that he will not be able to continue the next stage of psychosocial as a parent.

In this case, Pat experiencing stagnation as the dystonic of generativity. During his age, he is expected to be able to care for another person in the terms of parenting. Just like Ronnie, at his age, Ronnie is able to nurture Emily, his children, while Pat is stuck in a certain stage of development. To conclude, even Pat and Ronnie are in the same age, they are not having the same stage of development since Pat experiencing crisis on the stage of development before.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing Quick's *The Silver Linings Playbook* using psychosocial perspective, the researcher concludes the result of the research in the some explanations.

First, since crises happen on Pat's psychosocial development, the researcher finds a particular stage which Pat is unsuccessful to handle the crisis. In this case, Pat is unable to handle intimacy stage which leads him to be an isolated person.

Second, there are some steps of trauma healing that is Pat has to do. On safety and stabilization stage, Pat discovers situation

which makes him feel uncomfortable and he feels that he is unable to handle it. He also has to face some traumatic experiences until he finds the way to deal with it. Thus, this stage helps Pat to be a stable person, who is able to handle his uncertain feelings for every situation. The second stage is remembrance. This healing stage helps Pat to understand his own emotion, so he can aware and control it. Through remembrance, Pat is able to overcome any weaknesses that frustrate him. The third stage is reconnection. Reconnection with family is advantageous for Pat since family gives him social support to get healed. Through reconnection, Pat finds love and care that he missed before.

During his age, Pat is not able to experience generativity like he supposed to be. Divorcement that is experiencing by Pat is a crisis that happens during his intimacy stage. During this stage, he is experiencing failure in building a good marriage with his wife. The failure to maintain a good marriage life with Nikki results in divorcement. Therefore, Pat will not be able to build intimacy with Nikki anymore. This failure caused him to have a trauma which leads him to be stuck in certain stage instead of moving on to the next stage.

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