

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTRES' CONFLICTS
IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' *THE GLASS MENAGERIE***



A JOURNAL

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.) in English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and
Education Mataram University**

BY:

FEBRIANA KURNIAWATI

E1D110016

**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
LANGUAGE AND ARTS DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MATARAM UNIVERSITY
2017**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS' CONFLICTS IN TENNESSEE
WILLIAMS' *THE GLASS MENAGERIE***

BY:

FEBRIANA KURNIAWATI

E1D110016

ABSTRACT

This thesis is written based on a play by Tennessee Williams *The Glass Menagerie*. The analysis of this study focuses on identifying the conflict faced by the main characters of the play. The data of this study were gathered from the play itself which consists of the dialogues between the main characters and library research. This study applies two theories in analyzing the play. Objective approach is used to analyze the play structurally and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs theory used to identify causes of the main characters' conflict. The results of this study are: (1) there are three of main characters in the play; Amanda Wingfield (mother), Laura Wingfield (daughter), and Tom Wingfield (son). (2) There are two kinds of conflict found which the main characters faced in this play: internal conflict and external conflict. (3) There are some needs that motivated conflicts between the main characters: basic needs and meta-needs.

Keyword: *Conflict, Main Character, Play*

ANALISIS KONFLIK-KONFLIK PADA TOKOH-TOKOH UTAMA DALAM DRAMA KARYA DARI TENNESSEE WILLIAMS *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

Oleh:

FEBRIANA KURNIAWATI
E1D110016

ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini ditulis berdasarkan pada sebuah drama yang dibuat oleh Tennessee Williams yang berjudul *The Glass Menagerie*. Analisis pada penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mengidentifikasi konflik yang dihadapi oleh tokoh-tokoh utama dalam drama ini. Data dari penelitian ini didapatkan dari skrip drama itu sendiri yang terdiri atas percakapan antara tokoh-tokoh utama dan penelitian pustaka. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua teori dalam menganalisis drama. Pendekatan objektif digunakan untuk menganalisis drama secara berurutan dan teori Maslow yaitu hirarki kebutuhan manusia untuk mengidentifikasi penyebab-penyebab konflik pada tokoh-tokoh utama yang ada dalam drama. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah: (1) Terdapat tiga tokoh utama dalam drama, yaitu Amanda Wingfield (ibu), Laura Wingfield (anak perempuan) dan Tom Wingfield (anak laki-laki). (2) Ditemukan dua jenis konflik yang dihadapi oleh tokoh utama dalam drama ini, yaitu konflik internal dan konflik eksternal. (3) Adanya beberapa kebutuhan yang memotivasi terjadinya konflik antara tokoh utama dalam drama, yaitu basic needs and meta-needs.

Kata-kata Kunci : Konflik, Tokoh utama dan Drama.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In everyday life, we often experience conflict due to interaction and communication. According to Wilmot and Hocker (2011), conflict is known to be a fact of life and it truly exists and happens in our life. It occurs between individual, families, and even nations. This conflicts could be found in the workplace, at home between family and neighbors, or even through marriages. Undeniably, conflict seems to be natural for human being because man can not escape from it. It happens so because man can not fulfill all he desires completely. Where the choices fail to satisfy the complete desire, the result will be conflict.

In its development, conflict is not only used to examine human being in the real life but also as a basis for examining characters in literary works. Literature, like other arts, is essentially an imaginative act of the writer's imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experience (Taylor, 1981:81). It shows that literary work is an author's reflection and imagination about everything that he knows, feels, responds, and fantasizes about daily life. That is why the problems in literary works have similarities with the real life. Conflict in literature can be mentioned as something unpleasant and dramatic that happens and experienced by the characters in story that refers to the two contradicted actions (Wellek and Warren, 1989: 285). Moreover, this opposing action frequently leads to moral terms that relate to how human being faces the conflict in their life.

The Glass Menagerie was written in 1944 by Tennessee Williams. This play is about the Wingfield family, comprised of faded Southern belle Amanda (the matriarch) and her two children, Tom and Laura. Tom is a restless dreamer frustratingly tethered to home, while Laura is a shy, crippled girl who spends her time admiring her collection of glass animals in lieu of social interaction. The play's action is motivated by Amanda's urging of Tom to bring home a "gentleman caller" for Laura, despite Laura's timidity and Tom's desire to get out from under his mother's domineering hand. He is an aspiring poet who toils in a shoe

warehouse to support his mother, Amanda, and sister, Laura. This play is dominantly expressing conflicts experienced by the main characters.

Interactions between main characters and natural circumstances around them create conflicts which affected and forced the main characters to fulfill certain needs. These needs were desire and intuition which were motivated by basic needs. McLeod (2007) explains that these basic needs serve as a motivation for the people in achieving their goals. In addition, this motivation serve as a medium for people to make their lives more valuable in gaining their destiny. This statement is based on Maslow's theory that human constituted by basic needs (1970). This theory shows that one must satisfy lower basic needs before moving to the higher level needs.

Based on the consideration above, the writer have some problem which need to be analysis. The problem are as follow :

1. Who are the main characters presented in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*?
2. What types of conflict do occure in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*?
3. What are the causes of conflict based on Maslow's theory in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*?

The objective of research is to identify the main characters presented in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*, to identify the types of the conflict in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie* and to identify the causes of the conflict based on Maslow's theory in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*.

This study is concentrated on identifying and describing the main characters' conflicts in a play of *The Glass Menagerie* based on literary perspective. The analysis of the main characters is definitely focused on descriptions of conversations (dialogues) and events in the play in order to find conflicts phenomenon in main characters.

THEORETICAL BASES

Drama

Literature means writing valued as work of art. Literature refers to the compositions that tell the stories, dramatize situation, express emotion, analyze and advocate ideas (Robert and Henry, 1993:1). It means that literature is the art of writing that is full of expression and idea because it is a product of imagination that comes from the author's mind. Roberts states that literature may be classified into four categories or genres: prose fiction, poetry, drama and nonfiction prose. Usually the first three are classed as imaginative literature (1995: 2). Abrams (1999:69) defines "drama is form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue".

Characters

All stories must have certain characteristics or elements. Without these elements, the story will not make sense or not complete. One of the elements is characters. In literary work, characters can be represented whether by persons, animals, or things. Characters take an important role in a literary work, especially drama. Bennet and Royle (2004: 60) stated "Characters are the life of literature: they are the objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation". This statements showed that how meaningful characters are. Through these characters, the author exposing the reader emotions while reading the story. Support by Nurhayati (2004: 3), character is figures who present in a story which have moral value, certain intellectual and emotion that seen from him or her says or behaviour.

There are many types of characters that exist in literature, each with its own function and role. Characters may be presented by means of description, through their actions, speech,

thoughts interaction with other characters. Based on its function, characters can be divided into main character, secondary character, and supporting character. The other classification of character is based on the character's role can divided into two types; protagonist and antagonist (Althenberd & Lewis, cited in Damiyana, 2006: 10)

Conflict

In daily life, a person is confronted with many problems and obstacles. Conflict has an important role because conflict is the main issue in a story and it becomes the essence of any literary works. According to Roberts, conflict is defined as the opposition between two characters, between large group of people, or between protagonist and larger forces such as natural objects, ideas, modes of behavior, public opinion, and the like. It may also be internal and psychological, involving choices facing a protagonist (1995: 1694). While, Stanford said that conflicts means a struggle between two opposing forces may be in form of a class of action, ideas, desires, and will (1999: 40). In extreme, conflict can happen not only to survive and exist but it has the purpose to destroy the existance of other people or other group that they feel as their enemy.

Nurgiantoro (1995:124) states that kinds of conflict in a literary work are divided into two categories; external conflict and internal conflict. Internal conflict are the conflicts that happen to the character's heart and mind, for instance, because of the dual desires or different wishes and choice, etc. While, the external conflict occurs between the characters in the story with something outside of him perhaps with environment or other character (Nurgiantoro, 2002: 124). External conflict deal with: Man vs. Man, Man vs. society, and Man vs. nature.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory is a theory that emphasizes the important role of need in designing human's personality. Maslow (1943) states that people actions are motivated to achieve certain needs. Maslow first introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation* and his book *Motivation and Personality*. This hierarchy suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to the more advanced needs. Maslow believed that these needs are similar to instincts and play a major role in motivating behavior.

In his book entitled *Motivation and Personality*, Maslow (1970) divides hierarchy of needs into two; basic needs (physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, and esteem needs) and meta-needs (self-actualizations).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Method

The research method that used in this study is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is research procedure that results observable data from characters' utterances and behaviors (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 4). While, descriptive method is used to describe the objects, events, phenomenon, background of place and time where the main characters stand at that time.

Source of the data

The sources of data used in this study are primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data is the data that are collected directly from the play *The Glass Menagerie*. Moreover, the second data are supporting data gathered from journal, thesis of my senior collage students at Mataram University and some books that have relation to this study.

Method of Collecting Data

Method of collecting data that used in this research is by reading a whole the play and noticing important point in the story. In order to gather the data, the researcher reads the play and discovers any data in accordance with this study such as expressions, dialogue, signs, and statements.

Method of Analyzing Data

In analyzing data which are related to the topic, this study will use structural theory which is also called objective approach. This approach believed that in order to analyze literary work objectively, it should be based on the understanding of literary work itself or specially analyzes the intrinsic elements of literary work.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After observing the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*, the researcher found who are the main characters in the play, what kinds of conflict faced by the main characters, and what are the causes of main characters' conflict based on Maslow's theory. The first is main characters in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*. In this study, there are three of main characters found by the researcher in the play; Tom Wingfield, Amanda Wingfield, and Laura Wingfield. The second is kinds of conflict faced by the main characters in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*. The researcher found that there are two conflicts presented in this play, they are internal conflict and external conflict. The last is causes of main characters' conflict based on Maslow's theory. The researcher found chatacters actions in this play are motivated to achieve certain needs, wether basic needs or meta-needs.

After observing a play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*, the researcher identified there are a number of characters exist in this play. Here are characters that discovered by the researcher in the play entitled *The Glass Menagerie*;

1. Amanda Wingfield: Much of her life revolves around the past, particularly her time as a privileged debutante in the Mississippi Delta. She is the essential Southern Belle and a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.
2. Tom Wingfield: is a poet trapped by lower-middle class family circumstances and tethered to a job that offers no creative or emotional outlet. He struggles with his duty to support his mother and sister and yearns for the day that he can be free of the constraints they represent.
3. Laura Wingfield: is Tom's older sister, nearly 24, who wears a brace on her foot due to a childhood illness. She is physically and emotionally frail, painfully shy, insecure, and isolated.

Conflict Between Man vs Himself

1. Tom and Himself

Whole the effect of problem was centered by Tom. He is not only financially supports the family, but Amanda pushes him to take on a parental role. Tom feels the pressure of having responsibility for his sister until she is married. Amanda sees that marriage as a way to help and protecting Laura. Actually, Tom feels better when he tries to help his mother in finding a suitor for Laura to get mother belief. Moreover, he wants his sister has a relationship with other and can face the reality. however, what he did was wrong. All that he did failed.

2. Conflict between Laura and herself

Laura is the only character in the play that never does anything to hurt anyone else. One of her leg is shorter than the other, and it is quite possible that this physical deformity contributes to her physiological shyness. Amanda tries to fill Laura's social need with family. Laura points out that she is not expecting anyone, but Amanda does not want to believe it. She fears that Laura may become an "old maid". She asks her daughter to receive some of gentlemen caller, but Laura refuse it by exclaiming, "I'm just not popular like you were in Blue Mountain...".

3. The Conflict of Amanda and herself

In this story, Amanda's internal conflict showed when she failed to build up Laura's independency. As a single mother, she need to protect her children, especially Laura who is crippled girl. She entered Laura to Rubicam Businesss collage, but laura never attending that classes. This case made her very disaapointed with her daughter.

Conflict between Man vs Man

1. The Conflict of Amanda and Tom Wingfield

In this play, Tom who is a sensitive person, is aware about financial condition of his family and wants to escape to preserve his creativity. For the majority of his adult life, he had to work to support his mother and sister because his father had abandoned the family. Tom's attitude towards his family is stressful, he truly cares for them. Tom temporarily escape from the drudgery of the family, he goes to the movie and sometimes go to bars to numb his restless mind. But neither the movies nor the bars are his solutions to his problems. The irritating situation becomes worse by his

mother's endless nagging, so he starts to prepare himself to get out of the trap, and finally he runs away.

2. The Conflict of Amanda And Laura Wingfield

This conflict exists when Laura fears of disappointing her mother and her inability to function in the world. The incident in which Amanda spends precious funds to send Laura to business school reveals Laura's emotional turmoil in this regard. Laura understands the sacrifice, but she simply cannot bear to do what her mother wants her to do. She drops out, but she keeps her actions from Amanda, until the truth is revealed.

Conflict Between Man Vs. Society

1. The Conflict of Laura and Society

This conflict arise when Laura enrolled at the business school, she becomes very shy and embarrassed, hence causing her to become ill in the classroom. She cannot bear to face those some faces again the next day and decides to give up on going to her classes. Everyday instead of attending the academy, Laura would go to the zoo or take a walk around the park to pass the time.

2. The Conflict of Amanda and Society

Amanda is a mother of Tom and Laura. She is the opposite of her daughter outspoken and assertive. In 1937, she is a neglected wife forced to live as a single parents, desperate masses of the Great Depression. Generally, parents always take care of their children. It also does with Amanda as a single parent. This condition compulse her becomes an overprotective and smothering because Amanda wants her children to break out the cycle of poverty and encourages them to secure a better life for themselves.

3. The Conflict of Tom and Society

In this social crisis during the era of The Great Depression, Tom had gone to movies and wrote poem at work to escape the reality of living at home due to he always quarrelling with his mother. The responsibility and duty to support his mother, his sister and himself make him to work at the warehouse. He wanted to become a poet, but he was pressured by his mother to become responsible enough to take care of his crippled sister. The condition of the family's economy make him confuse what actually he should to do.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The play entitled *The Glass Menagerie* is a play that have chosen by the researcher as the object of this study. This play analyzed using objective approach and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs theory. Objective approach is applied in order to analyze the play structurally and Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs theory is used to identify main characters' conflict.

The first is through objective approach the researcher discovered there are the major characters in the play; Tom Wingfield, Amanda Wingfield, and Laura Wingfield. Each character in the story has their own problems. Tom hates working at the warehouse. Amanda tries way too hard to make her daughter more outgoing, and is too nosy, while Laura is too ensure of herself and terribly shy.

The second is through Maslow's hierarchy of human needs theory, the researcher discovered that the main characters' basic and meta-needs are fulfilled. In addition, there are two conflicts faced by the main characters; internal conflict and external conflict. In their own ways, each of the Wingfields struggles against the hopelessness that threatens their lives. Tom's fear of working in a dead-end job for decades drives him to work hard creating poetry,

which he finds more fulfilling. Amanda's disappointment at the fading of her glory motivates her attempts to make her daughter, Laura, more popular and social. Laura's extreme fear of seeing Jim O'Connor reveals her underlying concern about her physical appearance and about her inability to integrate herself successfully into society.

After giving some conclusions about the discussion, some suggestions were given as a part of this thesis. Literary work is useful as one of strategies in teaching foreign language. The learners, who spend their time in reading or watching literary work such as play, will acquire a great improvement in his reading comprehension since literary language has its literal meaning as well as the meaning beyond its expression.

The researcher recommends for people especially for English Department students of Mataram University to read this play, because during the examination of this play, there are a number of interesting aspects can be analyzed such as; historical aspect and cultural aspect. The writer also get the values and lessons from the story of the play, which may take as reflection toward our life, to be better than before and improving of the quality of life. Thus, to analyze the play, it is important for the researcher to understand the play deeply with read it repeatedly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M.H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Seventh Edition. United States of America: Earl McPeck.
- Bennet, Andrew & Nicolas Royle. (2004). *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. Great Britain. Longman.
- Bogdan, R. and Taylor, S.J. (1975). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Method*. New York: John Willey and Sons.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96.
- Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- McLeod. (2007). "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs". Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html> [31 July 2015].
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. (1995). *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press
- Nurhayati, Ari. 2004. *Unsur-Unsur Dalam Cerita Fiksi*. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
- Roberts, V. Edgar and Henry E. Jacobs. (1995). *Literature: An Introduction To Reading And Writing*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Wellek, Rene dan Austin, Warren. (1989). *Theory of Literature*. New York: A havest Book Harcourt, Brace & World. INC
- Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*. In the Gutterbreg ebook project. Retrieved from <http://www.ebooktakeaway.com> [22 February 2015]
- Wilmot, W, & Hocker, J. (2011). *Interpersonal conflict* (8th ed). New York: McGraw Hil.