

The Analysis of Conflict of the Main Character in the Movie “I am Sam”

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Abstract The title of this paper is *The Analysis of Conflict of the Main Character in the Movie “I am Sam”*. This study focuses on describing the category and function of the main character and the external conflicts of the main character. The movie *I am Sam* was analyzed by categorizing the main character. The data of this study were taken from a movie entitled *I Am Sam*. The data were collected through documentary method, by watching the movie and were then by marking and taking notes of parts of the movie which are related to the study. The data then were categorized based on the theories. The American drama film *I am Sam* which is the compelling story of Sam, a mentally-challenged father raising his daughter Lucy with the help of a unique group of friends. The category and function were analyzed based on the theory proposed by Wellek and Warren (1995: 227) who divide character into two types, static and dynamic characters; the analysis also included Protagonist and Antagonist characters. The conflict was analyzed based on the theory of literature proposed by Kenney (1996) who divides conflicts into two types, external and internal conflicts. But in the movie, the only external conflict occurs. The analysis brought some conclusions. Sam, as the main character, has a mental disorder, described as a really kind-hearted person. He also had a big willing, even so many challenges he should pass to live with his daughter, he still tried so hard to do it. After so many people hurt his feeling, he was still kind and did not do bad things to them. The conflicts all passed with him being a kind and honest person.

Keywords: *Categorization, Function, Conflict, Main Character, External Conflict.*

I. INTRODUCTION

There are three major types of literary works that can be observed, namely Poetry, Drama, and Fiction. Basically, literary works reflect the real life, which happen in society, connected to things such as social life, traditions, mythology and also about the author's private experience, imagination and their observation. The creation of literary works, especially English literature has three purposes: first escaping from everyday life, it also should light on real issue that affects the reader in both interesting and essentially truthful way, the second purpose is to inform and educate the readers, and third purpose is to provide ideas.

”According to Wellek and Werren (1967:1) literature represents “life” and “life” itself in large measure comes from a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been the object of the literary imitation. It means that literature, as with any art form, should hold a mirror up to society and reflect what is happening there. Besides using his creative imagination or the ability of writing, the writer should connect his work to the real life not directly

but rather indirectly and it appears that there is a social life issue shown inside.”

“Prose can be divided into fiction and nonfiction. Fiction is created based on the imagination of the writer. Fiction can be divided into short story, novel and novelette. In addition, nonfiction is a story that is constructed based on true or factual information such as biography, autobiography, diary, and essay. “A drama is a work of literature or a composition that shows life and human activity by means of presenting various actions and dialogues between groups of character.”

“Literary work is fundamentally developed by two elements, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The function of intrinsic element is to build up the literary creation itself such as theme, plot, setting, character, conflict, point of view, and so on.”

“The focus of this study is the category and function of the main character, and also the conflicts as portrayed in the movie “*I am Sam*”. “*I am Sam*” is the compelling story of Sam Dawson (Sean Penn), a mentally-challenged father raising his daughter Lucy (Dakota Fanning). The characters invite us to remember that kind hearted people get the best place

and God would never leave us alone, therefore people should be grateful on everything they have.” “The title of this paper is Conflict Analysis in Stromberg’s Movie “Maleficent”. It is aimed at finding out kinds of conflict faced by the main character and the sources of the main character’s conflict and analyzing the way the main characters solve the conflict. The data of this study were taken from a movie entitled “Maleficent”. This study focuses on describing external and internal conflicts. The conflict is analyzed based on the theory of conflict proposed by Kenney (1966) who divides conflicts into two types, external and internal conflicts. The description of the presentation of the characters is analyzed based on the theory proposed by Deetz & Stevenson (1986) who divides it into two; they are the source of conflict and resolution of conflict. The result of this study shows that the main character faces two conflicts; external and internal conflicts. The sources of the main character are incompatible goals, and different opinions. In managing the conflict, the main character uses avoidance strategy, competition strategy and creative integration.

“This Thesis is entitled” Analysis of main character, plot and conflict in the novel *the Witch of Portobello* by Paulo Coelho. Novel *The Witch of Portobello* by Paulo Coelho as the objects of the research. The aim of this research is to describe characterization of main character, plot and conflict. Analysis on this research descriptive method, because it can be used to increase understanding and knowledge about behavior and thought processes of people. The primary source of data is the novel *The Witch of Portobello*. Secondary source of data were taken from the library, book, journal, article and internet. This analysis focuses on main character, plot and conflict. (1) Main character, Athena is being rude, being offended and being religious. (2) Plot begin when Heron Ryan doing the journey to Transylvania and meet with Athena in the insignificant foyer of a still more insignificant hotel. In the end of conflicts which occurred in this story, Athena asks Ryan to promise to save and listen the voice record to other people after she dies. (3) Conflict, Athena always felt there is blank space in herself, by the dance that she do, Athena found a quiet and took her trance in the novel *the Witch of Portobello* by Paulo Coelho, Seen from structuralism theory by Endraswara, approach toward literature texts that emphasize entirety in relation between many element of text, the writer analyzes the way of story that happen in the novel *the witch of Portobello* by Paulo Coelho such as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.”

II. PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

The problems of this research can be formulated in the form of the following questions;

- a. What are the category and function of the main character in the movie *I Am Sam*?
- b. What kinds of conflict of the main character were found in the movie *I am Sam*?

III. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are to answer the problems stated in the background of the study. There are two specific aims of this study:

- a. To find out the category of the main character in this movie.
- b. To find out the kinds of conflict occurring to the main character in the movie *I Am Sam*.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

“Methodology explains about the way of doing the research. Methodology provides controlled significant ways. It made it easier to implement and get the success of the research. The methodology applied in writing this paper consists of three steps, they are: Data Source, Method and Technique of Collecting Data, and Method and Technique of Analyzing Data.”

This journal is entitled "Conflict of the Main Character in The Film The Curious Case of Benjamin Button". The purpose of this study is to analyze who the main character is, analyze the psychological aspects of the main character, identify the type of conflict and how the main character handles the conflict in the film by David Fincher. The theory used in this study is the theory of Myers (1992) to identify the types of conflicts that occur in the main character, Deets and Stevenson (1986) to find ways to overcome conflicts that occur. To identify aspects of psychology in the main character in the film The Curious Case of Benjamin Button using the theory of Bernhardt (1953).

4.1 Data Source

“The data for this study were taken from the movie *I Am Sam* (2001) by Jessie Nelson. The American drama film *I am Sam* which is the compelling story of Sam Dawson (Sean Penn), a mentally-challenged father raising his daughter Lucy (Dakota Fanning) with the help of a unique group of friends. As Lucy turns seven and begins to intellectually surpass her father, their close bond is threatened when their unconventional living arrangement comes to the attention of a social worker who wants Lucy to be placed in the foster care. Jessie Nelson and Kristine Johnson, who co-wrote the screenplay, researched the issues facing adults with intellectual disabilities by visiting the non-profit organization L.A. GOAL (Greater Opportunities for the Advanced Living).”

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

“The data were collected through observation method, and the technique applied was documentation. The steps of collecting data are: first, watching the movie; then, finding the important scenes; and taking note of the conversations between all characters to find out which part can be described based on their roles. Finally, the collected data were classified to meet the intended categories.”

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

“Data analysis is the process of describing and summarizing data with the intention to extract useful information and developed conclusions. All of the collected data were analyzed using the qualitative method. The main concern of this research was to understand the category of characters and to make it easier to analyze category of characters around this movie. The conflicts of the main character were analyzed using the theory proposed by Deetz and Stevenson.”

V. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The movie *I am Sam* was analyzed by the categorizing the main character. Based on the theory proposed by Wellek and Warren (1995: 227), the categorization consists of Static and Dynamic Character, analysis also included Protagonist and Antagonist characters.”

5.1 The Categorization and Function of the Main Character

Sam Dawson is the main character in this movie. Sam is described as a man retarded who becomes a single parent all of sudden because he has a daughter and his wife run away from him on the day his daughter was born. Sam raises his daughter by his own self and sometimes his friends come along to take care of his daughter, Lucy. And he also has a very kind neighborhood named Annie that always gives him suggestions how to take care of his baby Lucy.

The third content that shows Sam is a static character; Sam met Lily, a prostitute at the bus stop. Sam does not recognize if she is a prostitute. Sam, in sunglasses, waits for the bus. A young woman, Lily, sits down next to him. The wind catches her floral dress that is just left of innocent, just right of alluring. She is trying to tease Sam, wonders she might get money from him. But innocently Sam does not recognize it. He still think about if Lily is a good girl and will be a good mother for Lucy. In the end, the most important for him is always Lucy and no matter what he thinks, his first thought comes to Lucy.

“Lily : I got stories up the wazoo. Why don't you come with me? I'll tell you a nice story.

Sam : I have to pick up Lucy at Annie's first.

Lily : a menage a toi?

Sam : French, French the language of France. You could teach my daughter, Lucy.

Lily : Your daughter!? Can't you pick her up after?!

Sam : After?! No, no, Lucy comes too. (00.22.20 – 00.23-15)”

This scene shows how Sam matters Lucy the most above all. Even when it comes to his lovers wants, he still prioritizing Lucy. What is the best for Lucy, which is not good for Lucy, how to make Lucy smarter, greater, and prettier. He makes Lucy his priority and will do anything for Lucy's good. As the dialog shown, Lily, a prostitute which Sam does not recognize that, he thinks that might be she can be a good mother for Lucy and will make Lucy feels better. And even he thinks that Lily can teach her about new things, new experience and complete Lucy's life. He does not think about himself, or does he willing to love that Lily or not. He just wonder he will do anything for Lucy's life like Lucy is his life, no need others.

5.2 Analysis of Conflict

Kenney (1966:19) gives some notes about conflict in a plot. He states that the conflict which fiction concerns is of many kinds. “A story may deal with a conflict within a single man” which is called internal conflict. In addition, the conflict between man and nature, and so on is called external conflict.

The conflicts which are experienced by Sam as the main character begin when his baby Lucy was born. He is really excited about the birth of his baby. But all of sudden, Becca, his wife, left him in the middle of the way home the day after the baby was born. Her reason was just a kind of joke. She does not want the baby and she thinks it is not her life anymore. She does not want to spend her life raising a baby with Sam because she thinks that is just a one night fun with Sam. No feelings attached.

“Sam is nervous haling the precious cargo and Becca is agitated. They see the bus pulling up and down the street and Sam moves quickly so they can hurry and catch it. As he approaches the bus, he looks to Becca by his side, but she is not there. He looks around and no sign of her.

Frantically turning in a full circle, he saw the fabric of her dress disappearing into the crowd down the street. He screams.”

“Sam : Becca! Becca!

The more he screams the faster she moves away. Till there's no trace of her. Sam stands in the middle of the busy block holding Lucy to his chest, devastated. (00.04.46 – 00.05.10)”

The conflict ends with Sam left confusing yet surprising because he never thinks that this might

happen. He thinks that Becca is a good girl and it all just goes so soft. Never knew that Becca would leave him like that. Like there is nothing wrong with leaving Sam with a new born baby girl. Poor Sam. And it continues with so many bad things happened along Sam's life with his baby Lucy. But he can handle it anyway.

5.3 Conflict

"In this movie the analysis of external conflict of the main character is only in terms of the conflict between the main character and supporting characters (conflict between individuals). The external conflict occurs include; the conflict between Sam and Annie, the conflict between Sam and Lucy, and the conflict between Sam and Rita Harrison."

5.3.1 The Conflict between Sam and Annie

The first conflict that happens between Sam and Annie is when Lucy is crying in the middle of the night, making the neighborhood disturbed. At that moment, Sam is confused as he does not understand well about baby. He does not know when the baby is hungry or maybe peeing herself. Then one of Sam's neighborhood, Annie, complains by the phone when the baby starts to cry so loud around 1 p.m.

"He doesn't get two steps before Lucy wakes screaming. Defeated, he picks her up. The phone rings. He presses speaker."

"Annie : What the hell are you doing to that baby?! He looks out his window and sees Annie Cassell, his neighbor on the phone, watching him through her window. She is a strange creature with very thick glasses. We sense a uniquely intelligence behind all that armor.

Sam : Everything'sso tiny, tiny. Tiny. Everything. Won't you please come over? Help. I need somebody. Won't you please please help me.

Annie : You know I can't do that. What does her mother say?
(00.07.05 – 00.07.27)"

The conflict ends with Sam who finally comes over to Annie's room to ask for a help because he is really worried if something happens to baby Lucy at that time. Firstly, Annie feels annoyed. But then, she feels sorry when she looks at the baby crying so loud. She helps Sam take care of Lucy, and tells Sam so many things about baby. What he should or should not do. Because raising a baby with a love is not enough, he should learn more. So he will not make the same mistakes like he did on that day.

5.3.2 The Conflict between Sam and Lucy

The first conflict that happens between Sam and Lucy is when Lucy asks Sam about her mother. She never met her mother since she was born and Sam does not seem to tell how the story is until she cannot meet her mother. She is curious about that and

asking about how the story is. And how it ends up with they are not together anymore until now.

"Lucy and Sam are having a serious talk over breaded Sole.

Lucy : If you and Mommy liked each other enough to have me, how come you're not together anymore?

Sam : I think she fell out of love with me. Not you, never you. Me, just me.

Lucy : When you fall out of love, where do you land?

Sam : Somewhere in Florida, I think."

"Lucy : Do you think she'll ever come back?"

Sam : (long pause) Paul McCartney lost his mother when he was fourteen. John lost his mother twice. First when Julie gave John to her sister Mimi to raise. And then again when Julia was hit by a car. They say God picks certain people, special people. That's what they say." (00.13.12 – 00.13.57)"

The conflict ends with Sam who explains about other people's life, Mc Cartney and John, about how they lose their mothers and never get them back. Because it is God's way and God picks special people to through this. He wants Lucy to know that she is not the only person who lost a mother. There are certain people, and it is special. Sam also wants to tell Lucy that she is special, even she is living without a mother. She is still special and it is already written on God's hand. All she needs to do just trust what God's plan on her life.

5.3.3 Conflict Between Sam and Rita Harrison

The first conflict between Sam and Rita Harrison is when Rita tells Sam that she cannot be his lawyer on his case since she was a divorce lawyer so she cannot handle the cases like Sam had. But Sam insists on having Rita as his lawyer because he believes that Rita will help him win.

"Rita : "Mr. Dawson, what I'm trying to say is I'm a divorce lawyer and as much as I'd like to, I don't handle cases like yours—

Sam : Since you would like to, why don't you talk to your boss. Maybe he would let you.

Rita : (into phone) Then keep dialing – (to Sam) What I mean is that at this point in my career, I can't afford to.

Sam : I earn eight dollars an hout at Starbucks. I can pay your"hourly rate, rate by the hour, hourly –

Rita stands up, ushering him to the door.

Rita : Mr. Dawson, I'm sorry, I have to be in court in eight minutes with the Kresges. You understand, good luck to you and don't give up.
(00.37.21 – 00.37.45)"

The conflict ends with Sam who exits from Rita's office while Rita ushers him to understand what the condition is. Rita cannot help him because she is a divorce lawyer, and she did not take cases like Sam has. Sam needs to find another lawyer, it is not even about the money. When Sam explains about how much he can pay her hourly, she gives up on explaining. And finally ushering him to exit her office.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following points can be drawn as conclusion:

In the movie *I Am Sam*, there are two intrinsic elements that have been analyzed, they are the category and function of the main character and the external conflict of the main character. The main character in the movie is Sam. Sam belongs to the category of static character, because from the beginning until the end of the movie he mostly just think about his daughter Lucy. Lucy becomes his priority since Lucy was born, and in every decision or thought Sam will always belong to Lucy's better life. He even thinks of Lucy first instead of himself. And, as a function, Sam belongs to the protagonist character. Because he gets that kind-hearted, pure, honest, positive mind all along in the movie. Even when someone does bad things to him, he does not think of any revenge. He still does good to anyone, especially to his closest friends. Sometimes it makes him be used for people that are willing to do bad things to him, because he will not realize that.

The external conflict between Sam and other character in the movie are mostly the arguments about Lucy. There are 3 supporting characters analyzed for having conflicts with Sam; they are Annie (his neighbor), Lucy (his daughter), and Rita (his lawyer). The main character is represented by Sam Dawson who is described as a very kind-hearted character. That is why he gets so many argues with the people around them. And also it is because his mental disorder. It is hard for Sam to understand or learn new things that he has never heard before. Sometimes it makes people around him feel annoyed of him. But because he has a kind heart, it also makes people around him love him so much. And the conflicts will end easily. Those supporting character can forgive him or feeling sorry for being bad with him.

Sam, as the main character, which has a mental disorder, is described as a really kind-hearted person. He also has a big willing, even so many challenges he should pass to live with his daughter, and he still tries hard to do it. And even after so many people hurt his feeling, he is still kind and not do bad things to them. The conflicts are all passed with him being a kind person, with honest. And it is all pure from his deepest heart. Because he was born with that kind

hearted. He even cannot pretend to be bad one. With his mental disorder, and kind hearted, he proves to everyone that worrying about his ability to raise Lucy. In the end, he is successful and wins the case. He can live together again with his daughter Lucy and happily ever after. Even with a stranger that is willing to adopt Lucy before, he makes friend with them. He makes everything and everyone live happily in the end.

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