

“The Stolen Body” by H.G Wells: Analysis of Inner Conflict”

Hastin Nanda Ria

Students of English Study Program
Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu
Email: hastinandar@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the inner conflict that happens in H.G Wells's stories “The Stolen Body”, to pretend how Wells make the story more interesting by putting some conflict in the story. In collecting the data the writer using the textual method by reading a whole text of the story and making a quotation. The result of the analysis is: there are six parts of the story that shows the inner conflict that happens to the character in this story. There are show up in the first page of the story when Mr. Viecey thinks that Mr. Bessel has an extraordinary disorder, and the next at the time when Mr. Bessel was missing, when Mr. Viecey dreamed about Mr. Bessel, when Mr. Viecey found a fact that Mr. Bessel body was overtaken by evil spirit, and then when Mr. Bessel has been found but he still traumatized.

Keywords: *inner conflict, textual method, traumatize and H.G Wells's tales.*

Introduction

A Conflict in literature commonly defined as any differences or struggle between two people or more and even individual. But Pruitts and Rubin's (1996, 10) defined conflict as a “perceived divergences of interest”. The Background of conflict is the differences in the characteristics that carried by an individual in some interactions. These differences include physical characteristics, intelligence, language, culture, knowledge, beliefs, and so forth. However, It's quite different from the conflict that happens in literature. In Literature the conflict is known as something that can make the story more life. Usually, there are two particularly conflicts in literature there are internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is the conflict that happened inside the character. Usually, internal conflict happened to the protagonist character due to their weakness in life. However, the external conflict is the divergences or the struggle that due because of the external factor.

Such of these ideas also happens in *The Stolen Body* a short story written by English writer Herbert George Wells. In his story, H.G Wells tell us about someone who really interesting to the psychical research Mr.Bessel the senior of St. Paul's Churchyard. He and his partner doing astral projection which is he's being the subject of the experiment. In the beginning, they are failed but in the last day their experiment was succeeded, Mr. Bessel's soul can go out from his body, but unluckily his body was taken over by an evil spirit. Mr. Bessel being a different person, he always talks about *life*, his partner Mr.Vincey thinks that Mr.Bessel is odd, he is life but he still talks about life and his eyes looks very different, it looks like he is not Mr.Bessel.

At last, they can understand and get the point why Mr. Bessel being weird. They do the exorcism to Mr. Bessel and finally the evil spirit that took over Mr.Bessel's body disappeared. He's very grateful because he can take over his body again. He thinks that God still loves him. The setting of this story is in

London, Inggris, in 1896. There are so many conflicts caused by the main character (Mr. Bessel) and it is impacted the second character (Mr. Vincy) psychology.

For the example at the first time when Mr. Vincy know that Mr. Bessel was gone because of their experiment, Mr. Vincy was blaming his self and his emotion being uncontrollable. Its just one of the many conflicts that happen on the second character. That's why the writer chooses to analyze the conflict that happens to the second character. In this story, H.G Wells give us the experience to read one of his great horror-thriller story that has a lot of conflicts, not only the conflict that happened to the main character but also the conflict that happened to the second character. But in this article, the writer only chooses to analyze the conflict that happened to the second character. Why analyze the second character? because the conflict that happened to the second character was more interesting to explain then the conflict that happened to the main character.

This paper examines the inner conflict that happened to *Mr. Vincy* as the second character in *The Stolen Body*, the writer will analyze how the reaction of the second character to the conflict that happened to him. This research focuses on how the second character solves the inner conflict and which emotions that he feels, through the inner conflict that happens to him.

Literature Review

Literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. (McFadden 1978:56) states: "I should say, then, that literature is a canon which consists of those works in language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. The self-defining activity of the community is conducted in the light of the works, as its members have come to read them (or concretize them)". however, another expert says that: "literary means not only what is written but what is voiced, what is expressed, what is invented, in whatever form" (Greil Marcus and Werner Sollor, 2009).

So, in this case, we can conclude that literature is the written work or sometimes can be spoken, that include the artistic and aesthetic work and also to explain the meaning and share the knowledge from the writer to the reader. Literature has so many types, one of them is a short story. Usually, a short story only consists of a few pages maybe 1-20 pages, if more than that it can not be called as a short story anymore but it can be defined as a novel.

A short story is one of the literary work that very useful to entertain the readers and also to increases knowledge. The aim of the short story not only to entertain the readers, but a short story is one of the ways to help us to improve our abilities, to improve our imaginations, and also to make us better by writing or read the story. Shaw (1983) elucidated it as: "the short story is an independent yet hybrid genre, which connects with other art forms at various points and keeps eluding definition except as an interplay of tensions and antithesis." A short story has so many genres that usually has an A short story has some kind of elements to stand, such as character, setting, conflict, plot, and theme. Those elements have a big role to make a story being more interesting and structured. These 5 kinds of elements also can be a guide to analyze a short story, because there is already an outline of what we have to find in a short story.

But in this paper we just focus on one of the elements of a short story, it is a conflict of the short story. As we know that conflict is the problem of the short story or we can also be called as something that can make a story being more live and more interesting. As I know that conflict is not only one kind, but the conflict is defined as two different kinds. In his study Kenney (1966:19) states that: “The conflicts with which fiction concern itself are of many kinds. A story may deal with a conflict within a single man, a conflict between man and society, between man and nature, and so on”.

The conflict was divided to be two kinds there are internal conflict and external conflict. The internal conflict usually occurs due to the conflict between a person and his self. This kind of conflict can make a person who is through becoming a crisis identity such as having mental disorders, and always a dilemma.

However, the external conflict is the conflict that usually happens because of the external factors, such as the conflict that happens between the girl and the society, or the conflict that happens between the girl and another person. Usually, this kind of conflict is really interesting because it shows the readers about the dissension between someone and other people so it can make the story more life and make the readers more curious about the next story. The most common type of external conflict is where the protagonist fights back against the antagonists.

Method

The method of research is a way to solve problems or developing the paper or our work by using research methods, which aims to show the results or something obtained after doing research. There are so many kinds of methods that you can choose when you want to make a research.

In this paper, the writer is using the qualitative research analysis, by using a textual method. “Textual analysis expresses how text is unmade, how it explodes, disseminates – by what coded paths it goes off” (Barthes, 1977). The qualitative research analysis is research that focuses on the descriptive way, and usually, the main focus is only based on the analysis and more reveals to the process of meaning. In this research, the data was collected from the short story by H.G Wells *the stolen body*. In this paper, all of the data that has been collected is in the quotations from that refers to the sentences that proving about the inner conflict that happened to the second character in short story *the stolen body*.

Findings and Discussion

The Internal Conflict of the Character

Internal conflict usually, defines as a psychological struggle within the mind of a literary or dramatic character. Every story, dramas, life has their own conflict to make a story more interesting. Can imagine life without having a conflict? Your life will so flat, without a problem and without challenges, a very boring life. Sometimes has a conflict can make you learn something worth because experiences are the best teacher for your life. A conflict in a story is very important why? Because conflict can make us know about the story and how the situation of the story, and also conflict can make the character of our story more attractive and be more interesting.

Herbert George Wells tells the very various inner conflict faced by the second major character or we can call the second character in one of his famous

horror stories *the stolen body*. In this story (the stolen body) wells depict a man who feels very guilty about everything that happens to his friend. This is triggering prolonged depression for the man. In this case, the inner conflict that described by Wells in this story makes the reader ask why this could happen, what will happen to him in the future, and how the end of this story.

In story *The Stolen Body* the main character is a man named Mr. Bessel and he has a friend or partner named Mr. Viencey, both of them are interested in psychical research, so they agree to make an experiments about "phantom of living" or we can be called it astral projection to test the possibility of one's self by force of will through space. At several experiments, they do not get a satisfactory result, but in the fifth or in the sixth day Mr. Bessel was a success, he does the astral projection his soul can leave his body, but he did not know that what he had done was a fatal mistake that could make him lose his body. This is the beginning of the complicated inner conflict that happens to Mr. Viencey. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“....He was surprised to find Mr. Bessel's outer door standing open to the night, and the inner apartments lit and in an extraordinary disorder. For a few minutes Mr. Viencey, who had entered sure of finding Mr. Bessel in his easy chair awaiting him, could scarcely believe his eyes, and stood to stare helplessly at these unanticipated things.” (*The Stolen Body*, pg. 1)

This passage informs the readers that Mr.Viencey feel odd and did not understand what is going on with Mr. Bessel. By the changed of Mr. Bessel's personality, people think that he becomes depressed because of all his fails experiments. Mr. Viencey did not know what happened to Mr. Bessel, he is waiting for Mr. Bessel but he did not return to his room. These things make him could not sleep at night, and make him dreamed about Mr. Bessel. In his dream, he saw Mr. Bessel but with a different look, and from the gestures it looks like he is in fear, and also in danger.

In another page, the inner conflict between the second character and his mind is more complicated. As in the following quotation:

“He was angry and astonished and perplexed. It appeared to him indisputable that Mr. Bessel must have gone violently mad in the midst of his experiment in thought transference, but why that should make him appear with a sad white face in Mr. Viencey's dreams seemed a problem beyond solution. He racked his brains in vain to explain this. It seemed to him at last that not simply Mr. Bessel, but the order of things must be insane.” (*The Stolen Body*, pg. 4)

In this part Mr. Viencey being angry and jealous of all the things that happened to his friend, he believed that his friend Mr. Bessel is not someone who will hurt other people randomly. After all the doubts he recently realized that Mr. Bessel changed after doing the astral experiments. Mr. Viencey feels so difficult to understand, as hard as he thinks he does not find the bright spot about this problem. Then he decided to go down to St. Paul's Churchyard to meet Mr. Hart, Mr. Bessel's dearest friend. Surprisingly Mr. Hart is the one who did not know anything but he feels that there is something wrong with Mr. Bessel. And again this fact makes Mr. Viencey more confused about Mr. Bessel's condition and

make him can't stop to think about Mr. Bessel. It can be proven in the following quotation:

"All that day Mr. Bessel's whereabouts eluded an unceasingly active inquiry and all that night. And all that day there was a persuasion in the back of Vincey's mind that Mr. Bessel sought his attention, and all through the night Mr. Bessel with a tear-stained face of anguish pursued him through his dreams. And whenever he saw Mr. Bessel in his dreams he also saw a number of other faces, vague but malignant, that seemed to be pursuing Mr. Bessel." (*The Stolen Body*, pg. 5)

This passage is informed that Mr. Vincey feels guilty and worried about Mr. Bessel. He feels so depressed and it's causing Mr. Bessel to come to his dream every night. But, in fact, this thing made him feel dumb because he can't find a clue for solving this problem.

Furthermore, Mr. Vincey remembered about the remarkable stories, Mrs. Bullock, the medium, who has a vision of sense. So, he decided to consult her about this problem. Surprisingly, they found the fact that Mr. Bessel's communication with them by leaving the note, by his own handwriting. Of course, Mr. Vincey feels so surprised too and be more anxious with this case. As can be seen in the following quotation:

"But scarcely had he mentioned the name of Bessel when Doctor Paget interrupted him." "Last night--just at the end," he said, "we had communication."

He left the room, and returned with a slate on which were certain words written in handwriting, shaky indeed, but indisputably the handwriting of Mr. Bessel!

"How did you get this?" said Mr. Vincey. "Do you mean--?"

"We got it last night," said Doctor Paget. With numerous interruptions from Mr. Vincey, he proceeded to explain how the writing had been obtained." (*The Stolen Body*, pg. 5)

In this part Mr. Vincey seems like did not believe with all things that happened, how can Mr. Bessel leave a message by writing it with his handwriting, however, he is gone in that time. Mr. Vincey is trying to believe in Mrs. Bullock, he already believes that something that out of the sense exists and it's happened to his friend. His choice to believe in Mrs. Bullock is the right choice they found Mr. Bessel at the commencement of the work of the new electric railway near Baker Street station. Even though Mr. Bessel was found but this problem is not clear enough.

In the next part, the narrator reminds us about how this problem can begin. Start from the very first time. In order to understand clearly about the cause of this problem start from the experiments that Mr. Bessel and Mr. Vincey did, And find out that finally Mr. Bessel success his experiments and he can leave his body and do the astral projection and also pass into some place or state outside this world. Mr. Bessel still does the recovery, but he can tell the story when he was missing. He said that when he passes his body he feels like he is watching the affairs of a glass hive. Mr. Bessel's condition still bad, sometimes he can't control his emotion and him still unemotional. He told the stories with the blank eyes. It seems like he still out of his body. It can be proven in the following quotation:

"I felt as a kitten may feel," he said, "when it goes for the first time to pat its reflection in a mirror." Again and again, on the occasion when I heard him tell this story, Mr. Bessel returned to that comparison of the sheet of glass.

.... A thing that impressed him instantly, and which weighed upon him throughout all this experience, was the stillness of this place--he was in a world without sound.

At first Mr. Bessel's mental state was an unemotional wonder. His thought chiefly concerned itself with where he might be. He was out of the body--out of his material body, at any rate--but that was not all." (*The Stolen Body*, pg.7)

This passage informs about Mr. Bessel's condition after his body was taken over by another soul. He looks very shocks and still traumatizes with that accident. It is triggering the inner conflict happens to Mr. Bessel. Not only Mr. Bessel but also his friend Mr. Viency he thinks a lot and blaming his self to all of the things that happened to Mr. Bessel. Furthermore, Mr. Bessel who knew that his body had been taken over by an evil spirit thought that his original body had been killed when the spirit took over. he felt very scared of that. As can we see in the following quotation:

"All through those hours the persuasion was overwhelming in Mr. Bessel's mind that presently his body would be killed by its furious tenant, and he would have to remain in this shadow-land forevermore. So that those long hours were a growing agony of fear." (*The Stolen Body*, pg. 11)

In this part the narrator told us that Mr. Bessel has a conflict with his own mind, he has struggled too much to pass the bad luck of his own fault. If he had no ambition to do that stupid experiment, he and also Mr. Viency does not have to go through those bad things. Now that he had just felt the consequences of his stupid ambition, he had made his friend depressed, and also made himself like a crazy psychopath. In the end, he is the one who felt an endless fear.

Conclusion

As can we seen in the analyze before, that the result of this analysis there is some inner conflict that shows in this story. The author creates so many conflicts which happen between one character and his own mind, and the conflict is mutual related. Inner conflicts experienced by the second protagonist character, always create another conflict and inner conflicts so that unconsciousness appears and influenced the minds of the second character. The writer pretend that Mr. H.G Wells as the author of this story has an interest in mystery stories, it can be seen from several other mystery stories he has written besides this story. Conflict in a story can make the story more attractive and interesting for the reader.

References

- Agus. Rachman, (Conflict Analysis of The Main Character In Ile. 2000.
- Barry, Petter, An introduction to literary and cultural theory (2nd ed. UK : Manchester University Express, 2002.
- Bartess, Roland, The Pleasure of The Text. New York: Hill and Huang, 1977.
- Barthes, R. Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives, in: Image-Music-Text (London: Fontana), 1977.
- Diyanni, Robert. Literature (Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama Compact Edition). Singapore: McGraw- Hill International Edition, 2001.
- Griffith. R. Writing about Literature. New York: Harcourt Jovanovich Publishers, 1982.
- Kenney, William. How to Analyse Fiction. New York: Monarch Press, 1966.
- Mawaddah, Siti. "The Main Character Analysis of The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho Using Hierarchy of Human Needs of Abraham H. Maslow's Theory". Jakarta: State Islamic University "Syarif Hidayatullah", 2010.
- McFadden, George. 'Literature': a many-sided process. In Hernadi 1978, 49-61, 1978.
- Napitulu, Hermina, "An Analysis of The Main Characters' Conflicts in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter". Medan: University Of North Sumatra, 2009.
- Nurjayanti. Dewi. The Conflict of Main Character and Her Social Life in Windmills of The Gods by Sidney Sheldon, 2007.
- Rubin, Jeffrey Z., Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim. Social Conflict. Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement. NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1994.
- Sollors, Werner, ed. An anthology of interracial literature: Black-white contacts in the Old World and the New. New York: New York University Press, 2004.
- Taylor, Richard. Understanding The Elements of Literature. New York: The Macmillan Press, 1981.
- Wells, H.G. 1911 The Stolen Body and the Other Stories. Available from: <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/hgwells/the-stolen-body.pdf>
Downloaded on September 2019