INTERNAL CONFLICT OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN GEORGE MOORE'S ESTHER WATER

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ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini membahas tentang analisis konflik internal dalam novel karya George Moore yang berjudul Esther Water. Konflik internal pada karakter utama dalam novel karangan George Moore ini dianalisadengan menggunakan teori karakter dan teori konflik (Diettich and Sundell, 1974, Holmal, 1936). Penelitian ini menerapkan rancangan deskriptif kualitatif terhadap novel untuk menjawab pertanyaan: apakah konflik internal yang dihadapi tokoh Esther dan bagaimanakah karakter tokoh Esther. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa, berdasarkan teori konflik, konflik yang terjadi pada Esther adalah disaat ia mengandung tanpa suami dan ketika ia harus membesarkan anak yang dianggap masyarakat tidak mempunyai status hukum. Esther mengalami konflik rumit yang merupakan konflik internal. Konflik tersebut didominasi oleh konflik pribadi karena ia harus membuat keputusan sendiri dan tidak ada seorangpun yang dapat ia percaya. Sedangkan teori karakter jelas menunjukkan bahwa Esther sebagai karakter utama adalah karakter dinamis. Berasal dari kelas bawah, Esther tampak mempunyai karakter lemah namun setelah mengalami kehidupan yang semakin keras, Esther berubah menjadi karakter yang sangat kuat. Dengan percaya pada Tuhan, Esther berjuang demi anaknya, ia menjadi sangat berani menghadapi kenyataan dan berhasil menghidupi anaknya tanpa bantuan orang lain

Keywords: internal conflict, main character, round character

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a major part of almost all plots in any form of fiction, short story, drama, narrative, poem, or novel which provide both interest and suspense (Havighurst, 1968: 596). Conflict occurs in life of human being, which varies according to the social background of the person. It arises in literary works that keeps the readers on reading to know the story until the end. An author of literary work will always try to create his best in order to present the reflection of social life. The conflict shown in this novel expresses life complexity in industrial era in England, especially what happened to woman, lower class people in this era who must survive in their limitations.

As one of Victorian novelists, Moore has shown the characteristics of Victorian era literature: they were critically portraying the sufferings of the working class. This hasbecome a theme of frequent comment on the part of men-of-letters (Bakker, 1975: 62). *Esther Water* is Moore's masterpiece and it is one of the most important novels published in England. Moore has an excellent ability in his portrayals ofwomen through literary works such as *A Mummer's Wife* (1885), and *Esther Water* (1894). Revelation of a woman character who struggles in life is seen clearly from the main character of George Moore's *Esther Water*. Moore puts his main characters in complicated situation, which makes them undergo many conflicts in their life.

In Esther Water, Moore tries to show real life, especially life from lower class. Esther, the main character of the story, is a servant who always experiences hard life. In

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her suffering, Esther faces complicated problems. This novel shows woman's struggle when people surroundings are busy with themselves, Esther facesdilemma which forces her to make decision for herself. In her restricted condition as a servant, Estherencounters many conflicts which are mostly internal conflict. External conflict which comes from other characters does not seem to be dominant in Esther's life. In this story, Esther seems to have no right to protest which brings her into internal conflicts.

The focus of the present study is to investigate the character of the main character in the novel (i.e. Esther) and the kind of conflict she undergoes. For the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework of the study is the theory of conflict and character. By using theories of conflict and character, this study purposes to answer the problem statement namely: (1) What is Esther's internal conflict? (2) How is Esther's character? The study is expected to give more insights and understanding of the nature of conflict and character in literary works.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The word 'conflict' comes from the Latin word: *contra* (against) and *fligere* (to strike) (Barry,1966: 23). Someone will be in conflict if he or she is stricken by someone or something toward his or her aims. He or she may be in difficulties to decide what the best way to do. In the case, conflict is also interpreted as a struggle between two opposing forces or characters that causes tension or suspense in the plot (Macmilan,1986: 207).

There are two types of conflict in this case: internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict is the conflict of a character againsthimself (Diettich and Sundell, 1974:116). Man in himself is facing a kind of complicated situation in his life. He should choose the best way or alternative choice according to his own consideration. In the internal conflict, the protagonist has to struggle against himself in achieving his goal (Holmal, 1936:119).

External conflict is a struggle between man and man or society (Shaw, 1972: 91–92). A character may be in conflict with an external force such as another character, nature or society. In daily life, human beings tend to have different ideas between them. It can be a clash of ideologies and concept (Cohen,1963:119). Every human being usually has his own wish to face a problem. Because of his different interest, it often brings him to have conflict against other human beings (cf. Andayani 2004).

Character in literature, will be developed as a symbol of personality of man who represents a condition of society. In *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Harry Shaw defines: character also refers to moral qualities and ethical standards and principles (1972: 70–71). Robert (1997: 54) says that character is an author's representation of human being, with a specification in human inner qualities that put them to determine how a story are always pointed straight forward from the beginning of the story.

Round character is the character which should have a number of traits and these may even be somewhat as real as in real life. It presents us with the character that often changes. The writer portrays the character in greater depth and in more detail (Kennedy, 1983: 46). Round character is a complex individual with various personality features and distinctive precessions of being and is, further shown to be product of various behavioral forces which have, to come extent, determined his personality. A flat character is the character that usually has onlyoutstanding traits or feature, or at most of

few distinguishing marks. In literature, flat character never changes his character, he tends to stay the same throughout the story.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis is divided into to parts: Esther's internal conflict and Esther's character. The first part analyzes in details the internal conflict in Esther's life, the second part elaborates Esther's character in order to know exactly about Esther's mental qualityor manner in facing internal conflict in her life.

1. Esther's Internal Conflict

Moore's *Esther Water* contains social critics, and shows the sufferings of the working class. Esther, the main character of this novel, described as a servant, becomes one of the victims in Industrial Revolution (Victorian era).

"It was hard on you. She always gets as much as she can out her kitchen-maid. But last night she was pressed, there was company to dinner. I'd have lent you an apron, and the dress you had on wasn't of much account" (1894:9).

"It isn't because a girl is poor." (1894: 10)

Esther is a poor woman who works as a servant in Mrs.Barfield's family in Woodview. Esther does not have much money. She always comes to Mrs. Barfield when she needs something in a hurry. Esther ever borrows some money to Sarah, her best friend, but she has no money to pay her debt. She knows that her family is also poor and if she joins them, their lives may be more difficult than before. They do not have enough food to eat, and if she joins them, surely she will become a burden on them. Only Sarah will help her overcome her problems as well as her problem of love:

"Good friends, you know – no more. Sarah and me never hit it off; she will worry me with the stories she reads. I don't know what is your taste, but I like something more practical; the little 'oss in there, he is more to my taste".

Esther expresses her feeling that she falls in love with William. Esther will do anything for him. William seduces Esther, he says that he loves her and they will marry soon. Esther is very glad, and she does not think that their relationship will cause bad thing for her. Her life is unlucky, she meets a man who brings her to face trouble in her life:

"I will if you like, but the truth is that I have only three pounds in the world. I have been unlucky lately"

"But look here, Esther: marriage or not marriage, We can't go on in this way: they'll be suspecting something shortly" (1894: 47)

In this statement, William does not marry her. Esther only hopes to ask him to marry her but she must face a very bad situation when William rejects to marry since he has no money:

"I am very sorry, Esther. But I am not as bad as you think for. You let your temper get the better of you. So soon as I have got a bit of money together ... If you were a good man you would ask me to marry you now" (1894: 50).

Then finally when she meets again with William, it seems that William has changed because he can earn money by himself. If she marries William, her life and her son's life will also be secured. Esther is pregnant without husband, she has an illegitimate child with William, which makes her life more difficult. She undergoes many conflicts with herself because of her child's life:

"I was three months gone before I knew it myself, ma'am."

"Three months! Then for three months have knelt every Sunday in prayer in this room, for twelve Sundays you sat by me learning to read, and you never said a word" (1894: 60)

In this complicated situation, Esther is pregnant about three months. Something crosses her mind, that is to keep her pregnancy or not. She already knows what might happen if she keeps her pregnancy. She is afraid if she does not have any courage to face her unlawful pregnancy. She will also undergo more trouble if she continues her pregnancy and life becomes difficult for her. She really faces the dilemma in her situation and she does not know what she has to do to overcome her problem.

Esther feels frustrated. There is no one who cares about her. She feels alone with her child. She finds many difficulties to look for a job because many of the employers do not want to hire her when they know that she has an illegitimate child. She feels that people look down on the poor like her.

"She was made to feel that she was the lowest of the low-the servant of servant. She had to accept everbody's and everybody's bad language, and often times gross familiarity, in order to avoid arguments and disputes which might endanger her situation". (1894: 175-76)

Esther is really pain in her life. She has to face problems which are not easy for her to face. At last, she meets Fred,a man who cares with her. He is very kind to Esther. Fred is a good and religious man. He always reminds Esther to pray to the Lord and makes Esther to face her problems. Esther begins to like Fred: "She looked up in his face: her hand was in the gate, and in that moment she felt that she almost loved him" (1894: 195).

Time goes so far, and in fact Fred falls in love with Esther. He wants Esther to become his wife. Here, Esther has to struggle about whether or not she marries Fred. Esther feels that Fred can be a good husband for her and also a good father for her child. But at the same time, William, her son's father also asks her to come back to him. William promises to make their life happy, because he has enough money to survive now. Their life will be saved or better. Esther does not know what to do, she undergoes difficulties to make the decision for herself.

"She seemed like one standing at cross roads, unable to decide which road she would take. If she took the road leading to the cottage and the prayer- meeting her life would henceforth be secure. She could see her life from and to end, even to the time when Fred would come and sit by her, and hold her hand as she had seen his father and mother sitting side by side. If she took the road to the public house and the race course she did not know

what might not happen. But William had promised to settle on her and Jackie. Her life would be secure either way" (1894:239).

The quotation above shows how Esther is really put in a very hard situation, and she must make a good decision not only for herself but also for her son. She thinks that by getting married with Fred, surely her life becomes good and Fred is a responsible man. He will not make Esther's life in trouble anymore. But then she is in doubt with the coming of William who also asks her to marry him. In the previous time, of course she rejects William because he is not a kind person to her. Then, when she meets again with William, it seems that William has changed because he can earn money by himself. If she marries William, her life and her son's life will also be secured. Actually she still loves William and she wants to come back again to him, but she is afraid that later William does not treat her kindly anymore. She does not know what to do. She has to choose one of them and she finds it difficult to decide.

Actually she loves her work and she doesnot want to leave it. She has already has many friends there. If she leaves her work, she feels that there is no other place to make her happier than Mrs. Barfield's house. Esther feels confused with what she has to do. However, if she does not leave her work, she becomes a bad example for others who live in Woodview because she is pregnant, while she does not have a husband. Besides that, she is ashamed of her deed. She is really in doubt: "she would have to leave woodview. Oh, the same of confession! she has sinned, and the lord had punished her for sin" (1894:96).

Her employer, Mrs. Barfields is kind to her. Esther feels guilty because of her illegitimated pregnancy. It is difficult thing for her to say to Mrs. Barfields that she expects the baby. Inevitably, she has no other choice except coming to Mrs. Barfield to tell about her pregnancy. Esther wants to turn back her steps not to meet Mrs. Barfield. But it is also impossible for Esther to hide continuously about her condition. Anyway, if she want to keep her pregnancy, she has to tell the truth to her employer: "Esther turned a little pale, and the expression of her face altered; it seemed to her impossible to go before Mrs. Barfield and admit her shame" (1894: 97).

All of the quotations discussed above show Esther's personal conflict. Firstly Esther is described to have little conflicts with other characters namely Sarah, her best friend, when she must lend money to her which she can not return it back. Big conflicts come then when she falls in love with William, that she must accept her fate as William does not want to marry her, even when the man knows that she is pregnant. Other big conflicts arise when she has to become a good lady bringing up her daughter without a husband in an environment which can not accept an illegitimate child. Finally there is a young man, Fred, who wants to marry her, but in this case Esther does not want to accept his love. Esther arrives in her complicated situation, that her real conflict is internal conflict. She must have strong character to show that she does not depend on the pity of others.

She does not have a place to stay. By leaving Mrs. Barfield's house it means that she has to find a place to live. She is very poor and she only has a little money. There is no place for her to stay. The only way is that she has to come back again to her step father's house. Her step father may not let her stay with his family. Her step father will ask her to pay, if she want to stay in his house again. She knows that her family is also poor and if she joins them, their lives may be more difficult than before. They do not have enough food to eat, and if she joins them, surely she will become burden on

them: "Her father would curse her, and perhaps beat her mother and her too ... her little brothers and sisters would cry if she come back. They had little enough to eat as it was" (1894: 19).

If she aborts her pregnancy, it means that she does not need to come back again to her step father's house. She will undergo difficulties if she meets her step father because he does not like her. She remembers when her step father urges her to leave his house and to look for a job as soon as possible, so that she does not stay in his house anymore. She also remembers when her step father asks her about a job and he is so angry with her when he knows that she does not want to go there because she is a fraid if her employer is not a kind woman.

"I couldn't go there-that Mrs. Dunbar is a bad woman."

"Bad woman! Who are you, I should like to know, that you can take a lady's character away? Who told you she was a bad woman?

Well, then, just get out."

"Where shall I go?"

"Go to hell for all I care. Do you ear me?

"Get out!" (1894: 40).

Esther undergoes the complicated situation because it is about the living of another human being, her baby. She thinks that she will feel sorry by having an abortion. She will make a big mistake if she gets rid of it. Moreover, God will punish her because of her deed:.....but I've always heard that children die that or put out to nurse. If mine died I never should forgive myself" (1894:150). It means that she has to look for a job if she wants live with her baby. When there is a woman whose name Mrs. Spires that comes to her offer a job as a wet-nurse, Esther has conflict about whether or not she takes that job. As a wet-nurse, at least she will get much money and their life will save. Esther thinks in her mind: "The situation of wet-nurseis just what you want at the time, and it is a good money" (1894: 153–154).

Internal conflict is conflict of a character againsthimself. He should choose the best way or alternative choice according to his own consideration. In this case Esther has to struggle againsthimself in achieving his goal. In her complicated situation she can not trust anybody. The conflict happens within herself whether she surrenders to his fate by marrying with William or Fred or even neglecting her child or she must struggle to against her fate.

2. Esther's Character

Coming from lower class, Esther looks very weak that the character seems common. However from the analysis of Esther's internal conflict showing many problems faced by Esther in her life, the character becomes very dynamic. When she has good relation with her best friend, Sarah, Esther looks calm that she is gentle to everybody that people in Woodview recognize her as a friendly girl. Then Esther's sufferingsare decribed in details, firstly when William rejects her love and she must bring up her child alone. Esther loves her baby, she decides to keep her pregnancy although she knows that her life will be more difficult by having an illegitimate child. Her child, who will be born, has a right to live.

Esther loves her child very much. She always protects her child and she does not want her child to come into trouble. When her baby was born Esther gets confused

thatshe wants her child to be happy. She loves her child and she will do everything if it is for her child's shake. Actually it is so hard for her to live apart with her child but she has no other choice except going to work to earn money: "So they would part us," she whispered, bending over the sleeping child. ... There's no help for it, my poor darling. There's no help for it, no help for it" (1894:143).

It shows that Esther is very sad to leave her child, however she can not do anything. Beside the above problem, seemingly it is not easy for Esther to do the best thing for her child because she is a poor person. She has also no place to live and because she really loves her child, she does not want her child to live inWoodview. For Esther it is better to leave her child to other people's care rather than to let her child in Wodview. It is not a good place for her child. She will look for a good person who is able to take care of her child: "I should like my child to be well looked after ..." (1894: 149).

By doing such a thing, she might be able to save her child to be pauper forever. She tries to earn much money in order to make herchild's life better. What Esther faces from day to day really burdens her mind. She works as a wet-nurse in Mrs. Rivers'house. Because both of them have a different interest, Esther and Mrs.Riversmeet in conflict. Each of them thinks about herown child's safety. Esther remains with her will to see her own child as soon as possible by hearing that her child is sick. Actually, Esther can give money to the person who takes care of her child to bring her child to go to the doctor, but she doesnot do that. It shows that Esther really loves and cares of her child, even their love relation between son and mother seems very clear. "But when she opened Mrs. Lewis's door he came running to her, calling her Mummie and the immediate preference he showed for her, climbing on her knees instead of Mrs. Lewis's, was a fresh sowing of love in the mother's heart "(1894:150).

Mrs. Rivers will be angry with her if she leaves her baby, but Esther remains with her will. By leaving her house, Esther knows that Mrs. Rivers does not give money to her. Although she knows that she really needs money, she does not want to neglect her own baby.

"I shall not pay you one shilling if you leave my baby. You have no money."

"I shall try to manage without. I shall go with may baby to the worskhouse. However bad the living may be there, he'll be with his mother" (1894:157).

It is clear that Esther really cares for her child. She does not want bad things to happen to him. Because of her love toward her child, she decides to go to her child at last. She will rear her child by herself, anyway, it is better for a child to be with his own mother father than live with someone also. Esther also does not care with Mrs. Rivers'money, but she really cares her own child's condition. That is why, she decides to leave Mrs River's house and go to see her own child.

Then, Esther's problem is that she has to face Mrs. Spires, a woman who takes care of her child when he goes to work. Actually Esther is worried by leaving her child under Mrs. Spires'care. But she has no other choice except letting her child nursed by Mrs. Spires. When Esther comes to Mrs. Spires' house to see her child, Esther is so surprised by knowing that Mrs. Spires does not take care of her child well and she doesnot bring her child to go to the doctor while her child is sick. Struggle of Esther Waters to be a good woman and to bring up her child against fearful odds.

"Have you sent for the doctor?"

"Sent for the doctor! I've to get my husband's Supper."

Esther look her baby out of the craddle. It woke up Crying, and Esther said: "You don't mind my sitting Down a moment. The poor little thing wants it Mother. I wasn't going to stop there and my child ill" (1894:159).

Finally Esther decide that she will not come back again to her situation as a wetnurse. She will look for another job which unable her to be with her child forever. She doesn't want to live apart anymore with her child. She brings her child which is sick as far as possible from Mrs. Spires. Mrs. Spires does not take care of her child well and she has to protect her child form her. She will bring her child to go with her.

Because of her love to her child, Esther also decide not to marry Fred, a man who loves her, Esther believes that it is possible that later Fred will not love Jackie anymore if he has his own children with her. Fred will love his children rather than Jackie, her child with William: "No, Fred. But think if we was to marry. As likes as Not I should have children, and they'd be more in Your sight than my boy" (1894:242).

Esther does not want her child, Jackie, to be in trouble if Fred does not love and care for him anymore. Esther also does not want her and Jackie to meet conflict with Fred later. He has to make a decision to avoid conflict between them. Moreover, because of her love toward her child, it helps her to overcome her problem with Fred. By deciding not to marry Fred, it means that she will also avoid problem with him (cf. Andayani 2004). Besides, she whould not separate Jackie from his own father, William: "The thought gripped her more and more closely that She could not separate Jackie from his father ..." (1894:240).

Whatever she does, she wants to make her child's life happy. For Esther, her child's happines is more important than her own happiness. Esther is a religious person. In Mrs.Barfields' house, every Sunday afternoon she joins the meeting of the women servants in the library to follow the instruction in the life of Christ and to learn about the Holy Book, Esther fells so lucky that she can meet a person as kind as her employer, Mrs. Barfield. Mrs. Barfield often reminds trouble.

"I hope that the Lord may give you strength to bear Your cross. But Esther, do you feel your sin? Can you truly say honestly before God that you repent?"

"Yes ma'am, I think I can say all that."

Then, Esther, come and kneel down and pray to god to give you strength in the future to stand against temptation."

Esther remembers what Mrs.Barfield says to her, that she hasto come to God if she has problem and also she has to confess all of her sins to God. That is why, when she has problemshe does not forget to come to God. By coming before God, she gets the strength to overcome her internal conflict. She believes that God will give her the strength to face all of her problems.

Esther knows that people will mock her if they know about her condition thatshe is pregnant without a husband. So she has to get rid of her baby if she does not want people to look down on her. But she should not kill her baby, because it is cruel of her to do that. The only way which she can do is to come to God to ask strength in facing that problem: "She prayed for strength to endure with courage what she now knew she must endure, and she prayed lightto guide her present decision".

She believes that God will help her in facing the situation which is so hard for her to face. She does not want to take the wrong decision which will make her regret. She asks God to guide her in taking the decision. God is so kind to her. Realizing this, Esther decides to keep her pregnancy. Anyway God has given the child to her not to be killed but to be loved. With God, Esther also realizes that she will be able to face her problems because there are so many people who have problem bigger than hers: "I know there is many a hard time before me, but I haveprayed for strength, and God will give me strength, and I Must not complaint. My case is not so bad as many another" (1894:99)

Esther knows that there are many people who undergo difficulties in life, that is why, she has to be strong in facing the hardship of life because God will never leave her whatever happens. Esther does not know how to care her child without any money. She has to find a job as soon as possible if she wants her child to be alive. Anyway, she believes that God will give a hand to her until she can handle her problem: "God knows how we shall live until I can get to work again" (1894:138). Esther believes that God has made her fate. With the existence of God beside her, she will be able to face all of her problems.

From the discussion above, it shows that Esther is really a complex character. In the beginning she wants to get married with William then she changes her mind, even she also rejects to marry Fred. This character is obviously round character, she looks gentle that she loves and cares everybody. However when Esther will sacrifice herself for others and especially for her child, Jackie, she looks very strong. Her concern and her love to her child have helped her to overcome her conflicts. Her personality is clearly described that she does not trust anybody. She has a strong principle that she only trusts God. In her weakness as a poor woman she struggles by herself (cf. Andayani 2004). In the complicated situation, in her critical condition she looks very brave and firm. She rejects two men, then she decides not to abort her child, finally she earns her child to be a man.

CONCLUSION

Internal conflict of Moore's *Esther Water* is the strongest element in the novel that makes it interesting. The discussion of this study has explained Esther's personal conflict. Eventhough firstly Esther is described to have little conflicts with other characters namely Sarah, when Esther can not return Sarah's money, then when William breaks her heart. But other big conflicts arise when she has to become a good lady bringing up her daughter without a husband in an environment that can not accept an illegitimate child. Esther arrives in her complicated situation, that her real conflict is internal conflict. She must have strong character to show that she does not depend on other people'spity. She rejects William when he comes back to marry her. She does not trust anybody. He should choose the best way or alternative choice according to his own consideration. In this case Esther has to struggle with herself in achieving his goal. The real conflict happens in herself whether she surrenders to his fate by marrying with William or Fred or even neglecting her child or she must struggle to against her fate. She must make a decision and she also has to take all the consequences.

It is not easy for Esther to face her complicated problems. From the detail description about Esther, the main character of this story, it shows round character

which is portrayed dynamic and always changes. Her care for others and her love to her child show how gentle is her character. However in the same way, her love also enables her to face all of her conflicts, and it also helps her to overcome her conflict. Only by God's help, she may have the strength to get through and overcome her conflict (cf. McMahan 1986; Andayani 2004). Esther comes to God to ask for strength when she has conflict because of her pregnancy. Her faith in God makes Esther have the strength. She can stand with her illegitimate pregnancy and brings up her child to become a fine young man. Unpredictably Esther does not stay away from her conflict, she faces her problems bravely. She is not a weak character but really an optimistic woman who is full with spirit to seek happiness of life.

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