
The Psychological Conflicts of the Main and Secondary Characters of *The Lady With The Dog*

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Abstract:

This study entitled *The Psychological Conflicts of the Main and Secondary Characters of the "The Lady with the Dog"*. The study aims at identifying, classifying, and analyzing the conflict, psychological conflict, and motivation of the main and secondary characters in the story. This study is done by qualitative method; the data were collected from the short story *Lady with The Dog* in the form of passages or utterances that express the characters' conflict. The short story tells about the affair between Dmitrich Gurov, the main character, and Anna Sergeyvna, the secondary character. The data were collected by documentation and note-taking technique. After being collected, the data were analyzed with three theories: the theory of conflict by William Kenney, the psychoanalytic theory by Freud cited from Nayar, and the theory of human motivation proposed by Maslow. The findings reveal that the main and secondary characters face internal and external conflicts. Their external conflicts were caused by their unwell relationship with their suppose; meanwhile, their internal conflicts were caused by their inability to control their *tripartite psyche*. Their decision to have an affair also occur due to some motivation based on their unsatisfied love needs.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological aspects of a person can be learned directly from a person through several tests or from literary work. The term *psychological* relates to the person's mind and thoughts. This term is closely related to *psychology*. *Psychology* can be defined as the study of individual behavior and mental processes (American Psychological Association, 2016; Gerrig, 2014). In a literary work, the characters' psychological aspects can be seen. One example of a literary work is a short story. The short story is an example of written literary work. Short stories are typically written in 1600 to 20.000 words and have a limited number of characters. It is a literary work

with several intrinsic elements, including characters, setting, conflict, plot, and theme. Thus, a short story can be a data source for research that aims to analyze the psychological aspect of a short story. According to Kennedy (1979), a character is a person who inhabits a story. A character has a role in the story and should be able to represent a real human being (Sosisowati, 2021). Characters generally can be divided into main, secondary, and supporting characters. The main characters are usually mentioned the most in the story, and it is the center of the story. Meanwhile, the secondary character is the character that has a kind influence on the main character. The supporting character is the character that has the role of completing and supporting the main character (DiYanni, 1994).

A character's characteristics in the story can be analyzed based on the dimension of the character. According to Egri (2009), there are three types of characters' dimensions: (1) physiological dimension, which is related to characters' physical appearance, such as age, height, and weight. (2) sociological dimension related to the behavioral background such as education, religion, and race; (3) psychological dimension related to the personal quality of the character that covers ambition, emotions, and moral standards. (Peders, 2018)

Afterward, a character, as stated earlier, can be considered a fictional human form in literary works such as novels or short stories. Anything the characters might experience in the story is commonly a projection of life experiences that humans possibly experienced, such as conflict. Conflict can be defined as a situation where one party recognizes that another party is about to have the opposite point of view and might start to get frustrated and shows some concern from theirs (Thomas, 1992 p. 265). In short, by reading a literary work, especially in analyzing the characters' psychological aspects in the story, the readers could learn a life lesson rather than merely feel entertained by the story.

The main and supporting characters of the short story entitled *The Lady with the Dog* are also facing their own conflict. This short story, written by Anton Chekhov, a famous Russian writer, tells of a conflict that a married couple might have, which is having an affair. The term *having an affair* can be defined as a relationship that an individual creates with someone other than his or her spouse or partner. Having an affair involves feelings and emotions. According to a survey held by the *General Social Survey*, the statistic shows that twenty percent of men are cheating compared to thirteen percent of women. *LA Inelegance Detective Agency* also stated that thirty to sixty percent of married couples would have an affair at least once in the marriage, and ninety-nine percent of marriages come to the end of the vow: divorce—as a result of their affair being discovered. Furthermore, the story "Lady With The Dog" tells a tale about an affair couple that starts to doubt their decision to have an affair with each other. Based on the background of the study, the aims of this study are (1) to identify the conflicts of the main and secondary characters in the story, (2) to classify the psychological conflicts of the main and secondary in the study with Freud's psychoanalysis theory, and (3) analyze the reason why the main and supporting characters made the decisions to have an affair.

Some previous studies are reviewed in terms of better comprehension of the topic. In 2013, Krisnaninggar wrote a study that discusses the novel's main character, attitude development. His study is entitled "A Psychoanalysis Study of The Reason Behind Main Character's Changing Attitude in Ahmad Toharis's "Bekisar Merah." This study aims to increase the reader's awareness and understanding of human behaviors and their changes. *Bekisar Merah* is a novel by Ahmad Toharis that was published in 1993. This novel tells the story of Lasi, an obedient wife who, however, has financial problems and is cheated on by his husband, decides to move to a town for a better living. This study applied Freud's Psychological approach to understanding the changes in Lasi's behavior. As a result, the main character Lasi changes

drastically due to her disappointment toward her husband and mother. This study is relevant for the present study since it also focuses on discussing the character's psychology. However, the present study analyzes not only the main character but also the supporting characters since supporting characters are considered to have a huge influence on the main character in the story.

As the years pass, more studies discuss the character's psychological aspect. Saputra, in 2018 wrote a study entitled "The Effect of Maggie's Unconscious Mind to Personality Development in Stephen Crane's 'Maggie: A Girl of The Streets.'" The study analyzed Maggie's character development in relation to the role of her family and friends and her unconscious roles related to her personality development. Saputra did his research based on the theory of characterization proposed by Abrams and Harpham, the theory of personality development, and the theory of psychoanalysis by Freud (1896). Throughout his analysis, the findings show that Maggie's character development is related to her loss of her father and her environment.

In 2021, there is a study entitled "Psychological analysis of the Main and Secondary Characters in Dealing with Conflict' Marriage Story'" written by Swencadari. This study aims to discover the psychological aspect and conflict of the characters in *Marriage Story*. This study is conducted by a qualitative method. The data was collected by note-taking technique, then analyzed using the theory of conflict by William Kenney (1996), human motivation theory by Bernhardt (1953), and Managing Interpersonal Communication theory by Deetz and Stevenson (1986). From this study, it is shown that psychological aspects hold an important role in affecting the characters in handling a conflict. It also showed that Nicole Barber and Charlie Barber (the characters) dominate, having external conflict that affects their marriage. This study discusses the same topic as the present study: the conflict that characters might face in a marriage story from a psychological aspect; thus, this study is relevant.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to identify and analyze the data, there are three theories used in analyzing the data, namely Freud's psychoanalytic theory cited from Nayar (2009), the human motivation theory proposed by Maslow (1970), and the theory of conflict by Kenney.

Psychoanalytic Freud's Theory

Freud suggests that the language people use to communicate conveys hidden desires, anxieties, and fears. The desire cannot be conveyed or expressed directly because some desires are forbidden due to the culture that rules an individual's life (Nayar, 2009, p.92). Freud called the hidden desires the *unconscious* desire of an individual. Further, he pictured the *unconscious* in an individual like a floating iceberg where the part that can be seen from the iceberg is the small piece, meanwhile the *unconscious* hug yet powerful unseen mass below it (Dobie, 2012, p.56). Freud believes that the unconscious desire of an individual also requires a language as a medium to express the desire, and the medium could be in the form of literary work (Nayar, 2009, p.93). The opposite of *unconscious* is *conscious*, where Freud defines this term as the desire accepted by culture and society.

There are three famous terms by Freud, namely *The Tripartite Psyche*. There are the *id*, *Superego*, and *Ego*. **Id** is the *most unconscious* desire an individual could have. It always tries to satisfy an individual's pleasure without considering its consequence (Dobie, 2012, p. 57). The term **Ego** is in charge of controlling an individual's Id. Ego is the *conscious mind*, which makes an individual's desire follows the reality principle, such as regulation in avoiding the id's destructive energies (Dobie, 2012, p. 57). The last psyche term is **Superego**. It can also be considered an individual's conscience, which adjusts and controls an individual's social and

cultural codes (Nayar, 2009, p.94). Freud is entangled in the conflicts brought forth by two fundamental ideas. The *pleasure principle* states that all individual's actions must be motivated by the desire to experience pleasure. The *reality principle* helps an individual realize that not all of our pleasures can be experienced exactly as we want. It motivates us to seek alternative ways to experience pleasure without violating the regulation or norms (Nayar, 2009, p.95).

An Individual might experience internal psychological conflicts due to the existence of **the Id**, which supports the *pleasure principle*, and **Ego** also **Superego**, which support an individual to be on the track of *reality principle*. An individual might battle between pursuing their pleasure in any way possible or holding their desire to be accepted by society.

Human Motivation Theory by Maslow

In his book entitled 'Motivation and Personality,' Maslow suggests that an individual's motivation is based on the individual's basic needs. Maslow classified an individual's basic needs into five types, namely (1) Physiological needs, (2) Safety needs, (3) Love and Belongingness needs, (4) Esteem needs, and (5) Self-Actualization needs. If an individual success in fulfilling one of the needs, the other needs will emerge; thus, these basic human needs are organized into the hierarchy of relative prepotency (Maslow, 1970, p.37)

The Physiological needs are the needs that are related to the biological needs such as water, air, and food. This type is considered the starting point of other motivations. Individuals' physiological needs should be fulfilled to sustain a living. Soon as the physiological needs are fulfilled, an individual starts to seek another need which is the need to feel safe and secure; this need is called the safety needs. This need is essential to be satisfied because this can make the individual feel comfortable and secure and make the individual able to run a good life. After an individual is physiologically satisfied and able to feel secure in his or her life, this will push their desire to have contact with others. The individual will starve the affection from their surroundings, such as from their relatives or family; this need, according to Maslow, is called the belongingness and love needs (Maslow, 1970, p.43). Love is a feeling that involves both giving and receiving it (Maslow, 1970, p. 45). Humans, as social beings, need to socialize with others and have a sense of relationship, solidarity, fellowship, and even intimacy (Wirawan, 2021, p.18). Due to these needs, an individual could feel love-related emotions, such as feeling loved and lonely. After an individual can satisfy his or her physiological, safety, and love needs, the individual will desire to accomplish an achievement called the esteem needs. This need could motivate someone to improve themselves and discover their strength, capability, self-confidence, and desire to be useful to the world (Maslow, 1970, p. 45). If this need can be fulfilled, it can help an individual consider himself or herself a precious individual. After gaining self-esteem within themselves, an individual will start to have a standard for himself or herself in terms of discovering their *true color*. The desire to find the value of an individual is called the self-actualization needs. This needs to consider the highest level of need that an individual must satisfy (Wirawan, 2021, p. 19)

Theory of Conflict by William Kenney

William Kenney classified conflict into two types, namely **internal** and **external conflict**. **Internal conflict** can be defined as the conflict that individuals face within themselves. This conflict is related to an individual's desire. This conflict could lead a character into self-development. This conflict includes psychological, moral, and right choices. For example, when a character has to choose between the right and wrong things regarding stratified needs, someone could face this type of conflict (Swecandari, 2021, p. 14). **External conflict** is the opposite of

internal conflict. External conflict can be defined as a conflict that occurs between two parties. It can be through argument or other fighting activities (Swecandari, 2021, p. 14).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data source

A short story *The Lady with the Dog*, first published in 1899, is chosen for this study's data source. Anton Chekhov, a Russian playwright and short story writer, wrote the short story. One of the aims of this study is to analyze the conflicts that characters in a story might face or feel from a psychological perspective. This story generally tells a story in which the main and supporting characters are a couple that has an affair, faces conflicts during it, and makes a final decision about their affair. Thus, this short story is ideal as the data source for this study.

Data collection

The data is collected by documentation method and note-taking technique. The steps in collecting data include reading the short story thoroughly and then note-taking the credible data, such as passages or utterances by the main characters and secondary characters that indicate the characters' conflict within themselves or with other parties.

Data analysis

This study is analyzed using the qualitative method since the analysis is done to comprehend the passages or utterances as the data (Creswell, 2014, p. 215). In order to analyze the data that have been collected, there are two techniques used. First, the passages and utterances from the main characters and secondary characters were classified into three groups, namely the data which expresses the main and secondary characters' conflict, the data which expresses the conflict based on psychology, and the passage or utterance that expresses the main and secondary characters' motivation. After the classification, the data will be analyzed based on three theories. In order to identify and analyze the conflicts of the main and secondary characters, the theory of conflict by William Kenney is used. To classify and identify conflicts from psychology's perspective, the psychoanalytic theory by Freud is cited from Nayar (2009) and Dobie (2012). In analyzing the character's reason for having an affair, the theory of human motivation proposed by Maslow (2008) is used.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Synopsis:

The short story entitled *The Lady with the Dog* was written by Anton Chekhov. The story tells of an affair done by Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, a wealthy- married man who works at the bank with a woman he met at Yalta that is always accompanied by a pomeranian dog, known as, Anna Sergeyevna, a married woman. Dmitrich Gurov is unhappy with his marriage because he considers his wife unfashionable and narrow-minded. Meanwhile, Anna Sergeyevna, who wants to achieve more in her life, thinks her husband is a flunky.

They steal some time daily, have lunch, go for walks, and admire the sea. Their affair seems fun and works smoothly until the farewell time comes. Anna Sergeyevna decides to leave Yalta; initially, both accept the farewell and think their affair should be buried as deeply as their past. They knew they were sharing a fun and romantic time; however, the experience shall end. Long story short, Anna Sergeyevna returned to her house with her husband; meanwhile, Dimitirch Gurov feels things he never felt before; the sense of missing someone and the need for love. He

finally realizes that she has fallen in love with Anna Sergeyevna. Gurov decided to look for Anna Sergeyevna. He made it to the S town where Anna Sergeyevna lived. He made it to meet Anna Sergeyevna and tried to make everything clear between them, their feelings towards each other. Anna told Gurov to leave, and she promised to meet Gurov in Moscow. Their affair begins again; however, they cannot see a clear future for their love.

In this story, Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov is the main character because he is the centre of this story. At the same time, Anna Sergeyevna is the secondary character since she influences Gurov.

1. *Main and Secondary Characters Conflict Analysis*

1.1 *Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov's Conflicts*

Dmitiri Dmitrich Gurov has external and internal conflicts. He has an **external conflict** with his wife, where he considers his wife to be boring, which triggers his desire to have an affair. Meanwhile, he faces internal conflict when Anna Sergeyevna leaves Yatra and returns to S town. His **internal conflict** is proven by:

“He had believed that in a month’s time Anna Sergeyevna would be nothing but a wistful memory, and that hereafter, with her wistful smile, she would only occasionally appear to him in dreams, like others before her. But the month was now well over and winter was in full swing, and all was as clear in his memory as if he had only parted with Anna Sergeyevna the day before” (p.78)

“He began to feel an overwhelming desire to share his memories with someone. But he could not speak of his love at home, and outside his home. ... And what was there to tell? Was it love that he had felt? Had there been anything exquisite, poetic, anything instructive or even amusing about his relations with Anna Sergeyevna?” (p.79)

From the two passages above, it is obvious that Gurov feels unusual feelings. At first, he is okay and sure he will get through the farewell with Anna well. However, as time goes by since their separation, he starts to miss Anna and to doubt and question his decision, himself, and his short terms affair with Anna.

1.2 *Anna Sergeyevna's Conflicts*

In the short story, Anna Sergeyevna is the supporting character. She is facing external and internal conflicts. Her **external conflict** is the conflict that he has with his husband. This conflict causes her to have an affair with Gurov. Meanwhile, her **internal conflict** occurs several times with having an affair with Gurov. For example when she meet Gurov at S town:

“How you frightened me!” she said, breathing heavily, still pale and half-stunned. “Oh, how you frightened me! I’m almost dead! Why did you come? Oh, why?”

She cast him a glance of fear, entreaty, love, and then gazed at him steadily, as if to fix his features firmly in her memory. “I’ve been so unhappy,” she continued, taking no notice of his words. “I could think of nothing but you the whole time, I lived on the thoughts of you. I tried to forget — why, oh, why did you come?”

“What are you doing, oh what are you doing. We have both gone mad” (p. 82)

From the passage above, Anna is facing a conflict within herself. She knows that her heart belongs to Gurov; however, she denies that feeling because she thinks that their affair should be and already ended at the time she left Yatra, and both of them should have

continued their life separately. Anna also has internal conflict when she starts their affair. She knows that an affair is a bad thing. However, she cannot resist having it with Gurov and feels happier and more alive whenever she has Gurov around.

2. *Main and Secondary Characters Psychology Analysis*

2.1 *Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov's Tripartite Psyche*

Gurov, in the story, is described as a married man who is having an affair with Anna Sergeyevna. His decision to deceive his wife and have an affair with Anna shows that he is under the control of his *Id*. When he is having farewell with Anna Sergeyevna and decides to continue his life without Anna, his *ego* and *superego* take control of him, causing him to be the husband and father that his spouse and kids need, just like he should be. However, this realization is just for a while; when Gurov decides to proceed with his affair with Anna, he realizes that he is madly in love with Anna and that his feeling is genuine for her; finally, he realizes that his most desire is to have a life with Anna Sergeyevna (*Id*).

It can be said that Gurov was having a conflict when he could not control his *Id* and considered his *Id* or his love for Anna Sergeyevna as the right thing to pursue and feel. When Anna returned to him, he was so happy because his *Id* was satisfied. On the other hand, Gurov knows he is known as a married man in society. Hence, he chooses to do his affair secretly without exposing it to the public. Gurov is living two lives; a faithful husband who lives a perfect life in public, and the other side is just Dmitrich Gurov, a husband who deceives his wife and secretly has an affair with another woman.

2.2 *Anna Sergeyevna's Tripartite Psyche*

Anna Sergeyevna was an unhappy married woman until she met Gurov. Her desire to be happy and achieving more in her life (*Id*).

"...I was only twenty when I married him, and I was devoured by curiosity, I wanted something higher. I told myself that there must be a different kind of life. I wanted to live, to live. . . . I was burning with curiosity . . . you'll never understand that, but I swear to God I could no longer control myself, nothing could hold me back, I told my husband I was ill, and I came here. . . . And I started going about like one possessed, like a madwoman . . . (p.75)

The utterance above is stated by Anna to Gurov at the beginning of their affair when Anna knows this affair is not right. Her utterance shows that even though she did the wrong thing, she cannot control her desire and will still proceed with her affair with Gurov.

"It isn't right," she said. "You will never respect me any more. ... "May God forgive me!" she exclaimed, and her eyes filled with tears. "It's terrible." (p.75)

"How can I justify myself? I'm a wicked, fallen woman, I despise myself and have not the least thought of self-justification. It isn't my husband I have deceived, it's myself. And not only now, I have been deceiving myself for ever so long. ...and now I have become an ordinary, worthless woman, and everyone has the right to despise me." (p.75)

The utterance above is stated by Anna when she first sees his affair as a non-noble

attitude (*Ego*). As a married woman, she knows that she should not do the affair since society might not accept it, and even though she has her reason for doing the affair, it will not justify her action (*Superego*).

Anna Sergeyevna has conflict within herself due to her unconscious desire (*Id*) and her conscious desire (*ego and superego*). She would love to have a serious relationship with Gurov; however, because she and Gurov are married, she also knows that to be “the one” for Gurov is impossible.

3. *Main and Secondary Character’s Motivation Analysis*

Gurov as the main character and Anna as the secondary character have one similarity, that both are already married with their spouse and have an affair. Based on this similarity, the needs of love that cannot be satisfied by them and their spouse is the motivation behind their decision to have an affair.

“He began to feel an overwhelming desire to share his memories with someone. But he could not speak of his love at home, and outside his home who was there for him to confide in? Not the tenants living in his house, and certainly not his colleagues at the bank. And what was there to tell? Was it love that he had felt? Had there been anything exquisite, poetic, anything instructive or even amusing about his relations with Anna Sergeyevna? He had to content himself with uttering vague generalizations about love and women, and nobody guessed what he meant...” (p.78)

The passage above tells the reader that after Anna left, Gurov started to feel missing something, he felt a hole in his heart that could only be filled by Anna Sergeyevna. He found himself more comfortable with Anna rather than with his wife, this is proof that Gurov needs love pushing him to chase for Anna Sergeyevna again.

Meanwhile, there are other needs that motivate Anna Sergeyevna as the secondary character to have an affair with Gurov. It can be seen in her utterance:

“My husband is no doubt an honest, worthy man, but he’s a flunkey. I don’t know what it is he does at his office, but I know he’s a flunkey. I was only twenty when I married him, and I was devoured by curiosity, I wanted something higher. I told myself that there must be a different kind of life. I wanted to live, to live.” (p. 75)

According to the passage above, Anna considers her husband as a flunkey. Flunkey can be defined as a person who has unimportant work at his or her office or work (*cambridge.org*). Anna is not satisfied by it, she wants more for her life, something higher and better, this is indicating the needs of esteem of Anna is not satisfied. Hence, the needs of esteem also motivate her to have an affair with a wealthy married man Dmitrich Gurov who works at the bank.

CONCLUSION

Considering the result of the analysis, Dmitrich Gurov, the main character of the story, and Anna Sergeyevna, the secondary character, face both external and internal conflict. Both characters’ external conflicts occur due to their dissatisfaction with their spouse. Moreover, both characters’ internal conflict occurs due to their *tripartite psyche* and inability to control it. The main character Dmitrich Gurov starts to have internal conflict when his *Id* to keep his affair with Anna takes control of him dominantly when he realizes that his affair, meanwhile his *ego and superego* keep pushing him to be a faithful husband. Anna Sergeyevna’s internal conflict appears

due to her *Id*, where she fell in love with Gurov; meanwhile, she realizes that the affair is not a good thing to be done since each of them already has their spouse (*Ego and Superego*). In addition, Gurov and Anna have needs of love that cannot be satisfied by their own suppose. Thus they decide to have an affair in order to complete their needs.

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