

**THE MECHANISM OF HANDLING THE INTERNAL
CONFLICT OF SULLIVAN AS SEEN IN WILLIAM GIBSON'S
PLAY THE MIRACLE WORKER**

A Thesis

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Abstract

Skripsi ini membahas perasaan bersalah sebagai konflik batin yang terjadi dalam diri Sullivan, salah seorang tokoh yang terdapat dalam novel karya William Gibson, The Miracle Worker.

Dalam menganalisa konflik tersebut, penulis menggunakan teori identitas yang dikembangkan oleh Norman N. Holland, yang merupakan turunan dari Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud. Teori ini memiliki empat mekanisme yang mempengaruhi identitas seseorang, yaitu: *Defense* (semacam pembentengan diri terhadap pengaruh dari luar), *Expectation* (harapan dari seseorang), *Fantasy* (mimpi dan cita-cita seseorang) dan *Transformation* (perubahan yang terjadi pada seseorang)

Dari penelitian, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa Sullivan mencapai *Fantasinya*. Mekanisme *Defense* Sullivan mengambil peran dalam dirinya. *Expectation* Sullivan juga tercapai setelah muridnya mampu menyerap pelajaran yang diberikannya. Akhirnya Sullivan berhasil menjadi seorang guru yang dihormati oleh keluarga muridnya dan keluar dari rasa bersalah terhadap adiknya yang telah meninggal dunia sebagai bentuk *Transformation*, karena dia memiliki tujuan hidup lagi setelah berhasil mengajar muridnya.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of The Research

Psychology of Literature begins with the theory developed by Freud. The development of Literature in twentieth century is increasing rapidly. Psychological criticism is applied more than just a critic on relationship between text and its author. Following Abram's term of critical oriented, it can be applied through text or characters as an objective approach, through readers as pragmatic approach.

In this research, the writer chooses psychoanalytic criticism in analyzing this play. The implementation of this criticism usually concerns with the characters in literary works. As said by Holland, characters do not refer only to a person in literary work but what he/ she like is. It generally refers to personality, ways of life, physical form as well as moral attributes (1990:30).

Here, the writer would like to analyze William Gibson's play "The Miracle Worker". The Miracle Worker is a three-act plays based on Sullivan's struggle and her conflict in the 1880s in teaching her new pupil, Helen Keller. Sullivan is a young woman who faces the internal conflict that caused by her past time experience. She always hears the voice of her brother, Jimmie. Sullivan blames herself for his death and cannot forget her feeling guilty until she is able to help Helen and convince Keller's family that she can teach Helen.

Perrine says that conflict is reflected in the plot and characters' action. A conflict might consist merely of a sequence of related action. Conflict might be physical, mental, emotion or moral (1966:42). Literary works usually present more than one conflicts. Character's conflict might be internal or external which simultaneously affected the personal attitudes. The conflict that occurred inside of characters can be defined as the internal conflict; meanwhile the external conflicts occurred between one characters against another.

In psychological lens, conflict has several ends. One of them is happiness or we called as happy ending. Perrine says that story with a happy ending sent the readers a feeling pleasantly (1966:46). This phenomenon experienced by one of the characters in Gibson's play The Miracle Worker. Happiness is the final stage of conflict in this play.

The writer chooses The Miracle Worker since this play shows an internal conflict of Sullivan. This internal conflict appears inside of her mind and begins to grow up when she teaches Helen. Since character's conflict is the objective of this research, psychology becomes an appropriate aspect to analyze this work.

1.2. The Identification of The Problem

The writer finds the conflict of Sullivan derived from her past time when her brother, Jimmy, passed away. The writer intends to show the conflict happen on Sullivan and her efforts since her brother's death by using Holland's Identity Theory. Sullivan is haunted by Jimmy's voice in her dream and she always feels guilty. In

overcoming this feeling, she attempts to teach a pupil who has similarity to Jimmy. The pupil's family underestimates her capability. Therefore she keeps trying to teach Helen to out from her feeling guilty as her responsibility toward her brother.

1.3. The Scope of The Research

In this research, the writer focuses on internal conflict of Sullivan and to find the Sullivan's effort to overcome her feeling guilty by using DEFT of Holland's theory.

1.4. Objective Of The Research

The writer wants to portray Sullivan's struggle in facing the conflict that finally leads her to the happiness based on identity theory by Norman N. Holland.

1.5. The Review on Related Studies

After conducting a library research to find the review of previous studies, the writer may conclude that The Miracle Worker has never been analyzed before by student of English Department in Faculty of Letters Andalas University.

However, there are some previous studies respond to this play found in internet. Some articles give another value of The Miracle Worker. One article entitled The Art of Teaching in the Miracle Worker by Thomas S. Hibbs (2003). This article shows the story of Sullivan and Keller remains a devastating critique of the self-esteem movement and an affirmation of the proper role of obedience and repetition in

the life of the student. Most dramatically — and most surprisingly — it insists that the true teacher cannot simply be an instrument of the wishes of his student's family.

Another article gives response to this play is Scott Mendelsohn, The Unique Story of Helen Keller in the Miracle Worker. By telling the unique story of Helen Keller and her indomitable 20-year-old teacher, playwright William Gibson articulates the most universal mysteries of human existence. The story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan is an epic tale, a singular combat of two people to overcome their own human nature damage. Yet it also embodies the central, archetypal struggle between any parent and teacher who seeks to open the eyes of a child.

The writer in this research focuses on psychological problem related to Annie Sullivan who has to face internal conflict in her life. Therefore, it is clear that the writer discusses in different lens.

1.6. The Theoretical Framework

There are many criticisms in analyzing the literary works. In analyzing this work, the writer is interested to use psychological criticism in viewing the work. The writer thinks she needs to refer to the psychological theory since her analysis focuses on the conflict of the main character.

It begins with Sigmund Freud's theory in late nineteenth –century. Many theories are developed from Freud's basic theory. One of them is the concept of

identity by Norman Holland. He proposes four terms in his concepts which are: Defense, Expectation, Fantasy, and Transformation (DEFT).

1. Defense

Defense is a mechanism that bridges a self and other. The defense mechanism forms the character and shapes the character's action in its associate to the world. The Defense shaped this form of unconscious mind into conscious stated (1990:63).

2. Expectation

Expectation mechanism takes an important part on the development of a character with the outer self external world. Expectation is wishes that in period of time, the expectation then represses to the earliest fantasies and defenses. (1968: 28)

3. Fantasy

Holland sees that Fantasy is a wish or cluster of people that comes from the unconscious mind. Holland states that the role of fantasies reflected in the projection imaginings, and participations provide a base for our experience of life itself (1968:31).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

After analyzing The Miracle Worker by William Gibson which is using psychoanalytic criticism and identity theory by Norman N Holland, The writer finds several points that listed in the following paragraph.

The character, Sullivan, is analyzed with the four mechanisms of identity theory. The relationship between Sullivan's internal conflict with Holland's theory is the inner conflict, and this conflict stimulates her to remain and out from feeling guilty by keep teaching her student. Though the conflict between Hellen's family and Sullivan increasingly heated. Sullivan's expectation more directed towards his brother Jimmie. Meanwhile, her fantasy is more towards Helen. And her expectation produces a fantasy to become a successful teacher. In the beginning, why her expectation not in line with her fantasy is that because her expectation is her brother could be recovered, while her fantasy is they could grow together, but over time her fantasy turned to Helen.

The result is Sullivan maintaining her defenses, expectation, fantasy, and transformation. Four mechanisms shown in the analysis could help resolves her internal conflict and bring Sullivan to a better life. Her passion to help Helen to behave like normal child is motivated by her late brother, Jimmie.

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