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## **An Analysis of Conflict of The Main Character in *Whiplash* Movie by Damien Chazelle**

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**Abstract:** Movie is included in drama as a form of literature. The story is told in the dialogue, the forms of film and drama were identical. In addition, the objective of this study was to examine the conflicts encountered by the main character and to analyze the impacts of these conflicts in the *Whiplash* movie by Damien Chazelle. The research was supported by Kenney and Aruna's conflict theory. The research used a qualitative approach. The data extracted from the *Whiplash* movie, including dialogues, sentences, words, and phrases. It was found that there were two types of conflicts experienced by the main character in the *Whiplash* Movie: internal and external conflicts. Moreover, the study revealed two consequences resulting from these conflicts, both positive and negative impacts were observed. For instance, averts further serious conflict, results in personal communal change, brings two or more parties, always in state of tension, feelings of resentment and hatred escalate, and other relationships also are affected. Furthermore, the study identified psychological and sociological impacts arising from the conflicts faced by the main character, including experiences of trauma, anxiety, and depression. Meanwhile, the sociological conflicts encompassed clashes between individual and authority, as well as issues of competition and collaboration.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Internal Conflict, External Conflict, Impact of Conflict, Main character, Movie.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, the word literature has been widely recognized by many people and experts worldwide because literature is an important part of the language. Derived from the Latin word *literatura* mean "writing formed with letters," literature most commonly refers to works of the creative imagination, including poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and in some instances, journalism, and song. Welleck and Warren (1993:2), states that literature is a full creation form, emotion, and expression that designates imaginative ideas through language as media. In addition, Roberts and Jacobs (2006: 2) elaborates, "Literature is composition that tells a story, dramatizes a situation, expresses emotions, analyzes and advocates ideas".

Generally, literature is categorized into prose, poetry, and drama. The movie is included in drama as a form of literature. The story is told in the dialogue, the forms of film and drama were identical. Literature consists of two fundamental elements: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic element's function is to construct a story literary

works such as themes, plots, settings, characters, conflicts, points of view. Nuriadi (2016: 59), elaborates those intrinsic elements are those that exist within stories and serve to construct a story within it, acting as skeletons or muscles of the story's so-called fiction. Furthermore, extrinsic elements are those that exist outside or on the outside of the fiction structure. They help to build the work by providing ideas, materials, or data that can be used and presented in it. Among them are the author's personal experiences, educational background, religious beliefs, cultural background, and social and political background (Nuriadi 2016: 77).

In addition, since movie become popular among people, the writer has two reasons in conducting research on a movie. First and foremost, the movie means of communication and education. Second, because the writer only has a limited amount of time to watch it, this movie may be very interesting to evaluate. For instance, in the motivational movie titled *Whiplash*, directed by Damien Chazelle, the main character as an inspirational student is Andrew Neiman, portrayed by Miles Teller. The uniqueness of this

movie compared to other movies is the plot twist that occurs in solving problems implemented by Andrew Neiman, the main character of this movie. Depicts the main character's ability to overcome every obstacle in his quest to become the main jazz drummer at the JVC Jazz Festival.

Furthermore, movie is a motion picture that is made by using cameras to record photographic images and creating images using animation or visual effects. The audience can experience a range of emotions while watching a movie, including anger, pleased, sadness, curious and many other feelings. In addition to entertainment, watching a movie can provide information, ideas, and inspiration.

However, this study focused on conflict as the main discussion. Conflict is necessary in literary works because it can lead to audiences' emotions such as sadness, happiness, or anger, which makes the reader or audience more likely to enjoy the literature. Conflict occurs when individuals or groups encounter goals that neither party can achieve satisfactorily.

## METHODS

In this study, the writer employed qualitative research in a descriptive term. Because the data for this study taken from *Whiplash* movie in form of screenshots of scenes with dialogue consisting of sentences, phrases and word. Descriptive research attempts to accurately describe a phenomenon based on research characteristics in which data is analyzed through interpretation rather than statistical analysis. A qualitative approach applied in this study to analyze the main character conflict in the *Whiplash* movie. Moreover, data analysis used to methodically arrange the data in order to generate research findings needed to identify the concept or hypothesis contained within the data. According to Ary et al (2010). data analysis is the process by which researchers methodically explore and organize their information in order to comprehend the data and communicate their findings to others. Data analysis is the process of transforming information into data that has been collected or received in order to draw conclusions from research. The following are the data analysis steps used in this study to analyze the data: 1) The writer described the words, sentences, phares, clauses in terms of dialogues based on the conflict and the impacts of conflict. 2) The writer elaborated the words, sentences, phares, clauses in

terms of dialogues based on conflict and the impacts of conflict. 3) The writer concluded this study after describing and elaborating the words, sentences, phares, clauses in terms of dialogues based on conflict and the impacts of conflict.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The writer identifies two distinct conflict categories encountered by the main character, namely internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict involves the character's struggle to reconcile conflicting desires or emotions within themselves. Moreover, external conflict pertains to the character's struggle against external forces. In the movie, the main character confronts a conflict involving himself and others.

In addition, the writer discovered two impacts that arose from many forms of conflicts encountered by the main character after observing and studying *Whiplash* utilizing Ladva (2014) theory on the impact of conflicts. The impacts are positive and negative impacts. Further, the conflict function, which emphasizes that conflict has positive effects including increasing the main character's relationship and altering the main character's thinking to become a better person, is a term used to describe the beneficial influence of conflict. While the negative effects of conflict, emphasizes how the main character's anger and tension with others causes those relationships to fall apart.

Moreover, the writer finds the psychological and sociological impacts of conflicts experienced by the main character after observing and studying *Whiplash* used Kenney (1966) theory. The psychological conflicts are trauma, anxiety, depression. Meanwhile, the sociological conflicts are individual and authority, competition and collaboration.

### Discussion

#### 1.1 The conflicts faced by the main character as seen in *Whiplash* movie

##### 1.1.1 Internal Conflict

The internal conflict is a conflict between the figures with itself.

Fletcher: Why do you suppose I just hurled a chair at your head, Neiman?

Neiman: I don't know

The dialogue above highlights an internal conflict within Neiman, stemming from the intense pressure imposed by Fletcher's irritation. Neiman is pushed to maintain the tempo directed by Fletcher, who expresses annoyance and impatience by repeatedly counting and eventually slapping Neiman. This incident motivates Neiman to intensify his training efforts, driven by his strong desire to attain musical excellence and gain recognition from Fletcher. Neiman's dedication to his craft becomes so profound that he disregards the injuries and strain he incurs, exemplifying his unwavering commitment to his goal.

### 1.1.2 External Conflict

External conflict is a conflict between a character with something outside themselves, may come from that conflict between the human environments or otherwise make it a conflict.

Carl: **Oh my God! How could you so stupid?**

Neiman: A janitor, maybe a janitor took

Carl: **A janitor? You are dumb! Find the chart!**

In this dialogue, Carl is furious with Neiman for failing to uphold his trust by losing an important chart. When the Shaffer Band was about to perform for the second time, Fletcher questioned their delay. Carl admitted to giving the folder to Neiman, who subsequently lost it. Fletcher chastised Carl, emphasizing that the folder was his responsibility and likening the situation to giving a calculator to someone who wouldn't know how to use it. Despite the mishap, Fletcher instructed Carl to go onstage. However, Carl hadn't memorized the song chart, while Neiman claimed he had memorized it in detail. Carl reacted with shock and frustration, realizing that Neiman's negligence had caused the problem.

Neiman: **I'd rather we break up. Cause I want to be great**

Nicole: And I would stop you for doing that?

Neiman: **Yes**

The dialogue concluded that Neiman ended his relationship with Nicole because he believed that pursuing his goal of becoming the main drum player in college would leave him with insufficient time for their relationship. He wanted to prioritize honing his drumming skills and avoid the relationship turning sour due to neglect.

Nicole was disappointed and frustrated by Neiman's reasons, leading to a heated exchange where she ultimately decided to end the relationship herself. This conflict is characterized as an external one, involving Neiman and Nicole, with Nicole feeling hurt and questioning Neiman's commitment to the relationship.

Fletcher: **Neiman you lost the part now!**

Neiman: No, I didn't, you can't do this!

The provided dialogue illustrates an external conflict between Neiman and Fletcher. The conflict arises from Neiman's tardiness and his desire to retain his position as the core drummer in the band. When Neiman arrives late and still wishes to play, Fletcher becomes angry and replaces him with another drummer, Connolly. This decision deeply upsets Neiman, who believes he should be performing. In addition, the conflict escalates as Neiman protests and tries to explain his capabilities to Fletcher. Fletcher, on the other hand, responds with scolding and belittling comments, asserting his authority as the music instructor. Eventually, Fletcher allows Neiman to retrieve his drumsticks but sets strict conditions, threatening to send him back to a lesser band if he makes any mistakes or is late.

Travis: **How do they know who wins in a music competition?**

Uncle Frank: **Does the studio help get you a job?**

Uncle Frank: Well, I'm so glad you have it figured out. It's nasty business, I'm sure.

The provided dialogue portrays an external conflict within Andrew Neiman's family. The conflict begins when his cousin and uncle make sarcastic comments belittling Neiman's musical pursuits and seemingly elevating the accomplishments of his cousins in other fields. Neiman's father remains passive and does not intervene to support him. This conflict is external because it emerges from interactions between Neiman and his family members, particularly his cousins, and revolves around their differing perceptions of success and their respective endeavors.

## 1.2 The impacts of conflicts on the main character in *Whiplash* movie

### 1.2.1 Positive Impacts

### **1.2.1.1 Averts further serious conflict**

In this section, the impact of external conflicts is evident as Neiman meets with a lawyer brought in by his father to report Fletcher's harsh treatment during his time as a student. Fletcher's abusive teaching methods, which included physical and emotional harm, as well as the tragic suicide of one of his students, Casey, due to anxiety and depression, heightened Neiman's father's concerns for his son's well-being. His father wanted to take legal action against Fletcher. However, Neiman did not believe legal action was necessary and defended Fletcher, saying, "He didn't do anything." He did not want to prolong his personal problems with Fletcher through legal means. Neiman was forced by the lawyer to speak out against Fletcher's abusive behavior, but Neiman initially remained silent. Eventually, he firmly stated, "Well, I have nothing to say." This can be seen as a positive impact within the external conflict, as Neiman's refusal to escalate the situation through legal action avoids further intense conflicts. It highlights Neiman's desire to move on from the past and not let the issue with Fletcher define his future.

### **1.2.1.2 Result in personal and communal change**

An external conflict between Neiman and Fletcher leads to a positive impact on their relationship. Their chance encounter in a jazz club results in Fletcher acknowledging and reassessing his overly aggressive behavior as a music instructor. Initially, Neiman is taken aback when he encounters Fletcher at the club and tries to avoid him. However, Fletcher approaches Neiman, and they engage in a conversation. During their conversation, Fletcher's tone and demeanor have notably changed from his previous confrontational style. He starts to inquire about Neiman's well-being and reflects on his teaching approach. Fletcher explains that his tough teaching methods are meant to push his students beyond their limits, and he genuinely believes in the necessity of his approach. This shift in Fletcher's attitude towards Neiman and his introspection regarding his teaching methods can be seen as a positive impact stemming from their external conflict. It indicates personal and communal changes, highlighting the potential for personal growth and improved relationships as a result of conflict resolution.

### **1.2.1.3 Brings two more or more parties closer**

The impact of external conflicts on Neiman's family environment is explored, particularly the relationship between Neiman and his father. Initially, Neiman's pursuit of his musical ambitions created a divide between him and his father, causing personal problems within their family. However, a pivotal moment occurs when Neiman confronts his father, questioning why he took legal action against Fletcher. His father's response reveals a significant positive impact on their relationship. His father explains that he couldn't let Neiman go through the hardships imposed by Fletcher without consequences, emphasizing his deep concern for his son's well-being. He reassures Neiman of his unwavering love and support. This conflict ultimately brings Neiman and his father closer together, bridging the gap that had developed due to their differing views on Neiman's musical aspirations. The positive impact of this conflict is evident in the strengthened bond and understanding between them, as his father's actions demonstrate his commitment to Neiman's welfare and happiness.

## **1.2.2 Negative Impacts**

### **1.2.2.1 Always in a state of tension**

In this intense external conflict between Neiman and Fletcher, the tension escalates to a breaking point. Neiman desperately wants to avoid being replaced as the drummer for the competition, while Fletcher insists that Neiman is not ready and gives him a limited amount of time to retrieve his forgotten drumstick. As the conflict intensifies, Neiman rushes to retrieve his stick but gets involved in a car accident on the way, resulting in injuries and blood on his face and hands. Despite his dire condition, Neiman is determined to make it to the competition and join the band on stage. However, as he struggles to play due to his injuries, Fletcher eventually stops the performance, declaring Neiman's part as done. The tension reaches its peak when Fletcher's decision causes Neiman to lash out in anger, physically tackling him to the ground.

### **1.2.2.2 Feelings of resentment and hatred escalate**

The impact of conflict on the external conflict that shows a situation where Neiman has experienced repeated bad treatment from Fletcher. Neiman is upset with Fletcher because he deliberately humiliates Neiman. Fletcher had taunted him, slapped him, scolded him, and made him feel inferior in an attempt to motivate Neiman

to perform better. Plus, the tension between the two is growing, and Neiman feels a deep grudge against Fletcher. At band practice, Fletcher intentionally embarrasses Neiman in front of the other students by displaying his inability to keep up with tempo. This made Neiman feel angry and ashamed, and his feelings of resentment became even more obvious.

### **1.2.2.3 Other relationships also are affected**

The external conflict in the story revolves around Nicole feeling neglected due to Neiman's obsession with drumming and his pursuit of music success. Neiman's dedication to perfection in drumming leads to anxiety and a competitive attitude. This obsession causes a strain on their relationship, with Neiman eventually suggesting they break up to focus on his music career. Nicole initially smiles at their reunion but becomes annoyed upon hearing Neiman's reasons for ending the relationship. She ultimately decides to leave, feeling that Neiman prioritizes his music over their relationship. In summary, this external conflict has a negative impact on the main character and also affects other relationships, highlighting the consequences of Neiman's drumming obsession on his personal life.

## **1.3 The psychological and sociological impacts of conflicts on the main character in *Whiplash* movie**

### **1.3.1 Trauma**

In the movie, Andrew Neiman suffered deep emotional trauma from his harsh teacher Terence Fletcher, who employed extreme teaching methods, causing emotional wounds, insecurity, and low self-esteem. The pressure to meet Fletcher's high expectations took a toll on his self-confidence. Internal conflicts arose from his ambition and a strained relationship with his father, leading to anxiety and depression. Andrew's trauma also stemmed from sacrificing social and physical health, intensifying his isolation and loneliness. These conflicts drove the film's narrative, portraying his struggle for identity as a jazz musician amidst external and internal pressures.

### **1.3.2 Anxiety**

The main character faces deep anxiety from harsh treatment by his teacher, Terence Fletcher, and intense competition at the conservatory. Fletcher's demanding standards and

unpredictable teaching style create chronic anxiety for Andrew, who fears judgment if he falls short. The pressure to excel and meet musical dreams adds to his anxiety. Competition at the conservatory intensifies his worries about proving himself, while internal pressure and his father's lack of support compound his anxiety. This chronic anxiety becomes a central aspect of Andrew's character, shaping his interactions and self-worth as a musician. The film explores the psychological toll of pursuing greatness.

### **1.3.3 Depression**

Andrew Neiman in the movie experiences profound depression as a result of several conflicts he faces in his journey to become a talented jazz drummer. Harsh treatment from his music teacher, Terence Fletcher, contributes to his depression as Fletcher constantly belittles and doubts his abilities. Andrew's sadness and low self-esteem are evident in his expressions, further deepening his depression. Additionally, Andrew's conflict with his unsupportive father adds to his depression, as he feels lonely and unsupported in pursuing his musical dream. The lack of understanding from loved ones crushes his spirit and contributes to his sense of hopelessness. Andrew's internal conflict, torn between his ambition and uncertainty about his musical dream, also fuels his depression, creating feelings of despair. The weight of Fletcher's expectations, fear of failure, and emotional exhaustion take a toll on Andrew's mental well-being. The constant pressure to achieve perfection and the lack of support exacerbate his depression.

Furthermore, Fletcher's lack of positive reinforcement and validation reinforces Andrew's feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. His pursuit of musical excellence isolates him from friends and family, deepening his loneliness and disconnection. As the film progresses, these conflicts manifest in Andrew's withdrawn expressions and loss of enthusiasm for music, leading to a downward spiral of depression that affects his overall mental health.

### **1.3.4 Conflict between individual and authority**

Andrew Neiman faces a sociological conflict with his authoritarian teacher, Terence Fletcher, as he aspires to be a jazz musician. Fletcher's dominance and harsh teaching methods create tension, making Andrew anxious and

insecure due to the power imbalance between them. Andrew strives for Fletcher's approval while Fletcher controls his music career. This conflict explores the struggle between individual ambition and authority's influence on achieving success. Andrew must balance following Fletcher's lead for opportunities with staying true to his jazz dream.

### 1.3.5 Conflict between competition and collaboration

Andrew Neiman faces a sociological conflict centered on the tension between competition and collaboration in his quest for success in the world of jazz. The competitive atmosphere at his music conservatory compels him to excel and stand out, often at the expense of collaborative efforts. However, Andrew also acknowledges the beauty of making music with his fellow band members and the inspiration that arises from working together. He comes to realize that competition and collaboration can exist simultaneously, emphasizing the challenge of balancing personal ambition with the importance of cooperation within the artistic realm. This conflict underscores the significance of maintaining a healthy competitive spirit while upholding unity and mutual respect in the pursuit of success in the fields of art and music.

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there are two types of conflict in this study; internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict in Andrew Neiman is a strong conflict between the protagonist, Andrew Neiman, an ambitious jazz drummer, and himself. In addition, there are four external conflicts in this movie, it was proven when Andrew Neiman got bullied and argued with several other characters such as his friends, family, girlfriend, and his music instructor, Terence Fletcher. Moreover, the external conflict that dominates in this movie occurs between Andrew and Fletcher.

For further extent, there are two types of impacts that occur as a result of various types of conflicts faced by the main character, namely positive impacts and negative impacts. The positive impact of conflict is only found in external conflicts between man vs man and man vs environment. These are the relationship between Neiman and his father getting better, Neiman preventing his conflict with Fletcher from

continuing, and the change in character between Neiman and Fletcher is a result of that conflict. However, the negative impact of this conflict lies in the external conflict and between man vs man. For further instance, sociological conflicts between individuals and authorities, competition and collaboration that occur in external conflicts in this film. Meanwhile, the psychological conflicts faced by the main actors that occur in internal conflicts are trauma, anxiety, and depression.

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