
Family Conflict in Edward Albee's Selected Dramas

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Abstract

This research aimed to identify the kinds of family conflict that appear in Edward Albee's dramas and to know the causes and impacts of the dramas using theory of family conflict by Ursula Lehr and descriptive qualitative method. In The Sand box drama the types of family conflict are conflict with own parents, conflict with own children, conflict with husband/wife, and self-conflict. Other causes were because mommy's selfish characteristic and always wanted to be a dominant person, while grandma was experiencing her second childhood phase. The impacts of The Sandbox drama are the fight between the characters in the drama and the loss of harmonization in the family. In who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Drama, there are conflicts with other people, conflict with husband/wife, and self-conflict. The main causes were Martha and George as a marriage couple that always wanted to drop down on and insulted each other. The impacts are the loss of harmonization in the family, another couple (Nick and Honey) got into their problem fought to each other

Keywords: Family Conflict, Edward Albee, Structuralism, Sandbox, Virginia Woolf



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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a medium that using language to tell the story of human life. People can communicate and understand each other through language that is why language has an important role in our daily activities. There are three kinds of literary works; they are drama, poetry, and prose. In this research, the writer focused on discussing drama. According to Neelands (2004) drama is one of the literary works that appear in performance. Makinwa (2012) said that the disintegration of the family is a common issue in the society, and it should not be underestimated by the youth ministry. In this research, the writer focused on types of family conflict in the dramas and the cause impacts of the family conflict that appear in Edward Albee's selected dramas. The dramas chosen are The Sand box and who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?? By Edward Albee.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bestya (2018) in her research with the title Family Disintegration in Nicholas Sparks "The Best of Me" (2011): A Sociological Study. The study is about The Best of Me from Nicholas Sparks that viewed from Sociological Perspective. The research purposed to find out and explain the efforts of Dawson as the main character to uncover the significant meaning of Dawson's effort. The result of this study mentions three aspects that causing the family disintegration of this novel; they are educational aspect, communication aspect, and family fight aspect.

Kaibr & Jingjing (2018) figured out the family conflict that occurs in the drama that related to the style of American family. The symbolic of suicide, murder, and death are the result that the writer found in his research. Dina & Suhendi (2019), discussed the causes of the

conflict in the family in E. Lockhart's Novel *We Were Liars*. The method using in this study is qualitative research method. There are three causes that appear in this novel; first is different social system, second are different personalities, third is needs of treasure and inheritance. Pratiwi (2021), analyzed the family conflict that appears in Alcott's *Little Women* novel. The approach that used in this research is structuralism approach with a conflict theory by Ursula Lehr. The results of this research described four siblings and the differences among them causing many conflicts among all of them such as a conflict to them their selves, to her people, and to the siblings.

The other research is from Rosita (2022) states that the factors and causes of household problems in the *Gone Girl* novel by Gillian Flynn is as a reflection of society. Internal factors come from each partner such as communicate and sexual relation, external factors are coming from outside the partners such as rude actions against partner, rude words and the presence of the other people.

2.1. Previous Studies

Etymologically, literature comes from Latin word "*litteratura*" adapted from "*littera*" (letter) which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing. According to Klarer (2004) literature entirely describe as a written expression, in the other side, not every document is categorized as a literature. According to Iwuchukwu (2008) Literature comes from our longing of telling a story based on what we feel, our longing in arrange the words to pleasing pattern or figurative words, and our longing in expressing some special aspects of human experiences in words.

Literary works itself divided into three branches; drama, poetry, and prose. In this study, the writer would like to focus on analyzing drama. Drama is one of literary works. Drama is performed in a stage by some people. Iwuchukwu (2008) stated that drama is one of literary works that represented in performance which is why it called in term as "staged art" by Robert Di Yanni. Drama is one of literary genre that realized in performance which is designed for the theatre because the characters assigned to perform in different characteristic from their real character on the stage (Buneri, 2020)

According to Yuniari (2020) Drama is a composition in prose that represent in a dialogue and action which written in a purpose to be performed in front of the audience. Also, Yuniari (2020) in her book said, there are five elements of drama; Setting, Characters, Plot, Theme, Style.

2.2. Structuralism Approach

According to Gough (2010) Structuralism is a methodological approach and conceptual to describe and analyze a various objects of inquiry such as, cultures, economics, language, literature, mythologies, politics, and societies. Umma (2015) stated that structural Linguistics do the research by its structure and not from the history, for him, language is an organized system and it must be different one to each other as the act of individual communication act.

Conceptually, structuralism is a continuation of formalism which mostly depends on language. Structuralism has a close relationship to the linguistics, especially in analyzing the function of language that used and it helps to understand about the semiotic language that views literature as assign which later led to literary semiotic (Manshur, 2019). According to Dewi (2019) Structuralism approach is one of interpretive research methodologies which use the philosophy structuralism with many theories.

2.3. Family Conflict

According to Makinwa (2012) the disintegration of the family is a common issue in the society and it should not be underestimated by the youth ministry. Amstad, et al (2011) Work-Family conflict can be defined as a type of internal conflict among the family members in which the role pressures from the work and the family domains are mutually in some respect. According to Lehr (in Siregar, 2018) there are several types of family conflict:

1. Conflict with own parents
The situation happens because someone lives together with parents. The expectation of the parents to their children made their children feel pressure.
2. Conflict with own children
The situation in where the children get an over-reaction from their parents because of their bad behavior.
3. Conflict with other family member
It caused by the other members of family like uncle, aunty, cousins are too much mind other people's business. Sometimes it caused because of the inheritance.
4. Conflict with other persons
This conflict is among the neighbors, co-workers, friends, or the other social people. The conflict can cause by the differences about some things.
5. Conflict with husband/wife
In a household, it is a proper thing if there are problems between wife and husband, whether is a little problem or a big problem. The problem in a house hold is sometimes caused by miscommunication, each hectic activity, and misunderstanding.
6. Self-conflict
Sometimes it is called inner conflict; it means conflict to our own self. It comes from our insecurities, unable to continue our life, couldn't make decision to our own life, etc.

3. METHOD

The writer used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. Purpose of this method is to analyze, describe, and summarize various conditions, situations from various data collected in the form of the results of interviews or observations about the problems study that occur.

According to Tewksbury (2009) that the qualitative research is focus on the analytical description process to identify a repetitive pattern or theme and seek to build a cohesive data representation. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research define as exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

4. RESULTS

There were two dramas that had been analyzed using the theory of family conflict by Ursula Lehr, the dramas were *The Sand box* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Dramas by Edward Albee. The writer found there were four types, causes, and impacts of family conflicts found in *The Sandbox* drama and there were 3 types, causes, and impacts of family conflict found in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* By Edward Albee..

4.1 Types of Conflict in the *Sandbox* drama by Edward Albee

The writer found there were four types, causes, and impacts of family conflicts found in *The Sand box* drama.

Conflict with own parents

Daddy: (shrugs) "She's your mother, not mine."

Mommy: "I know she's my mother. What do you take me for?" ... Were you ready, Daddy?

Let's go get Grandma."

(Albee, The Sand box, 1959: 2)

From the dialogue above, it is conclude that Mommy did not care about grandma was her mother by saying *I know she is my mother*, but she kept wanted to brought grandma into the sandbox.

Grandma: (same as before) "Ahhhhh! Ah-haaaaaaa! Graaaaaa! "Daddy: "Do you think...do you think she's...comfortable?" Mommy: (impatently) "How would I know?"

Albee, The Sandbox, 1959:3)

Grandma screamed because she did not like mommy and daddy to put her in the sandbox, she wanted to show that she felt uncomfortable but mommy did not care about grandma's scream, it could be seen in the sentence of daddy wanted to make sure by asking if grandma was comfortable or not and mommy, the sentence of daddy showed that daddy was trying to care a bit of grandma. While mommy just replied with *How would I know?* The sentence showed that mommy did not even care about grandma.

Grandma: (banging the toy shovel against the pail) "Haaaaa! Ah- haaaaaa!"

Mommy: "Be quiet, Grandma...just be quiet, and wait." (Grandma throws a shovelful of sand at Mommy.) "She's throwing sand at me! You stop that, Grandma; you stop throwing sand at Mommy!"

Grandma: "GRAAAAAA!"

(Albee, The Sandbox, 1959:3)

The dialogues above showed that the conflict between mommy and grandma was because mommy did not like when grandma screamed and threw shovel toy to her. Mommy asked grandma to became quite by saying *be quiet, grandma...jus be quiet and wait*, while grandma kept screamed to mommy and daddy. Mommy scolded to grandma because of she screamed loud.

Conflict with own children

Grandma: (mocking) "That's right, kid; be brave. You'll bear up; you'll get over it." (off stage: another rumble...louder)

Mommy: "Ohhhhhhhhhhh...poor Grandma....poor Grandma..."

(Albee, The Sandbox, 1959: 4)

Based on the dialogue above, the writer found that the statement of the narrator (*mocking*), grandma was mocking to mommy first and then mommy replied by saying *Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh...poor Grandma....poor Grandma....* Mommy was mocking to grandma like she did it to her friend. In fact, a child should not did that to the parent. They were mocking each other like a child.

Conflict with husband/wife

Daddy: (whining) "I'm cold."

Mommy: (dismissing him with a little laugh) "Don't be silly; it's as warm as toast..."

(Albee, The Sandbox, 1959: 2)

The dialogue in the utterance *"Don't be silly"* above showed that mommy really rude to her husband, she spoke like she talked to another person, she did not speak like how the wife supposed to speak with a husband. She used an appropriate word to her husband.

Daddy: "Shall we talk to each other?"

Mommy: "Well, you can talk, if you want to...if you can think of any thing to say...if you can think of anything new."

(Albee, *The Sandbox*, 1959:3)

Based on the data above, the sentence "Shall we talk to each other?" Showed that daddy asked mommy that if they can talk to each other, but mommy seemed did not want to talk to daddy by saying *Well, you can talk, if you want to...* Mommy just let daddy to think the topic of the conversation, while she did not want to think another topic to talk to daddy.

Self Conflict

Grandma: (righting herself to a sitting position; her voice across between a baby's laugh and cry) "Ahhhhhh! Graaaaa!"

Grandma: (same as before) "Ahhhhh! Ah-haaaaaaa! Graaaaa!" Grandma: (banging the toy shovel against the pail) "Haaaaa! Ah-haaaaa!"

(Albee, *The Sandbox*, 1959:3)

The data above showed that grand ma often screamed so loud like a baby because she experienced her second childhood and she also played the toy shovel. The grandma's behavior in her second time of childhood was a conflict to herself. She wanted a tention, while mommy and daddy did not care.

Grandma: "Honestly! What away to treat an old woman! ...I'm eighty-six years old! I was married when I was seventeen. To a farmer. He died when I was thirty."

(To the Musician)... "I'm a feeble old woman...how do you expect any body to hear me over that peep! Peep! Peep! (to herself) "There's no respect around here." (To the Young Man) "There's no respect around here!"

(Albee, *The Sandbox*, 1959: 3)

From the dialogue above, the writer found that grandma told her own conflict in the past. She had a conflict to herself on how she wanted to be treated in her age at that time. In the sentence *honestly! What a way to treat an old woman! ... I'm eighty-six years old!* Showed that grandma was being mad to be bad treated by mommy. Grandma got married to a farmer at 17 and her husband died when she was 30. She had to raised her daughter (mommy) by her won. She wanted her daughter to treat her well, but her daughter did the opposite act.

4.2 Causes and Impact s of The Sandbox drama by Edward Albee

Based on the four types of family conflict was found the causes and impacts based on the four types of conflicts.

Causes and Impacts of conflict with parents

The main causes in this type of family conflict is that mommy put grandma in the sandbox which was grandma did not like that, she was uncomfortable in the sandbox and that was the reason of the conflict between mommy and grandma (her parent). Mommy did not understand that grandma was in her second childhood phase. She wanted to accompany grandma to death because she thought it washer duty as a child.

The impacts of the conflict between mommies to her parent were they fight to each other by words and there was no more feel like mommy and daughter but they were like an enemy. From the data before, grandma often screamed because of what mommy did to her. They also used to mocking each other.

Causes and Impacts of conflict with own children

The conflict between grandma and mommy was they mocked each other. Grandma was mocking to mommy and mommy was mocking to grandma. The causes of the little conflict between mommy and grandma was because grandma heard about what daddy said to mommy and grandma replied it with made it in to a joke and told to mommy. While mommy was replying back by mocked to grandma mommy did not understand that grandma was in her second childhood phase. Therefore, that was what made a conflict between grandma and mommy.

Causes and Impacts of conflict with husband/wife

The conflict with husband/wife was because of some reasons. Mommy always raised her intonation when she spoke to her husband. Because of the characteristic of mommy that always wanted to be a dominant person and wanted for everybody to obey her command was also the reason why she acted bad to her husband.

The impacts of the conflict between mommy and daddy were the loss of love between them and daddy was not excited in responding mommy. Daddy always did and listened of what mommy said, he lost his interested to mommy because he was too lazy to argue and talked to mommy. There was no harmonist in the relationship.

Causes and Impacts of self conflict

The reason of the self-conflict was because of grandma's past story. She was married to her husband, who was a farmer at 17 and her husband died when she was 30. She had to raise her daughter (mommy) by her own, therefore she was depressed. When mommy (her own daughter) brought her to the beach and put her into the sandbox, grandma could not accept to be treated like that because she was an old woman.

Because of the reason, the impacts were grandma was stressed and played with the toy shovel and she could not do anything in the sandbox. The relationship between her daughter and her was also getting worse; no one wanted to understand each other.

4.3 Types of Conflict in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? By Edward Albee

There were 3 types of family conflict found in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* By Edward Albee.

Conflict with other person

Nick: "Just am inute here..."

George: "...and they got to know each other when they were only..." Nick: "I said JUSTAMINUTE!"

George: "This was my game! You played yours...you people. This was my game!"

(Albee, Who's Afraid of VirginiaWoolf?, 1962:142)

From the dialogue above, the writer found that Nick interrupted George in the sentence *I said just a minute!* and George did not like it. George said *This was my game! You played yours... you people. This was my game!* The sentence showed that George was angry and tried to say that it was his time, asked the other to mind their own business and no one could interrupt him.

Conflict with husband/wife

Martha: "George said...but daddy...I mean...ha,ha,ha,ha...but sir, it wasn't a novel at all..."

(Other voice) Not a novel? (Mimicking George's voice) No, sir...it wasn't a novel at all...

George: (advancing on her) "You will not say this!"

Martha: "The hell I won't. Keep away from me, you bastard! (Back off a little...uses George's voice again) No, sir, this wasn't a novel at all... this was the truth...this was really happened...TOME!"

George: (on her) "I'LL KILL YOU!"

Martha: "IT HAPPENED! TO ME! TO ME!"

George: "YOUSATANICBITCH"

(Albee, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, 1962:136-137)

From the dialogues above, Martha and George had a seriously conflict, they fought each other. George even wanted to kill Martha by saying *I'LL KILL YOU!* He was already on her. Martha talked about George shame and embarrassing moment and based on the statement of the narrator (*mimicking George's voice*), it's how ed that Martha was mocking with George's voice. George really could not accept this one, therefore he got really mad. They were also cursing each other in the words *bastard!* And *BITCH!* Nick and Honey were panicked because George wanted to kill Martha. They tried to take off George's hands that already on Martha's neck.

Honey: "You're always at me when I'm having a good time." Nick: "I'm sorry, Honey."

Honey: "Just leave me alone."

Honey: "I'd like to dance and you don't want me to." Nick: "I like you to dance."

Honey: "Just...leave me alone."

(Albee, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, 1962:129)

From the dialogues above, the writer concluded that there was a misunderstood between Nick and Honey. Honey presumed that Nick did not want her to dance while Honey liked to dance, in her sentence *I'd like to dance and you don't want me to*. Nick apologized by saying *I'm sorry, Honey* to Honey but Honey did not accept it and wanted to be alone by saying *Just...leave me alone*. In fact, Nick did not mean to hurt Honey.

Self Conflict

George: "All I said was, our son... the apple of our three eyes, Martha being a Cyclops...our son was a bean bag, and you get testy."

(Albee, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, 1962:99)

From George's explanation to Nick, Martha and George were having an imaginary son, it was a *bean bag*. They had a problem with their own selves. They could not have a child, therefore they pretended like they had a child. In the other side, George was saying that Nick was a testy person because George said that his son was a bean bag. Nick and Honey was fooled by Martha and George.

4.4 Causes and Impacts of the family conflict in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? drama by Edward Albee

Causes and Impacts of conflict with other person

The conflict was between George and Nick. They both fought each other because George told a story about Nick's and Honey's secret, George made it into a story game. Nick was really angry and asked George to stop it. George did not want to stop it and kept continue

his game. Therefore, because of that reason, Honey felt disappointed to Nick and got surprised because of George's story that told about her and his husband secret story. Honey was mad to Nick and they argued a little. Nick kept said sorry to Honey and told that he did not mean to.

Causes and Impacts of conflict with husband/wife

The writer found that this was the biggest fight between Martha and George, George really could not accept what Martha said, he wanted to kill Martha, he was already hold Martha's neck. The reason was because Martha was mocking George by mimicked George's voice and told about George's disgrace. She replied it many times and that made George really angry. The impacts were they got a big fought and George was about to kill Martha by held her neck. They also cursed each other used many bad words.

In Nick and Honey's conflict, it was because Honey assumed that Nick did not like if she was dancing. Honey asked Nick to leave her alone. The miscommunication between them and the acted of George that did this situation in a purpose were the cause of the conflict in this data. The impact was Nick and Honey fought and they argued each other.

Causes and Impacts of self conflict

Martha and George had a problem to their selves on having a child. On George dialogue, he told to Nick that their child was a bean bag. It showed that they had been thought and imagined that a bean bag was their son. Martha and George did not have a child; therefore they decided to make their own imagination about their son. Therefore, because of that, Nick and Honey had been fooled by Martha and George.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Types of family conflict in *The Sand box* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Drama by Edward Albee

The writer found there were 4 types of family conflict appear in *The Sandbox* drama, they were conflict with own parents, conflict with own children, conflict with husband/wife, and self-conflict.

There are many conflicts appear between grandma and mommy, they did not understand each other and always get into a fight. The conflict with own children was happened also between mommy and grandma. Mommy and grandma always had a conflict with some reason. They kept being in a conflict because no one wanted to understand each other. Also in husband/wife conflict, the writer found that Mommy was easier to got angry to daddy because of just a little thing such as too many asking, slow movement, while daddy always obey Mommy's command.

In self conflict, grandma told how her life in the past was married with a farmer when she was 17 who was mommy's father. She had to raised mommy alone because her husband was died. Then her child (mommy) treated her like she actually she should not be treated. It made grandma got mad to mommy. Grandma could not do anything and just accepted mommy's act to her. Well, grandma kept screamed like a child.

Meanwhile, there were 3 types of conflict found in the drama. The first conflict was conflict with other person. It was between George and Nick. Nick tried to stop George to play his stupid game, but George still wanted to continue it. George claimed that it was his time to play his game and asked other to mind on they own business.

These type of conflict found in this drama was conflict with husband/wife. They were the conflict between George and Martha. Martha raised her voice to George, and George also raised his voice to Martha. Both of them were playing a competition to defeat each other. They told each other's disgrace and underestimated each other. There was no respect more between this marriage couples. They tried to show to their guests (Nick and Honey) about who was the worst person.

There also another couple of husband/wife conflict found in this type of conflict. They were Nick and Honey. Nick and Honey got fight in George's house. There was miscommunication between them. Honey was disappointed by Nick and also got mad to Nick for a reason. But different with George and Martha, Nick never mean to hurt Honey, he always said sorry when Honey got mad to him.

The third type of conflict found in this drama was self-conflict. Martha and George made their own son in their imagination, it was a bean bag. They had a problem to their selves in having a child. They also told to Nick and Honey about their imaginary son.

5.2 Causes and impacts of the family Conflict *The Sand box and Who's A afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Drama by Edward Albee

There were some causes and impacts that the writer found in the Sandbox and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Drama by Edward Albee. The causes found in The Sandbox drama in the conflict with own parents was because mommy brought grandma to the beach and put her into the sand box. Grandma that had her second childhood did not accept what mommy did to her. Mommy did not care about what grandma like or did not like. Therefore, the impacts were they were having a fight and no more respect to each other as apparent and daughter. In the conflict with own daughter, it told that grandma did not like what her daughter (mommy) did to her because mommy brought her into the sandbox which she could not free to move. She kept screamed to make her daughter angry and to show her dislike to her daughter (mommy).

The impacts were the same with the conflict with own parents; they were having a fight and no more respect to each other as a parent and daughter. In the conflict of husband/wife, there were some causes and impacts. Based on the data, mommy often and almost every dialogue shout to her husband. Because of the characteristic of mommy that always wanted to be a dominant person and wanted for everybody to obey her command was also the reason why she acted bad to her husband.

The impacts of the conflict between mommy and daddy were the loss of love between them and daddy was not excited in responding mommy. Daddy always did and listened of what mommy said, he lost his interested to mommy because he was too lazy to argue and talked to mommy. There was no harmonist in their relationship. In the conflict of self-conflict, the experienced from the characters was the character of grandma. Grandma had a problem to herself because of her second childhood phase. She acted like a child that wanted to play and sometimes screamed and laugh very loud like a child. She just wanted an attention because nobody in her family cares to her.

The other reason was because of grandma's past story. She was married to her husband, who was a farmer at 17 and her husband died when she was 30. She had to raise her daughter (mommy) by her own, therefore she was depressed. When mommy (her own daughter) brought her to the beach and put her into the sandbox, grandma could not accept to be treated

like that because she was an old woman. Because of the reason, grandma was stressed and played with the toys hovel, she could not do anything in the sandbox. The relationship between her daughter and she was also getting worse, no one wanted to understand each other.

The causes and impacts found in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Drama by Edward Albee in the conflict with another person was between Nick and George, it had just one data. Nick got angry to George and asked George to stop the stupid game of Nick that could make Nick and Honey got fight. Therefore, because of George did his game in a purpose to make Nick and Honey got fight, the impact was Nick and George had a fight and it raised the mistrust from Honey to Nick.

In the conflict of husband and wife, it showed that the conflict between George and Martha was mostly because the miscommunication between them and the selfish characteristic between them. They kept defend their selves and tried to prove who was the best. They tried to play a game made by their own in a purpose to belittle each other and to expose each other's disgrace. The impacts of their conflict were first, they brought Nick and Honey into their household conflict, second was they did not even had a harmonist relationship as a husband and wife because of their conflict, third was they brought a negative vibes to Nick and Honey, therefore that they also got fight, fourth was they had a trust issue between them.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Two dramas by Albee were about a family drama which *The Sandbox* drama consists of 4 types of family conflict, causes, and impacts. They were conflicts with own parents, conflict with own children, conflict with husband/wife, and self-conflict. In the other side, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* drama consists of 3 types of family conflict, causes, and impacts. They were conflicts with other person, conflict with husband/wife, and self-conflict. After analyzing the types of family conflicts and the causes, also the impacts of *The Sandbox* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee by using theory of conflict by Ursula Lehr, the writer expected that this research had a benefit to the further research. Therefore, the writer suggested the next writer to analyze family conflict from the other literary works using another theory of family conflict or the same literary works using other theory.

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