THE THEME ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF GRANDMA KURNITZ'S BEHAVIOR ON HER CHILDREN'S PERSONALITY IN THE DRAMA LOST IN YONKERS BY NEIL SIMON THROUGH INTRINSIC AND PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH: BEHAVIORISM

This thesis is proposed as one of rules and regulations to get a Master's degree (Undergraduate Program)

BY:
KHOIRIYAH PERWIRAWATI
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FACULTY OF LETTERS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
DARMA PERSADA UNIVERSITY
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is a scholarly work that I arranged under the guidance of Dr. Hj. Albertine S. Minderop, MA and Drs. Rusydi M. Yusuf, MA and not a plagiarism of another thesis or works, a part or all of it. The contents of this thesis become fully my responsibility.

I wrote this statement in truth in Jakarta, July 1, 2004.

Jakarta, July 1, 2004

Khoiriyah Perwirawati

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah (Thank God), I am grateful for God's blessing and generosity so that I finished my thesis that is entitled

THE THEME ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF GRANDMA KURNITZ'S BEHAVIOR ON HER CHILDREN'S PERSONALITY IN THE DRAMA LOST IN YONKERS BY NEIL SIMON

This thesis is a scholarly work that I arranged under the guidance of Dr. Hj. Albertine S. Minderop, MA and Drs. Rusydi M. Yusuf, MA and not a plagiarism of another thesis or works, a part or all of it. The contents of this thesis become fully my responsibility.

I wrote this statement in truth in Jakarta, July 1, 2004. Meanwhile, the purpose of writing process of this thesis is to get a Master's degree (Undergraduate Program) of Faculty of Letters of English Department of Darma Persada University, Jakarta.

I realize that it is impossible for me to finish my thesis without the assistance, support, and direction that were given to me.

On this occasion, I want to express my deepest thanks to Allah and to people who gave me support and direction to finish my thesis.

I want to express my deepest thanks to:

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For the last word, I realize that my thesis is not perfect. Therefore, I hope all of examiners and readers give me some directions in order to being an improvement in the future.

Jakarta, July 1, 2004

Khoiriyah Perwirawati

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of The Problem

According to M. Atar Semi, literature is a form or a result of creative literary work that the objects are human beings and their life by means of language.

Sastra adalah suatu bentuk dan hasil pekerjaan seni kreatif yang obyeknya adalah manusia dan kehidupannya dengan menggunakan bahasa sebagai mediumnya.¹

While according to Jacob Sumardjo and Saini K.M., literature is a personal expression such as experience, thought, sense, idea, spirit, and belief in a concrete picture that arouse an enchantment by means of language.

Sastra me<mark>rupakan ungkapan pribadi manusia y</mark>ang berupa pengalaman, pemikiran, perasaan, ide, semangat, dan keyakinan dalam bentuk gambaran konkret yang membangkitkan pesona dengan alat bahasa.²

Drama is a work of literature or a composition which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various of—and dialogues between—a group of characters. Drama is furthermore designed for theatrical presentation; that is, although we speak of a drama as a literary work or a composition, we must never forget that drama is designed to be acted on the stage.³

I chose Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon to be analyzed in my thesis. Neil Simon is the world's most successful playwright. He has written 28 plays and holds the record for the greatest number of hits in the American theater. He has had more plays adapted to film than any other playwrights, and additionally he has written nearly a dozen of original film comedies. He helped to define television comedy during the medium's legendary early days. In the theater, at the movies, and at home he has kept America laughing for more than 40 years and has been rewarded with four Tony Awards, two Emmys, a Screen

¹ M. Atar Semi, *Anatomi Sastra* (Padang: Angkasa Raya, 1993), page 8.

Jacob Sumardjo, dan Saini K.M., Apresiasi Kesusasteraan (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988), page 2-3.
 Christopher Russel Reaske. How To Analize Drama (New York: Harvard University, 1966), page 5.

Writers Guild Award, and a Pulitzer Prize.⁴ Neil Simon has for almost forty years invigorated the stage with touching stories and many characters, but possibly his greatest contribution has been the ability to create humor from the lives and troubles of everyday people.⁵

Marvin Neil Simon was born in the Bronx on July 4, 1927, and grew up in Washington Heights at the northern tip of Manhattan. He studied at New York University briefly (1944-45) and the University of Denver (1945-46) before joining the United States Army where he began his writing career working for the Army camp newspaper.

After being discharged from the army, Simon returned to New York and took a job as a mailroom clerk for Warner Brother's East Coast office. He and his brother Danny began writing comedy revues and eventually found their way into radio, then into television where they toiled alongside the likes of Woody Allen, Mel Brooks and Larry Gelbart to write for *The Phil Silvers Show* and Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*. Simon received several Emmy Award nominations for his television writing, then moved on to the stage where he quickly established himself as America's most successful commercial playwright by creating an unparalleled string of Broadway hits beginning with *Come Blow Your Horn*. During the 1966-67 season, *Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple, Sweet Charity* and *The Star Spangled Girl* were all running simultaneously. During the 1970-71 season, Broadway theatregoers had their choice of *Plaza Suite, Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, and *Promises, Promises*.

In 1973, following the death of his wife, Simon reached a low point in his career with two failures *The Good Doctor* (1973) and *God's Favorite* (1976). A move to California, however, reinvigorated him and he produced a many more successful plays later that year in *California Suite*. After marrying an actress Marsha Mason, Simon went on to write *Chapter Two* (1977) which was considered by many critics to be his finest play to that date. His fourth musical play, *They're Playing Our Song*, proved fairly successful in 1979, but his next three plays (*I Ought to Be in Pictures, Fools* and a revised version of *Little Me*) all proved unsuccessful at the box office.

⁴ The John F. Kennedy Center For the Performing Arts, *The Kennedy Center Honors*, Neil Simon (1995), Online Internet, March 22, 2004.

⁵ American Masters, Neil Simon, Online Internet, March 22, 2004.

Then, in 1983, Simon began to win over many of his dramas with the introduction of his autobiographical trilogy--Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983), Biloxi Blues (1985) and Broadway Bound (1986)--which chronicled his stormy childhood, his brief Army time, and the beginning of his career in television. Suddenly the dramas began taking him seriously, then he followed it up in 1991 with Lost in Yonkers for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Awards for Best Play.⁶

I was interested in Neil Simon's play, Lost in Yonkers because I thought it's easy to read and easy to understand. Besides, Lost in Yonkers is a nice play that is blended between comedy and drama. It's a story about a very disfunctional family where a mother called Grandma Kurnitz dominates her children. Grandma Kurnitz believes that the children shouldn't cry. Therefore, she never lets her children cry. A harsh childhood when she was in Germany made her be a strong, hard, and cold woman. She has never cried to being a widow with six children in foreign country (in Yonkers, New York) and when two of her children died. This is why she tries to teach her children, to be strong in their lives. She was brought up strictly and brought her children up in such a way that there is something wrong with all of them. Her coldness and cruelty have crippled her children. Eddie, her first son becomes a weak man and dare not to rebel against her strict mother, Louie becomes a gangster because of mistake in interpreting a bravery he calls "moxie", Gertrude suffers from a nervous speech impediment, and the childlike Bella has never grown up and wants nothing more than to have someone to hold and love that her mother cannot give.

As living with his mother, Eddie suffered because of his mother's strict behavior towards him. It is why Eddie never lets his sons visit their grandmother after marrying a kind woman, Evelyn. But in the early 1940s in Yonkers, New York when the country is at war, Eddie has to leave his sons, Jay and Arty with their strict grandmother because Eddie fell heavily in debt paying his dying wife's hospital bills and now he tries to pay off his debt by going around selling scrap iron in the South. In their grandmother's house, the boys see how their grandmother treats them and their aunt Bella strictly. The boys have to work in their grandmother's candy store and have to get up and eat bad soup when they are sick. They also have to suffer when they make mistakes and they are not allowed to cry.

⁶ Neil Simon, Neil Simon, Online Internet, March 22, 2004.

The only way to contact their father is through letters. However, ten months living with their grandmother, they learned how to be strong and responsible and finally, they begin to understand about their grandmother.

B. The Identification of The problem

Based on the background of the problem above, I identify the problem as follows: a harsh treatment in the past has made Grandma Kurnitz to be a cold, hard, and strict woman. Her coldness and strictness have influenced and crippled her children's personality. Then I assume that the theme of this drama is the influence of Grandma Kurnitz's behavior on her children's personality.

C. The Limitation of The Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, I limit this research on analyzing of characterization, plot and symbol of this drama by using an intrinsic approach and on analyzing this drama by using a personality psychological approach: behaviorism.

D. The Formulation of The Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, I formulate the problem: is it true that the theme of this drama is the influence of Grandma Kurnitz's behavior on her children's personality?

To answer that question, I formulate the problems as follow:

- 1. How are the characterization, plot and symbol in this drama?
- Can the characterization, plot and symbol analysis be used to analyze this drama?
- 3. How is Grandma Kurnitz's behavior towards her children that has influenced her children's personality through personality psychological approach: behaviorism?
- 4. Can the theme be established through the results of the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic elements?

E. The Purpose of Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this research is to prove that the theme of this drama is the influence of Grandma Kurnitz's behavior on her children's personality by determining the following matters:

- 1. Analyzing characterization, plot and symbol in this drama by using intrinsic approach.
- 2. Proving the characterization, plot and symbol analysis can be used to analyze this drama.
- Explaining Grandma Kurnitz's behavior towards her children that has influenced her children's personality through personality psychological approach: behaviorism.
- 4. Proving the results of the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic elements can establish the theme.

F. The Theoretical Framework

Based on the purposes of research above, I use the theoretical frameworks to support this research as follow:

1. Characterization

Characterization is the character of a person who takes part in all or part of events that are illustrated in the plot of story.

Perwatakan adalah karakter orang yang mengambil bagian dan mengalami peristiwa-peristiwa atau sebagian dari peristiwa-peristiwa yang digambarkan di dalam plot (alur).⁷

While according to Atmazaki, characterization is the temperament of the characters that appear in a story.

Perwatakan ad<mark>alah temper</mark>amen tokoh-tokoh yang <mark>hadir di dala</mark>m cerita.⁸

Every dramatist has at fingertips a relatively large galaxy of differing devices of characterization. Some of these devices follow:

a. The appearance of the character. In the prologue or in the stage directions the playwright often describes the character in physical sense. We learn from these stage directions what the character looks like and probably how he dresses: when a character walks onto the stage, it is obvious from his appearance whether he is a meticulous or sloppy person, attractive or unattractive, old or young, small or large, etc. In other words, in the mere appearance of character we locate our first understanding of him.

⁷ Sumardjo, dan K.M., Op. Cit., page 144.

⁸Atmazaki, Ilmu Sastra Teori dan Terapan (Padang: Angkasa Raya, 1990), page 62.

- b. Asides and soliloquies. All of the further characterization is of course established through dialogue. We learn about the characters as they speak. And, specifically, we are apt to understand the characters best when they speak in short asides and in longer soliloquies. On these occasions the character is, in effect, telling the audience of his specific characteristics; if he is a villain, he usually explains his evil intentions or at least his malicious hopes; if a lover, he offers us poetic statement of devotion; if a hero torn between love and duty, he tells us about his conflict, and his resulting agony. The use of soliloquies and asides is one of the most expert devices of characterization.
- c. Dialogue between characters. Not only does the language of the character speaking alone characterize him, but his language when speaking to others also sheds a great deal of light on his personality.
- d. Hidden Narration. While a character in a play is never directly described by the playwright himself, there are nevertheless descriptions of the characters. One of the devices of the characterization frequently employed is having one character in a play narrate something about another character.
- e. Language. It cannot be emphasized too many times that the language of any given character is extremely central to his personality attributes. Not only must we pay close attention to the kind of words which the character uses, but also we must be careful to remember how the character speaks.
- f. Character in action. As the characters become involved in the action of the play we quite naturally learn more about them. For once a playwright chooses to have a character act in one way rather than another, we immediately understand that character much better.⁹

2. Plot

Plot is the central aspect of all drama, for drama is primarily concerned with what happens. 10

10 *Ibid.* page 35.

⁹ Reaske, Op. Cit., page 46-48.

The plot contains five structural elements: exposition, complication, crisis, falling action, and resolution.

- a. Exposition. The exposition provides essential background information, introduces the cast, begins the characterization, and initiates the action. Some exposition is always provided in the first scene, and all of the essential background material is usually provided by the end of the first act.
- b. Complication. This section of the plot introduces and develops the conflict. It commences when one or more of the main characters first become aware of an impending difficulty or when their relationships first begin to change.
- c. Crisis. The crisis, or turning point of the play, occurs at the moment of peak emotional intensity and usually involves a decision, a decisive action, or an open conflict between the protagonist and antagonist. It is often called the *obligatory* scene because the audience demands to see such moments acted out the stage.
- d. Falling action. As the consequences of the crisis accumulate, events develop a momentum of their own. Especially in tragedy, the falling action of the play results from the protagonist's loss of control and a final catastrophe often appears inevitable.
- e. Resolution. In both tragedy and comedy, the resolution brings to an end the conflict that has been implicit (or explicit) since the play's opening scenes. When the curtain falls, the relationships among the characters have once more stabilized. The resolution, or denouement, merits special attention because it is the author's last chance to get the point across. Thus, it is not surprising that the resolution often contains a clear statement (or restatement) of he theme and a full revelation of character. 11

3. Symbol

Symbol is an image or object that is charged with meaning beyond its denotative value. 12

12 Ibid. Page 328.

¹¹ James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hoeper, *Concise Companion to Literature* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981), page 269-273.

4. Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. 13

5. Behaviorism

According to DR. Singgih Dirgagunarsa, behaviorism is a science of studying real, open, and measurable behavior objectively.

Behaviorisme adalah aliran dalam psikologi yang hanya mempelajari tingkah laku yang nyata, yang terbuka, yang dapat diukur secara objektif.¹⁴

Skinner's behaviorism did not need the mind, unconscious or conscious, to explain an individual's personality. For him, an individual's personality was the individual's behavior. Behaviorist such as Skinner believes that our personalities (behavior) are not as consistent as most personality theorists argue; behaviorists say that we do not have to resort to biological or internal aspects of the person to explain behavior. Behaviorists have been criticized for taking the person out of personality and viewing the organism as "empty".

From the behavioral perspective, where is personality located and how is it determined? For Skinner, personality is simply the individual's observed, overt behavior; it does not include internal traits or thoughts. For example, observations of *Sam* reveal that this behavior is shy, achievement-oriented and caring. These behaviors represent his personality from the behavioral perspective. Why is *Sam*'s personality, or behavior, this way? For Skinner, the rewards and punishments in *Sam*'s environment have shaped him into a shy, achievement-oriented and caring individual. Because of interactions with family members, friends, teachers, and others, *Sam* has learned to behave in this fashion.

Behaviorists who support Skinner's perspective would say that Sam's shy, achievement-oriented and caring behavior is not consistent and enduring. For example, Sam is uninhibited on Saturday night with friends at a bar, unmotivated to achieve heights of greatness in English class, and occasionally nasty toward his sister. The issue of the consistency of personality is an important one.

Diane E. Papalia and Sally Wendkos Olds, *Psychology* (USA: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985), page 4.
 Singgih Dirgagunarsa, *Pengantar Psikologi* (Jakarta Pusat: Mutiara Sumber Widya, 1996), page 76.

Since behaviorists believe that personality is learned and often changes according to environmental experiences and situations, it follows that by rearranging experiences and situations the individual's personality can be changed. For the behaviorists, shy behavior can be changed into outgoing behavior; aggressive behavior can be shaped into docile behavior; lethargic, boring behavior can be turned into enthusiastic, interesting behavior. ¹⁵

The behaviorists emphasized the role of the environment in shaping human nature and played down hereditary characteristic. ¹⁶

6. Theme

Theme is the underlying idea, relatively abstract, that is given concrete expression by the literary work.¹⁷

G. The Method of Research

I arrange this research by using a library research or library study. Library study is a study of data collection.

Studi kepustakaan atau studi literer adalah studi yang digunakan di mana data-data yang digali untuk penelitian berasal dari bahan tertulis (khususnya berupa teroti-teori).¹⁸

Through this method, I read the play and collect the necessary data by reading some books from library to analyze this drama that can support this research.

H. The Benefit of Research

The benefit of this research is to analyze and comprehend a literary work especially drama. I hope this research can be useful and profitable for the university students who want to broaden literary works especially this Neil Simon's play and for the public who want to know about this drama.

¹⁵ John W. Santrock, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behavior* (Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1988), page 447.

¹⁶ Papalia and Olds, Op. Cit., page 9.

¹⁷ Wilfred L. Guerin, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), page 328.

¹⁸ Tatang M. Amirin, Menyusun Rencana Penelitian (Jakarta: CV. Rajawali, 1986), page 135.

I. The System of Presentation

The system of presentation is divided into four chapters as follow:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the problem, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, the purpose of research, the theoretical framework, the method of research, the benefit of research, and the system of presentation.

CHAPTER II THE ANALYSIS OF INTRINSIC ELEMENTS

This chapter consists of the analysis of characterization, plot and symbol.

CHAPTER III THE ANALYSIS OF EXTRINSIC ELEMENT BY USING PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY: BEHAVIORISM

This chapter consists of the analysis of the extrinsic element by using personality psychological approach: behaviorism.

CHAPTER IV THE THEME ANALYSIS

This chapter consists of the connection between characterization and the theme, the connection between plot and the theme, the connection between symbol and the theme, and the connection between the result of extrinsic analysis by using personality psychological approach: behaviorism and the theme.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of conclusion, summary of the thesis, the scheme of research, bibliography, abstract, summary of the story, biography of the author, and my personal identity.