# Analysis of the External Conflict of the Main Character in the "Don't Look Up" Movie

**I Gusti Ngurah Aditya Pranandha Swijana[1], I Putu Andri Permana[2]**

[1, 2] *English Department Faculty of Foreign Language, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar*
Email: adityaprananda14@gmail.com[1], andripermana@unmas.ac.id[2]

**Abstract-**The study aims to identify literature, especially the intrinsic elements that are limited to the type of conflict and conflict management strategy in the "Don't Look Up" movie. The qualitative descriptive method is used for the research method to provide a clearer picture of the problem and a well-organized description; this method was used because it briefly explained the findings and aimed to find out the types of conflict and conflict management strategies efficiently. The data collection from this research was taken using the observation method through four stages, namely watching the "Don't Look Up" Movie repeatedly to ensure an understanding of the conflict, note-taking by listing the types of conflict and their resolution, selecting each data that has rich of information regarding the conflict and conflict management strategies, and classifying each data that related with the problem conflict in the "Don't Look Up" movie. The research found external conflict, namely man vs man and man vs nature it is because most of the conflict in this movie is related to outside forces that made the main character "Randall" face the conflict and resolve each of the conflict. The conflict management strategy found avoidance in the "Don't Look Up" Movie. This study intends to enhance the literary studies theory and present valuable concepts that can aid in comprehending character building especially related to conflict and conflict management strategies.

**Keywords:** Conflict, External Conflict, Conflict management strategies, Character Analysis, Movie.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Good literature is created with intrinsic elements, and one of these intrinsic aspects is conflict. Conflict plays a crucial role in making the story stimulating (Artawan, Dewi, & Savitri, 2020). Conflict arises as a result of miscommunication, misunderstanding, underestimation, and other unrealized processes (Hasanah & Wardana, 2023). It is also part of a natural and inevitable human interaction that occurs when two or more people that have differing goals. It can manifest at any level of society. That is personal relationships to international diplomacy and can take many forms, from minor disagreements to violent confrontations. Utama, Suastini, & Permana, (2023) stated if the conflict is not well-built, the story might appear dull and lacking depth. Conflict is a situation that appears due to disagreement or difference of opinions and typically involves individuals or groups, or a decision-making process that involves choosing between two alternatives (Tue, Resen, & Winarta, 2023). Conflict is the problem that will be faced by the character. It is a prevalent occurrence worldwide, encompassing various

aspects that often exert an influence, such as environmental dynamics and human interactions within society (Wijaya & Sosiowati, 2023). Dewinta (2019) stated conflict in literature can be divided into two types: internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict occurs within characters, whereas external conflict involves challenges in the outside world.

According to (Kenney, 1966:5) a struggle between characters and outside forces is part of external conflict. External conflict is whenever a character argues against things outside themself, like arguments or disagreements, which affect how they see themselves (Putra, Jayanti, & Winarta, 2022). An external conflict might take the form of a brawl, a disagreement, or another sort of conflict between two parties. The action depicts a clash with the outer world. Physical conflict and social conflict are both examples of external conflict. The conflict that arises as a result of the character's actions colliding with the environment is referred to as physical conflict. Then there's social conflict, which is a conflict between characters with social links that are tied to social situations. There are 3 types of conflict, The first is the conflict between man against man happens when the characters compete with one another. These conflicts might arise from emotional, linguistic, or psychological disagreements, as well as moral, religious, or social differences, or the conflict of man against man, as in stories in which the characters are against one another. According to Artawan et al. (2020), an example of man against man is when one character is struggling against another character in the story. For example, a hero fights the villain. Man against nature conflict happens when the playwright has a relationship between man on nature in one way, which means nature is considered a hostile or destructive force. The conflict between man and society is the protagonist's struggle against other people's views, habits, or expectations. To resolve the problem, conflict management strategies play a crucial role.

According to (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986) in their book "Managing Interpersonal Communication", Conflict management strategies are categorized into five, namely: avoidance, competition, compromise, pacification, and creative integration. Techniques involving conflict management are essential when resolving conflicts. There are several dispute resolution techniques accessible, each with specific benefits depending on the situation.

Avoidance is a common and passive strategy for handling conflict. Avoiding potentially problematic situations, giving in to the other person when one arises, and agreeing to shift the disagreement to a different setting and time. Avoidance is an appropriate course of action when there will be a better time and place for a quarrel in the future. The best course of action, however, might not be to entirely prevent conflict. This strategy is often used when the issue is minor or when there are more pressing issues to take care of Competition refers to situations in which each party to a dispute decides that they must win in order to achieve their desired conclusion. Argumentation is the most effective strategy for resolving disagreements caused by differences in knowledge or beliefs. Relationships in this conflict benefit from careful discourse and practical replies, but they suffer when participants lose focus and seek victory at any cost, and as long as the objective of maintaining a positive relationship is valued higher than winning a particularly tight one, competition can be a successful way for resolving conflict based on opposing beliefs and relatively straightforward situations of limited resources or incompatible aims. Positive loss acceptance should come before the desire to engage in competitive strategies.

Compromise is a strategy that seeks to keep everyone happy or maybe not happy, but happier than they would have been if they had lost. However, implementing concessions does not maximize overall satisfaction. It instead equalizes the participants' dissatisfaction. Instead of ensuring happiness, it strives to ensure that no one is sadder than others. Compromise tends to affect participants' morale rather than revitalize the relationship and address the issue. It also encourages. The pacification strategy prevents the discussion of a problematic issue by decreasing rather than avoiding the dispute discourse. While calming statements appear to fix the problem, they undermine dispute resolution. It makes it difficult for individuals and relationships to resolve conflicts by weakening decision-making and increasing the complexity of the problems; so, it may be best to prepare ahead to pacify conflicts. Creative integration, the most difficult and time-consuming strategy, provides the best opportunity to meet each participant's goals and enhance the long-term relationship. Conflict integration aims to disrupt the context of the conflict by demonstrating that there are alternative ways to see conflict than the

way it is currently understood. A conflict can be viewed in a different context than the one in which it now exists. The creative integration process consists of three steps: Combine the goals of all individuals and consider them to be their wishes. Find activities and procedures that would ideally achieve all of the discussed goals and needs. These may change significantly from what the participants originally recommended Thus, conflict is widely known in the literature, especially in the movie.

A movie is a form of visual communication that conveys human emotions through moving images accompanied by sound (Pradnyaningsih, Sudipa, & Dewi, 2022). The movie consists of multiple pictures that have been captured within each frame, which are projected through a projector lens, creating the illusion of movement and bringing the images on the screen to life. According to Hapsari, Ediwan, & Malini (2018), a movie is a form of social communication that combines the senses of sight and sound, centered around a core narrative or theme. The movie has important parts similar to a drama, which are the main aspects found in a story (Putra, Sudipa, & Aryawibawa, 2023). In every movie, there is interaction between characters with each other that becomes conflict because of different opinions or points of view. The presence of a character within the narrative holds significant importance, as the character assumes an important role in shaping the storyline of the movie (Sain, Resen & Santika, 2023).

In this research, the researcher used a movie entitled "Don't Look Up" as data for study purposes. "Don't Look Up" movie is a satirical disaster comedy film directed by Adam McKay. The movie follows two astronomers, DR. Randall Mindy (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Dr. Kate Dibiasky (Jennifer Lawrence), who discover a comet named R-41 that is on a collision course with Earth. "Don't Look Up" serves as a darkly comedic commentary on society's response to urgent global issues, reflecting on the denial, complacency, and distractions that hinder effective action in the face of impending doom. The genre of this movie is comedy, drama, dark comedy, science fiction, fantasy, disaster, and politics. The movies have won several awards, there are American Film Institute awards, the African-American Film Critics Association awards, the Writers Guild of America awards, etc. This movie gives many conflicts that occur in certain scenes that progress the main story of the movie. The reason this movie is to be analyzed is because it gives various conflicts that occur in certain scenes of the movie and the researcher wants to present the result for future academic purposes. This research aims to identify the external conflict and conflict management strategies that occur in the movie.

## II. METHODS

The qualitative descriptive method is used for the research method to provide a clearer picture of the problem and a well-organized description; this method was used because it briefly explained the findings and aimed to find out the types of conflict and conflict management strategies efficiently. The data collection from this research was taken using the observation method through four stages, namely watching the "Don't Look Up" Movie repeatedly to ensure an understanding of the conflict, note-taking by listing the types of conflict and their resolution, selecting each data that has rich of information regarding the conflict and conflict management strategies, and classifying each data that related with the problem conflict in the "Don't Look Up" movie. The data will be analyzed through literary theory, using the idea put forward by Kenney (1966). The theory is used to identify which one is internal and external conflict. The first phase of the research is classifying them according to their types, such as internal conflict or external conflict. The second phase analyzes how the main character resolves the problem in the "Don't Look Up" movie using the theory of Deetz & Stevenson (1986). Their theory is important for this research because it will helpful when finding which one is internal or external conflict and their resolution.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Various conflict occurs in every type of fiction that deals with humans, society, or nature (Kenney, 1966). Conflict is divided into two types: internal and external conflict. Furthermore, every conflict has its way how to settle it depending on the situation when a problem arises. Conflict management strategies have various ways to help manage conflicts more effectively, such as minimizing various levels of conflict, attaining and maintaining a moderate level of conflict, and selecting appropriate conflict management strategies. According to Deetz and Stevenson (1986), there are several dispute resolution techniques accessible, each with specific benefits depending on the situation. conflict

management strategies are categorized into five, namely: avoidance, competition, compromise, pacification, and creative integration. Techniques involving conflict management are essential when resolving conflicts. Results In conducting the research result, the author found several external conflicts and how to resolve these conflicts. From the results of the analysis, it was found that there are 3 external conflict data that can be divided into certain types, namely man vs man and man vs nature. The conflict strategy management has included avoidance only.

Table 1. Types of Conflict

| Name | Amount |
|---|---|
| Man vs Man | 2 |
| Man vs Nature | 1 |

Table 2. Conflict Management Strategies

| Name | Amount |
|---|---|
| Avoidance | 3 |

Table 1 and Table 2 show the types, frequency, and percentage of external and internal conflicts found in the "Don't Look Up" Movie. Conflict management strategies are also found in the movie. There are 2 types of external conflicts and 3 types of conflict management strategies as conflict resolution occurred in the "Don't Look Up" Movie. From Table 2, there is only 1 type of conflict management strategy used by characters in certain dialogue, in the movie that aims to resolve external conflicts contained in the "Don't Look Up" Movie.

**Data 1**
The first conflict occurs when Randal, Kate, and Doctor Oglethorpe arrived at the white house United States of America. They want to discuss an event that will be faced by all the humans on Earth with President Orlean. Randall faces man vs man toward President Orlean. The external conflict happened when Randal gives a serious fact about a comet impact that will happen 100% on Earth and he is supported by his accompany, Kate and DR. Oglethorpe. The argumentation arises when President Orlean does not believe that the meteor will happen 100% even her assistant said the event most likely will not happen. Kate gives her opinion that the meteor will happen

no matter what with high intonation. Randall clarifies that the exact probability is 99.78 percent, but Jason sarcastically remarks that at least it's not 100%. DR. Oglethorpe adds that scientists avoid saying things are 100% certain. President Orlean suggests calling it 70% to downplay the severity, but Kate objects, stating that it's not even close to seventy percent. See the following data:

DR. Oglethorpe: "Madame President, this comet is what we call a planet killer."
Randall: "That is correct."
President Orlean: "So how certain is this?"
Randall: "There is basically 100% certainty of impact."
President Orlean: "Please don't say 100%."
Mr. President Assistant: "Can we just call it a potentially significant event?"
Kate: "But it's not "potentially" going to happen. It is going to happen."
Randall: "Exactly, 99.78 percent to be exact.
Jason: Oh, great! So, it's not 100%."
DR. Oglethorpe: "Scientists never like to say 100%."
President Orlean: "Call it 70% and let's move on."
Kate: "It's not even close to seventy percent."
President Orlean: "You can't go around to people telling them there's a 100% chance that they are going to die."

**(Don't Look Up, 19:51-20:34)**
The conflict management strategy used by President Orlean is categorized as avoidance. In this scenario, a strategy of avoidance was being employed, characterized by being unassertive and uncooperative. When utilizing avoidance, an individual refrains from actively pursuing their own concerns or those of the other person involved. They choose not to directly confront the conflict at hand. Avoidance can manifest as diplomatically avoiding a particular issue, postponing it until a more opportune moment arises, or completely withdrawing from a situation perceived as threatening. This strategy occurs when President Orlean said "*Call it 70% and let's move on*" even though Randal and Kate already explained that even 100% will happen therefore President Orlean chose to avoid this situation rather than accept the fact. This made the story more complex and make a big change because how of President Orlean tried to avoid the fact regarding a comet that will hit Earth.

This scene also related with real world especially when people ignore a very important information with each other.

**Data 2**

The Second conflict occurs when Randall and Kate are invited to a TV show to publish their finding about the comet that headed to Earth. Brie and Jack are the presenters in the show named "Daily Rip". Randall's performance in the show was calm and informed the information about the meteor correctly to the public. Although, Kate appears disturbed by the show. Kate faces a man vs man conflict with the presenters. The external conflict occurs when Randall explains Dibiasky's Comet to the presenters with every detail of how much damage will Earth takes when this event happens.

Jack little bit shocked because the entire planet will be destroyed by this comet. Although, he jokes around with the fact that Randall already exposes accompanied by Brie who joins up with Jack's jokes. Kate is frustrated and apologizes for any confusion in their message. She wants to make it clear that they are trying to communicate the imminent destruction of the entire planet. Brie responds dismissively, suggesting they use a light-hearted approach when delivering bad news. Jack supports Brie's idea, mentioning the concept of making difficult news easier to accept.

However, Kate interrupts, disagreeing with the notion that the destruction of the planet should be presented as enjoyable or entertaining. She argues that it should instead invoke fear, and distress, and elicit strong emotional responses, like staying up all night crying, considering that everyone's death is certain if they do not do anything about it. Kate crashes out of the studio because she cannot handle the situation very clearly. See the following data below:

Kate: "I'm sorry... Are we not being clear?! We're trying to tell you that the entire planet is about to be destroyed."
Brie Evantee: "It's something we do around here to keep the bad news light."
Jack Bremmer: "Helps the medicine go down. And speaking of medicine, tomorrow we've got a…"
Kate: "Well, maybe the destruction of the entire planet isn't supposed to be fun. Maybe it's supposed to be terrifying... and upsetting...and maybe we're supposed to stay up all night every night crying... when we're all 100% for sure going to fucking die!"
Randall: "Hei, Kate…"

**(Don't Look Up, 38:54-40:10)**

The conflict management strategy used by Kate is categorized as avoidance. In this scenario, a strategy of avoidance was being employed, characterized by being unassertive and uncooperative. When utilizing avoidance, an individual refrains from actively pursuing their own concerns or those of the other person involved. They choose not to confront the conflict at hand directly. Avoidance can manifest as diplomatically avoiding a particular issue, postponing it until a more opportune moment arises, or completely withdrawing from a situation perceived as threatening.

Kate who had enough of the presenter's jokes when she talks about a serious problem with all the people on Earth will face. She ran out of the studio to avoid the matter she had faced. This scene is also impactful it is because if Kate keep her head cool and tells the information correctly, she might change the perspective of each person to Kate rather than laugh at her. This scene also related with real world when someone cannot keep their head calm especially with the situation that will change everything.

**Data 3**

The third conflict occurs when Randall and Kate decided to call NASA about their finding about a meteor that will impact the Earth. Randall and Kate faced man vs nature because what they going to talk is related to the condition of the Earth. In this scene, the NASA scientist got a call from Randall and Kate, then he informs it to DR. Calder. She was not interested in what Randall said because he disturbed her team meeting. Although, Randall speaks about the DR. Calder meteor with strange orbital numbers. He then sent some data and pictures to DR. Calder. She decided to call out someone named DR. Oglethorpe who is the head of the Planetary Defence Coordination Office in Washington DC. After a long talk with DR. Oglethorpe, he then asked about the exact coordinate the meteor head to. Kate responded the coordinate running the same result. See the following data:

Kate: "I've been running it all day I keep getting the same result. A direct hit of the earth in 6 months and 14 days."
Randall: "Me too."
DR. Calder: "Mathew, what are your calculations?"
NASA Scientist: "Our scout program is saying... 6 months, 14 days."
DR. Calder: "We've got 6 months and 14 days."
DR. Oglethorpe: "And it's roughly 5 to 10 kilometers wide. Which means..."
Randall: "...Isn't that an extinction-level event?"
DR. Calder: "Well, let's not be dramatic here."

**(Don't Look Up, 07:23-08:00)**
The conflict management strategies used by DR. Calder are categorized as avoidance. It is because after a long talk discussing a meteor that will hit the Earth. Kate had been tirelessly running the calculations all day, yet the outcome remained unchanging: a grim revelation that the Earth was to face a direct hit in a mere six months and fourteen days. Randall, too, shared the same unsettling conclusion. The urgency of the situation prompted DR. Calder to inquire about Mathew's calculations, hoping for a glimmer of hope or an alternative perspective. However, the NASA scientist's response only confirmed their worst fear, six months and fourteen days.

The weight of the impending catastrophe settled heavily upon them all. Presenting the gathered information, DR. Oglethorpe revealed the staggering size of the approaching threat, estimated to be between 5 and 10 Km wide. The realization dawned on Randall, who voiced the fears that gripped their minds. DR. Calder, attempting to avoid the fact that they have been discussed rather make panic and tell them not to be too dramatic about it, even though the realization hit hard.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Based on previous results and discussion, the conclusion in this part of the "Don't Look Up" Movie is Randal and Kate who tried to announce their discovery about a comet headed toward Earth called Dibiasky's Comet to every human being. The theory used for conflict categorization was proposed by Kenney (1966) and the theory of conflict management strategy was proposed by Deetz and Stevenson (1986).

Randall and Kate faced several conflicts they are man vs man and man vs nature. Although, most of the conflicts they faced were external conflicts, man vs man. The conflict management strategy mostly used is avoidance. The movie represents of how the real-world work of how people do not trust each other especially avoid a serious fact that will change everything if they do not do something about it.

This research can be helpful for those who like to do the same research related to conflict, types of conflict, and conflict management strategies in the future. The analysis of conflict in this study can be a starter to explore what kind of conflict exists and how to manage conflict, especially on a daily basis. Therefore, this research is expected to help and provide a primary picture for other researchers who like to analyze the same topic about conflict, furthermore, it can be more developed and better than the previous one.

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