



## Various conflicts of main characters in Steven Savile's novel “Stellaris: infinite frontiers”

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Characters face conflicts in a story. The way the characters' acts, reacts, and deal with the obstacles will reveal about their qualities. Any conflict arise refers to represent something.

**Purpose:** The aim of this research was to find conflicts of the main characters in a novel "Stellaris: Infinite Frontiers" by Steven Savile.

**Design and methods:** The duration of the research was from 6th of March 2020 until 14th July 2020. Analytic descriptive was the method of the research. The steps of the research include: (1) preparing research data, (2) preparing support data, (3) processing the research and support data, (4) analyzing the research data. The total conflict data that were gathered from the novel was 40 data which was divided into four categories: against another, against nature, against group, and against self.

**Results:** The result shows 11 conflicts against another, 10 conflicts against group, 10 conflicts against nature, and 9 conflicts against self. In total there are 40 conflicts that the researcher take from the novel.

**Keywords:** symbolism, conflict

### Introduction

A fiction is the telling of stories which are not real. More specifically, fiction is an imaginative form of narrative, according to Mays (2016), The word fiction comes from the Latin root *figere* 'to fashion or form. In the past two centuries, fiction has become more narrowly defined as "prose narrative about imaginary people and events."

Based on Mays (2016), a character is any personage in a literary work who acts, appears, or is referred to as playing a part. Though personage usually means a human being, it does not have to. It can be other nonhuman characters like aliens, robots, and monsters as long as they have the ability to think and feel (p.219). Characters are presented in two different ways: directly and indirectly. Direct presentation is when the author tells us about the characters and what we are to think of them. Indirect presentation is when we learn about the characters by their actions or thinking during the story, without detailed explanation from the author.

Characters face conflicts in a story. Morley (2007) said that conflict is an important part of fiction, particularly novels. By using conflicts, the author throws many kinds of predicaments and obstacles to the characters (p.173). The way the characters' acts, reacts, and deal with the obstacles will reveal about their qualities, causing us to know more about them while at the same time keeping us invested to the story.

Any conflict arise refers to a thing. This phenomenon has closest meaning with symbol. Symbolism or symbol, can mean an object, a person, a place, or an experience, to represent something else. The thing represented is often abstract, but it can be concrete as well. A symbol may have more than one meaning and its meaning may change during the story (The Princeton Review, 2001, p.31).

Researcher Ariska wished to analyze the novel in order to observe hidden meanings that were covered by symbols and to limit the research data, not all symbols were discussed, the focus was symbolic expression. To compare current and previous research. Current research does not necessarily limited to one kind of symbol and rather than finding hidden meanings from symbols, current research instead analyzes conflicts for symbols.

Theory used in previous research is Semiotic Theory by Ferdinand de Saussure, of which the researcher take notes and follow the example to use it in current research as well. Furthermore, the symbols found in the previous research was claimed to be intended or planned by the author. Whereas in current research, the symbols might or might not intended or planned and based on the researcher's interpretation.

Eunike Destibela Rato Nono from English Department of Sam Ratulangi University Manado (2017). The data that the researcher wish to compare is the first question and significance of the research, they are respectively: (1) What kind of symbols appeared in the novel *The Scarlet Letter*? (2) To identify and classify kinds of symbols in the novel *The Scarlet Letter*. The current research has entirely different kind of question and objective which is identifying conflicts occurred in the novel.

## Method

The method used in this research is descriptive analyses. The researcher used Kusaeri's (2014) definition of descriptive analyses, it is a method of obtaining data from observations, document or text analysis, interviews, photography, and field notes. The researcher conduct data analysis by enriching information, looking for connections, link, and finding patterns on the basis of the research data. The data compiled by the researcher is not stated in the form of numbers and the results is in the form of an explanation of the matter, presented in narrative description form (p.28).

The researcher read the source data (novel) in order to have a comprehension of what the novel is about. After reading the novel the researcher proceeds to find the conflicts in the novel by examining and selecting the sentences, the dialogues, and the narratives in the story that gives hint or contains the conflicts.

After the data has been compiled, the researcher will determine which data are relevant enough to be included in the research. The researcher finally analyze the final data that include from the primary source and secondary source, before making the conclusion of the research.

## Findings & Discussion

All the main characters are categorized as "Round characters". It means that their decisions or actions depends on motive, impulse, desire, and influence from other character. As opposed to "Flat characters" whose behaviors are predictable and repetitive.

The researchers also would like to mention that all main characters except Amelia and Devolo are "Dynamic Characters". These characters have their personality or behaviour changes throughout the story, contrary to "Static characters" that Amelia and Devolo are whom regardless of their actions or emotions, their personality did not change. The details regarding related events will be discussed later after the characters' introduction.

### *Hayden*

The first main character is Hayden. He was a "Listener" whose task was to observe and listen the sounds of space. He had been doing his job for at least three years, listening to the same-empty sounds from the space every day.

*The reception wasn't clear, but it was good enough to hear nothing, because there was never anything to hear. He'd been doing radio duty for three years. Pedar was right: there was only so much white noise you could listen to before you lost your mind. (page 8)*

As the passage above suggests, even though their job seems very simple, it could take toll on their minds and therefore can cause hallucinations or even harm their sanity.

*The Council Elders picked the Listeners with care. They wanted people without imaginations. People content to listen to nothing for days and weeks and months and years. People who wouldn't start to imagine voices and messages hidden within the echoes and silences." (page 8)*

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*But not Hayden Quinn.  
His mind was empty. (page 9)*

The job is a heavy burden to the human mind, this is why the council carefully choose the right individuals to do the task, people like Hayden who can control their imaginations. However, even though Hayden is not a person who depends on his imaginations, he can still feel excitement and enthusiasm as expressed in the passage below which also shows his quality of being a round character.

*There was no grace to his rush. "Pedar! Pedar!" he yelled, long before he reached the open doorway. "Did you hear it? Tell me you heard it!"*

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*"Holy hells," Pedar said, shaking his head. "It's there, isn't it? It's really there. I'm not imagining it?"  
Hayden shook his head, grinning like an idiot. (page 10)*

Hayden is a dynamic character, this is shown when Hayden was interested to apply for a position in the expedition team and years later he shows reluctance in participating the mission.

*No one was better equipped to serve as linguist than the Listener. No one was more conversant in the symbols of this lost species they were hunting than the Listener. No one. So he had done as they asked, and now he waited for word. (page 18)*

*"I can't," he said. "Look at me. I wasn't good enough before, and now ... now I am half the man I used to be." (page 27)*

### **Amelia**

The next main character after Hayden is Amelia. After Hayden takes the role of his previous superior, he started to seek another individual to assist him.

*Her name was Amelia. She had no surname. An orphan. She lived alone in the library, and swore she had never felt the sunshine on her face as he led her outside by the hand, with the promise that there was a whole universe out there for her to discover.*

*She followed him, hanging on his every word as he explained the importance of the signal and the images he had decoded.*

*Amelia nodded solemnly.*

*She had all of her worldly possessions gathered up in the pack on her back. (page 25)*

Amelia then became Hayden's pupil and assistant. Contrary to Hayden and because of her curious nature, she was known for her imaginative and inventive conclusion. Despite their differences however, they were able to get along as if they are families.

Amelia did not get any spotlight until much later in the story. After Hayden's death, she has to take his place. His death affects her heavily to the point she felt pressured and underwhelmed, claiming that she is not ready for the task. This shows her as a round character.

“You can’t go on like that.”

Again, she shrugged. “There’s so much I don’t know. So much we lost with Quinn. I just feel so ... useless.” (page 103)

### ***Devolo***

Devolo is the captain of the Terella ship. Though this was his first time leading such a large operation, he handled things quite professionally. He is quite an emotional person but he can suppress his feelings so that it does not get in the way of his duty and responsibility. He also prefers to involve himself in the crew's activity or action, he thought that it was also part of his responsibility as the captain and hopes he could give inspiration and motivation to his crew. This trait of Devolo is a sign of his quality as a round character. The passage below is an instance of Devolo's decision to take an action personally.

*“No, you stay here. I’ll go.” It would be better for the crew’s morale if they saw him as a man of action, not as someone who relied on subordinates to do his bidding. It was all such a delicate balancing act, but he was learning. (page 49)*

### ***Grace***

Grace is an Artificial Intelligence or A.I. for short. She is the heart of the ship and therefore have access to pretty much everything on the ship. She has a unique personality and more often than not she expresses sarcasms, dark humors and disheartening facts even in a dire situation.

*“Ah, the liability. Pleased to make your acquaintance, Master Quinn. I am Grace, the Terella’s on-board A.I. I am here to make your life—and, in the event of your body failing before journey’s end, your death—aboard the ship as comfortable as possible.” (page 34)*

Grace is both dynamic and round character. The passage below shows an instance of both the dynamic and round quality. It shows a round quality, as the reason Grace releases the traitor was because the situation was desperate and she has no one else to depend. At the same time, because Grace has been increasingly become more human and no longer an ordinary A.I., her decision to plea for help from the traitor shows the quality of a dynamic character.

The cell door opened.

“Thank you.”

The A.I. didn’t talk to him until he stepped out of the cell.

“What do you need me do?” he asked.

It was a blanket question, and the answer was every bit as general. “Save us.” (page 171)

### ***The Traitor***

One of the Terella crew members is a Traitor. He was very skilled in hiding his presence even from Grace who have access to every surveillance monitors on the ship. His excessive

actions to hide his true identity would later backfire and bring Grace's attention to the unidentified personnel.

*It was regrettable that it had come to this, and so early into the mission, but it was imperative that he maintain his cover.*

*"I'm sorry about this, Gracie," he said, crouching. "But it's going to be okay, I promise. You won't even know it happened." (page 45)*

The passage above also represents the traitor's round characteristic. Grace's investigation that threatens his secret mission caused him to take action against her. As for his dynamic characteristic, in the later part of the story the traitor decided to stop doing his secret mission and wants to help the expedition team instead.

*He couldn't allow the box to fall into the hands of Devolo if he wanted to reinvent himself as one of the good guys here. (page 90)*

The passage above shows that the traitors would not want Devolo to retrieve the evidence of his crime, because if that happens he would be doomed and could not participate in their expedition just as he wanted to.

### ***Conflicts against another, group, nature, and self***

Conflict is a tension, predicament, challenge, unrest, fight, struggle or dilemma that characters approach in the story as well as its origin and resolution. Woods (2008) said that in fiction works, some or even all of these conflicts may appear and interrelate

One character against another is a type of straightforward conflict. One character in a story has a grievance against another, or against a few others. An example of the conflict against other characters as follows. Grace went into the giant structure together with Mahalac in order to find and save countless informations that Mahalac's species have discovered. After Mahalac gave the data to Grace, he also told her regarding the route toward a planet that is habitable for the human's species. He states that he is doing so as thanks because they have saved him from imminent death by the plague.

A character against group or against society is a kind of plot pits a character against society or a dominant group. An example of the conflict against group as follows. After the crisis aboard the Terella regarding the hostile intruders has been concluded, Hayden managed to establish communication to the ship. Grace informs Devolo of the unfortunate events that claimed many lives of the crew, she told him things could have been worse if it was not for Varick's sacrifice.

A character against nature refers to the involvement and clash against Mother Nature. It usually plays a central or supporting role in many novels and plays. An example of conflict against nature analysis as follows. Devolo and Mahalac reminiscing about what they have lost so far. One thing that they have in common is that they are no longer be able to return to their respective home, at least the 'old' home. They now have the opportunity to be able to go to the long desired new home.

A character against himself or herself refers to a character having trouble with their inner emotions, thought, or psychology. An example of the conflict against inner self analysis as follows. Hayden is not happy with the council's decision that concludes he is not chosen to be in the ark. Hayden felt some sort of resentment towards them, but he tried not to let his feelings overwhelming him, by lying to himself.

### **Conclusion**

The story of the novel focused on several main characters though the story itself is not that long. However, the usage of multiple main characters makes the novel suitable and

interesting main source for the research, as the reader gets to see the events through different point of views. For the research data, the researcher found 11 conflicts against another, 10 conflicts against group, 10 conflicts against nature, and 9 conflicts against self. In total there are 40 conflicts that the researcher takes from the novel.

The conflicts against another covers the struggle between an individual to another individual or too few others. Though there was one instance where the conflict are double: it was conflict against another and against self at the same time. In data B-4, the conflict is actually not only between Devolo and Amelia but also Amelia's struggles with herself which can be considered as conflict against self. Another thing is that the symbolism does not always about the conflict itself and it could be something that is related or connected to the conflict, for instance in data B-6 where the symbolism is about a particular occurrence (a misleading occurrence) rather than the encounter with another entity.

Conflicts against group, as its name suggests, involves more than just two individuals that the main character faces or struggled with. Once more, there was an instance of the symbolism referring not directly to the conflict but to something related: In data C-5 the indirect conflict between the human and other alien ship symbolizes is the real beginning of their journey.

Conflicts against nature involves non-human-made objects, events, or occurrence. As far as the researcher is aware and according to the analysis, there was no instance of double conflict or symbolism that refers to something else other than the conflict or the nature.

Conflict against self involves an individual struggle with their emotion or feelings. There was a potential double conflict in this category, in E-2 the interaction between the two characters could also categorized as conflict against another. However, the researcher did not categorize it as such because the lack of "struggle" or "difficulty" between the two characters.

From the perspective of the researcher, the novel is very interesting and catches the researcher's attention. That is the novel's way on how to deliver the story by using different perspective of the main characters. By doing so the author was able to cover large enough plot for the story. This method of multiple main characters might have a downside: the main characters appearance are not long enough for the readers to take a liking and attachment to them which is understandable since the story was divided to each main characters' perspective in return for a bigger and diverse plot. The researcher conclude that the usage of multiple main characters can only works effectively if a story is plot oriented rather than character oriented.

The researcher also would like to conclude the connection or relevancy between the research focus: symbolism in conflicts and literature. As the reader attempted to find and understand a certain meaning or context within a literature text, the one that the reader is looking for is the hidden meaning or context instead of the literal meaning that was in the plain sight. This effort is to analyze a literary content, text, or work in order to look for an objective is the relevancy of current research focus and the literature subject.

There are some instances where the researcher struggled to understand and to find out the hidden and symbolized conflicts, due to the researcher's lack of experience and unfamiliarity in analyzing such data. The researcher suggests that when analyzing a conflict in order to find its hidden or symbolized context, a comparison to real world problem might be necessary and also to consider the conflict's preceding events or its future consequences to either understand or to receive the bigger picture of the conflicts.

Another suggestion is regarding the main source data. The researcher suggests choosing a novel or a book that is not well-known, because surely some famous books are already has been researched and analyzed in some way by other researchers. This is so that the researcher

did not have to worry about the availability of the main data to be analyzed. The novel of the current research is not very popular globally, let alone on the researcher's country.

Of course, choosing a book that does not interest or attract the researcher is not recommended because it could potentially affect the research analysis. Finding the source data that is suitable and fascinating to the researcher is essential for an at least steady progress for the research. This does not only apply to books but also other forms of source data as well.

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