



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

Analyzing Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* Through the Lens of Enneagram

Sakchai lamkrasin

Email: s65584947001@ssru.ac.th, sakchai.ia@ssru.ac.th

Graduate student in the Doctoral of Fine Arts program, Majoring in Performing Arts,
Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
Chutima Maneewattana

Email: chutima.ma@ssru.ac.th

Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Abstract

This article aims to integrate knowledge in using the Enneagram theory, a body of knowledge that studies human characteristics, to analyze the character Amanda Wingfield in the play "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams. This play represents a life from modern era that first incorporated psychological theory into character design. This play is crucial in performing arts education, serving as a case study for both acting and directing. The article analyzed Amanda Wingfield character by using the Enneagram theory and discovered that the character exhibits traits of Enneagram as Type 1 with Wing 2. These traits are evident in the character's attitudes and perspectives towards herself and other characters, expressed through motivations, objective, dialogues, and actions that are all aimed at achieving a sense of completeness according to her ideology (women's beauty, manners, and righteousness). Furthermore, the character displays Amanda's managerial and controlling nature, seeking to dominate everything with her expectations. When expectations are not met, the character expresses frustration, irritation, and resentment. Simultaneously, the character exhibits Enneagram Type 2 (as Wing 2) in her expectations of receiving love, acceptance, and special care in return for the attention she provides to others. Based on the analysis results, the researcher sees the possibility of applying Enneagram theory for integration with the performing arts. Utilizing the Enneagram in character analysis helps individuals involved in performance-related work to understand characters that align with each other, fostering the creation of high-quality performances.



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

Keywords: Enneagram, Character Analysis, Tennessee Williams, Amanda Wingfield,
The Glass Menagerie

Introduction

Performance is a discipline and body of knowledge that has evolved and creatively generated knowledge and tools continuously from the past to the present. Educators in the field of performance, as well as a significant number of theater professionals and performers, strive to seek and explore to create and develop processes, concepts, and tools that can help reflect the reality, cause and effect, and the true nature of characters as human beings through performances presented on stage. The inherent truth of human nature conveyed through performance has an impact on the audience's beliefs toward the performance. Ultimately, the genuine character of humans depicted in performances also links to the substance that both the playwright and the characters aim to communicate to the audience.

Enneagram is a tool for learning human behavior that works deeply within the minds of learners through reflection, introspection, and consideration of motivations and goals in life. Besides categorizing personality traits into 9 types, personality science also reflects distinctive features, areas for improvement, strengths, and weaknesses of each personality type. It is a comprehensive and international learning of human inner dimensions. Personality science has gained global acceptance, and many users have applied it to develop individuals with guiding principles in various activities. It has led to self-reflection, deep self-understanding, and an understanding of actions and internal driving forces that cause various behaviors.

This researcher sees the possibility of applying the Enneagram theory in the analysis and understanding of drama characters, which is considered a crucial process to help actors understand the behaviors, motivations, and internal driving forces that are essential for various expressions of characters. This includes understanding the character's thoughts and perspectives on oneself, others, or even the environmental context of the character during that time. Another important aspect is that if actors have a comprehensive understanding of the character from all aspects of their lives, they can create a 'belief' in the character without any doubt. This belief is like the first key that allows actors to access the role of the character in their creative performance going forward.



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

Objective

To study the character Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* through the lens of Enneagram theory.

Literature review

Rutnin (2003, pp. 38-39) emphasizes the importance of the character, stating that directors must study and analyze each character individually, starting from the most significant characters to the smallest roles. This involves understanding their emotional characteristics, behaviors, background, life history, and most importantly, the super-objective in the life of each character. It also involves the determination to reach that objective, focusing on the central point, and understanding how it evolves, develops, and why. This is all interconnected with which characters and their relationships may change.

Iamkrasin (2021) conducted a study on the design of learning activities to develop performance skills using the cognitive process, emotional intelligence education, and the DISC theory. It was found that promoting actors to learn about the internal dimensions and applying the DISC theory can help them better understand the characters, enabling actors to have a deeper understanding of the characters.

According to "The Enneagram: A Review of the Empirical and Transformational Literature" conducted by Andrew M. Bland (2010), it was found that the Enneagram can significantly enhance actors' understanding of characters in the dimension of human nature, demonstrating fluidity in behavior, actions, and expressions. Additionally, the Enneagram helps actors gain a better understanding of themselves and allows them to understand others more effectively.

Helen Elizabeth Prien (1998) research's "The Enneagram and the Actor: Using a System of Personality Typology in Character Analysis" found that the Enneagram can help drama students develop a better understanding of characters. This is achieved through comparing and contrasting the characteristics of all 9 Enneagram types. The researchers gathered data through interviews with the target group as part of the research project.

Karen Webb (2000) and Phooriwat Kittithunwiwat (2022) state that the Enneagram has become increasingly prevalent in the Western world, primarily through the work of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff linked the concept of the Enneagram and the symbol to personality patterns, incorporating this knowledge into the context of the Christian concept of the seven deadly sins. Additionally, he expanded on the themes of fear and deceit, traits that



The 16th National and International Conference
 "Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
 20 March, 2024



can be broadly explained by the characteristics of the 9 personality types in the Enneagram, Type 1, The Perfectionist. Worldview: This world is imperfect and has errors that need to be corrected. Individuals seeking perfection often have strict standards and rules for everything. They tend to have clear ideas about what should and should not be done and are inclined to criticize things directly. Type 2, The Giver. Worldview: This world will receive love when it becomes a giver. Individuals who enjoy helping others and desire to be important to others. They prioritize relationships and often place more importance on the needs of others than their own. Type 3, The Performer. Worldview: The world will accept us when we take action and persist until we succeed. Individuals who seek success and are serious about achieving their goals. They enjoy competition and prioritize their self-image. Type 4, The Individualist. Worldview: There are some things missing in this world; it doesn't understand us. Individuals with deep and varied emotions, especially sadness. They yearn for things they lack and are often dissatisfied with what they have. Type 5, The Investigator. Worldview: This world demands a lot. Individuals who seek high levels of privacy and want to maintain a distance from others. They often separate themselves from emotions and have a rich inner world. Type 6, The Loyalist. Worldview: This world is dangerous, not to be trusted; seeking stability and safety. Individuals who question their surroundings, anticipate potential dangers, and have constant doubts. They are always suspicious and analyze situations from all angles to cope with uncertainty. Type 7, The Enthusiast. Worldview: This world confines us. Individuals who view the world positively, cheerfully, and enjoy having fun. They like new experiences, dislike being tied down, and often find ways to keep themselves in a constantly good mood. They have a lively and playful nature. Type 8, The Challenger. Worldview: This world is unjust. The weak are often oppressed and taken advantage of, while the strong are the ones who survive. Individuals who prioritize control and power, living life to the fullest. They get angry easily but quickly let it go. They express anger straightforwardly and have a strong desire to protect the vulnerable. They are powerful, confrontational, and brave. Type 9, The Peacemaker. Worldview: The world overlooks us. Individuals who enjoy tranquility and harmony, preferring a friendly and comfortable atmosphere. They like helping others and feel uneasy when faced with conflict.

Analysis Results

By processing theoretical knowledge to using Enneagram as tools for observing and learning about people, including using such archetypes as tools to do the inner work of myself,



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024



the researcher has synthesized knowledge and developed criteria for character analysis in 10 points, as follows:

1. **Behavior:** personality traits. For example, complaining, being indecisive, and fearing to commitment, etc.
2. **Motivation:** motivating force, that is the cause of action.
3. **Character's life value and meaning:** the character holds onto and might feel regretful or flawed if not successful.
4. **Decision-making / choice of responses / solutions in certain situations:** values, or life goals that the character prioritizes.
5. **Expressed emotions and unexpressed emotions:** emotional characteristics and responses that occur both visibly and invisibly.
6. **The main force or power that drives life or center of instinct:** body center, heart center or gut center.
7. **Patterns of actions, thoughts, and recurring feelings:** both conscious and unconscious
8. **Worldview:** perspective, or view towards the world.
9. **Avoidance:** things that individuals often avoid and don't want to confront, which may lead to feelings of insecurity.
10. **Self-defense mechanisms:** a psychological process that occurs automatically in individuals, mostly used unconsciously. Its purpose is self-adjustment, addressing existing problems, and maintaining the balance or normalcy of the mind.

"*The world should be perfect.*" is the worldview of Type 1 in Enneagram theory, Type 1 individuals strive for perfection and place great importance on correctness. They believe that human life should adhere to good rules and standards. Type 1 personalities use rules, standards, and accepted norms (both all people accepted and those they create themselves) as tools for self-judgment and judgment of others. Often, Type 1 individuals encounter actions of people or events that deviate from proper management, control, or standards. Type 1 personalities respond by taking actions and may express their dissatisfaction, criticize, and even pass judgments on people. In many instances, Type 1 individuals are described as perfectionists who are meticulous and critical of those close to them. In *The Glass Menagerie*, based on the actions of Amanda towards Tom and Laura, which the researcher has analyzed as Type 1 personality, various actions, and events in the drama, as well as Amanda's relationships with other characters, including herself, reflect a worldview,



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

thought processes, and a way of life that demonstrate the characteristics of Type 1 personality, as evident in the following 2 crucial points:

1. Sets CRITERIA and REQUIREMENTS for being the 'ideal daughter' with Laura.

Amanda has various criteria for herself and, by default, various requirements for Laura, such as taking care of herself to look beautiful and managing charm and beauty to make men fall in love. She believes that women should have qualities that ready to be a wife so that men desire Laura as a wife and build a family. Additionally, Amanda also hopes that Laura's marriage will contribute to the happiness and improvement of everyone in the family's quality of life. Amanda controls and manages Laura in various aspects of her life. This includes sending Laura to learn typing to enhance her abilities and employability, which is one of the standards Amanda has set for women (as daughters), believing they should be well-rounded in every aspect. Amanda also takes charge of styling and grooming Laura, including making requests for Tom to help Laura find a man who works in the same profession. This is seen as a starting point for a relationship that Amanda's hopes will lead to marriage and a future where Laura's husband contributes to improving the family's living conditions.

However, when Amanda imposes control in areas where Laura is not emotionally stable, Laura exhibits resistance and defiance, as seen in the instance where Laura is sent to learn printing and typing but doesn't attend school daily. Amanda discovers the truth about this situation.

[...]

AMANDA: *I went to the typing instructor and introduced myself as your mother. She didn't know who you were. Wingfield, she said. We don't have any such student enrolled at the school! I assured her she did, that you had been going to classes since early in January. 'I wonder,' she said, 'if you could be talking about that terribly shy little girl who dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance?' 'No,' I said, 'Laura, my daughter, has been going to school every day for the past six weeks!' 'Excuse me,' she said. She took the attendance book out and there was your name, unmistakably printed, and all the dates you were absent until they decided that you had dropped out of school. I still said, 'No, there must have been some mistake I There*



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

.....

must have been some mix-up in the records!' And she said, 'No - I remember her perfectly now. Her hands shook so that she couldn't hit the right keys! The first time we gave a speed-test, she broke down completely - was sick at the stomach and almost had to be carried into the washroom! After that morning she never showed up anymore. We phoned the house but never got any answer' -while I was working at Famous and Barr, I suppose, demonstrating those - Oh! I felt so weak I could barely keep on my feet! I had to sit down while they got me a glass of water! Fifty dollars' tuition, all of our plans - my hopes and ambition for you - just gone up the spout, just gone up the spout like that. [LAURA draws a long breath and gets awkwardly to her feet She crosses to the victrola and winds it up.] What are you doing?

(The Glass Menagerie, pp. 755-756)

2. The STANDARD for being a 'good son' of Tom in her IDEALIZED world.

There are many standards that Amanda believes a good son should adhere to. Amanda has been separated from her husband for a long time, and there has been no contact or financial support. As a result, Amanda places even more importance on the role and responsibilities that Tom should take on. Throughout the story, the character of the mother, Amanda, often expresses her expectations for her son, Tom. This is evident in her directives for Tom to conform to the rules and regulations she has established to transform him into an ideal son. Examples include ordering Tom to comb his hair neatly, maintaining the family's lifestyle with Tom's salary, instructing Tom to find a man to court her daughter and disapproving of Tom going out at night. However, Amanda catches Tom outside at night and concludes that he is lying about going to the movies, asserting that Tom is self-centered, and doesn't love his mother and sister, without even listening to Tom's explanation. These actions lead the storyline to a breaking point in the drama.

[...]

AMANDA: *That's right, now that you've had us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense! The*



The 16th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
20 March, 2024

.....

*new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! all for what?
To entertain some other girl's fiancé! Go to the movies, go!
Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister
who's crippled and has no job! Don't let anything interfere
with your selfish pleasure I just go, go, go - to the movies!*

TOM: *All right, I 'will! The more you shout about my selfishness to
me the quicker I'll go, and I won't go to the movies!*

AMANDA: *Go, then! Then go to the moon - you selfish dreamer!*

[Tom smashes his glass on the floor. He plunges out on the
fire-escape, slamming the door. Laura screams-cut by door].

(The Glass Menagerie, p. 784)

Discuss the results

The Enneagram theory is a tool that helps to reflect on patterns of behavior, motivations, and even reveals the different cores that individuals hold on to values and the meaning of life. Enneagram also illustrates characteristics, including opportunities to use as a guide in improving and developing the dimensions of humanity to make them even more normal and happy. This is because the type is merely a behavioral pattern categorized for clear understanding, and there is a learning plan that can be seen as a clear direction for personal development. The 9 types represent general human patterns that we encounter in society, family, or even in ourselves. While Amanda has the Type 1 personality, which may have developed through nurturing and upbringing in a diverse society, the creation of rules, criteria, and standards has become a tool that Amanda uses to judge the goodness of her children, Tom and Laura.

This judgmental behavior of Amanda becomes a weapon that Amanda uses to harm her son and daughter in the future. If Amanda could be aware of her Type 1 personality in her own identity on time, reducing self-judgment of others and accepting mistakes arising from her actions and others, the Wingfield family may become happier.

Therefore, the Enneagram is considered an intriguing alternative tool that can be used for analyzing and understanding characters. It also serves as a means of communication between directors and actors, enhancing mutual understanding. In the field of performing arts, the analysis and understanding of characters may serve as a starting point that is crucial for actors and those involved in acting. Nevertheless, high-quality performances that create belief



The 16th National and International Conference
 "Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2024"
 20 March, 2024



among viewers and effectively communicate the intended message of the script require dependence on several key factors, such as rehearsal, collaboration between actors and directors, and coordination among all production teams.

References:

Bland, A. M. (2010). The Enneagram: A Review of the Empirical and Transformational Literature. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education And Development*, 16.

Phooriwat Kittithunwiwat. (2565). *Enneagram and Emotional Intelligence*. (Master of Management Program in Management). The College of Management, Mahidol University.

Prien, H. E. (1998). *The Enneagram and the Actor: Using a system of Personality Typology in Character Analysis*.

Sakchai lamsaksin. (2562). Designing learning activities to develop acting skills with DISC Theory. (Master of Arts Program). Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

urbinner. (2022, May 6). *What is Enneagram? What are the characteristics of each type*. from <https://www.urbinner.com/post/what-is-enneagram>.

Williams, T. (1945). *The Glass Menagerie*, 749-784)