



## Mortals and Immortals' Conflict in Tad Williams's The Heart of What was Lost

Aveen Arshad Faris\*



\*Department of English Language,  
College of Languages, Salahaddin  
University-Erbil

[aveen.faris@su.edu.krd](mailto:aveen.faris@su.edu.krd)

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### Abstract

Conflict is a literary element that can be defined as a continuous struggle between two opposite forces, it has two main types which are external and internal conflicts. The novel under study is an epic fantasy set in Williams's legendary world of Osten Ard. It depicts the conflict between mortals and fairy people; serving a continuation of prior events between these two races.

The aim of the study is to explore the way Williams portrays conflict with its different types to reflect the negative consequences of war. The study is also an attempt to show how these conflicts reflect the agonies and ethical challenges of characters, and that war can only bring decay and shadow. It can be concluded that war results in different types of conflicts and, each of which lead to gloomy ends, to achieve this the text is thoroughly analyzed.



### About the Journal

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## 1. Introduction

In the world of literature, war has been a recurring theme since ancient times. As explained by Calloway in the world of literature war has existed since the first literary works were composed. She further elaborates scholars had explained that war was a dominant force in the works of the three earliest cultures: the Greeks, the Romans and the Hebrews. The culture of war is reflected in the works of Homer and Virgil. Even the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh which is considered to be the earliest piece of literature includes an epic battle. Therefore; war is constant in societies like the universal themes of love, death and time. The recent works of scholars regarding war only serve to remind us that war is still very much a contemporary issue (2020, p.1).

Sanborn claims that war literature, in the form songs, in verse, in narrative account, and in drama has a long history. Accounts of war in the novels and other narrative forms consistently appear on the American best-seller lists and can be found in the collection of public and academic libraries (2012, p.1).

Conflict in literature is characterized as the main struggle between characters or opposing forces, such as a man's struggle against society, nature, or himself. The exposition, or the start of the story, introduces the conflict and sets the stage for subsequent developments. Although some stories feature multiple conflicts, the protagonist or protagonists typically have to deal with one underlying fundamental conflict (Tucker, p. 1).

Tucker goes on to say that there are two main sorts of conflict: internal conflict and external conflict. When the protagonist battles with his own fears or struggles inside his own head, there is internal conflict. While the main characters' conflicts with other characters, society as a whole, or elements of nature, such as the weather or gods, constitute external conflict. (ibid)

According to Tucker, conflict is the catalyst for the main action, the reason why the climax occurs, and the reason why the main characters act in a particular way in response to their circumstances. Conflict also generates interest and suspense while keeping the plot moving forward steadily. Complex conflicts that demand character growth, adaptation, and reaction drive the plot forward. Conflict frequently brings out the best in characters and compels them to face their problems, but it doesn't always result in character resolution. They have to deal with the circumstances, endure the sufferings, and conquer the difficulties, for instance. When Odysseus reconciles with the Greek gods in the *Odyssey*, he ends his struggle with nature, elaborating the moral message of the story (p,1).

It can be stated that, conflict is an essential literary element in different literary genres and, it sets the events into motion. It is through these conflicts that the characters' true identities are revealed.

## 2. Races of Osten Ard

Like Tolkien's imaginary world of Middle Earth, Williams's Osten Ard is an imaginary world inhabited by many different races. Presented as a dark world in which the inhabitants are in a continuous struggle as they strive to survive. The races include the Rimmersmen who are like the Vikings, mighty fearless worriers, the Italianate who resemble the Anglo-Saxons and the Celt like Hernystiri. It is believed that long before the dwelling of mankind, Osten Ard was peopled by the undying Gardenborn who had built nine great cities long before the dwelling of men. According to old stories, it is believed that with the growing power of mankind, the immortal clans of Sithi, Norns and Niskes were driven away (Peoples of Osten Ard 1).

Throughout the pages of the work under study, we come across the Sithi and the Norns who play vital roles in the thematic development of the story. As mentioned previously, Osten Ard was inhabited by the Gardenborn clans before the coming of mankind and among the Gardenborn clans were the Sithi and the Norns who were once on the same side.

The Sithi were called "the peaceful ones", they called themselves "the Ziday'a" which means Children of Dawn. They had golden skin and golden eyes and white hair but often colored it. Their land was invaded by the mortal Rimmersmen and they were badly defeated and slaughtered.

Unlike the Sithi, the Norns never befriended mankind. After the death of their queen's (Utuk'ku) husband Ekimeniso and her son Drukhi, she swore revenge on mankind. They were known as "the Hikedaya" meaning Children of Cloud and they dwelt in Nakkiga. They were once one people with the Sithi but the events that happened to their queen affected their relationship. Their skin was corpse pale and their eyes were dark violet, their hair was white and they never dyed it. Both clans were served by another race known as the Niskies, peaceful race known as the Children of the Ocean or Tinukeda'ya (*Peoples of Osten Ard* pp1,2).

*The Heart of What was Lost* shows the continuous struggle between good and evil, each side of the conflict think that they are fighting for moral purposes yet, as time passes, they realize that there is no morality in war.

### 3. The Heart of. What was Lost

At the end of *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*, the storm king Iniluki and the Sithi joined him in bringing the human race to an almost certain end as the Earth was on the verge of destruction. Duke Isgrimnur and his soldiers are returning home from war when they notice a remnant of Norns fleeing back to their mountain in the North, so they pursue them with the intention of annihilating them. The Norns have fled to Nakkiga, an ancient citadel that holds the priceless artifact known as "The Heart of What Was Lost". The two armies engage in a weird and terrible dark war that is plagued by evil enchantments and poses a threat to the destruction of both sides. Both sides of the conflict attempt to survive, both dream of annihilating the other side, and seek personal acts of revenge for their losses. Both sides see the continuation of this conflict as horrible but essential to survival.

The novel was published 23 years after *To Green Angel Tower*.

Below are some samples from the text that show different kinds of conflict from different perspectives.

*It is always dreadful, waiting for the fighting to begin, Isgrimnur thought. But it was much worse when the enemy was unknowable as the Norns. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.30)*

Using the stream of consciousness technique, Williams shows the inner restless self of Isgrimnur's character as he is on his way to eliminate the remaining Norns. According to the passage, the duke thinks about this long-term conflict with the Norns, the words show his concern and fear in the face of the unknown because they have always considered the Norns as immortal eerie creatures. This selected passage also demonstrates Isgrimnur's inner feelings concerning an inevitable war, because they view it as a means of survival yet its negative impact and dark shadows will continue for ages and many generations shall carry the burden and this is presented by the author through employing the same technique in a way that it reveals the storms of struggle within the duke's mind concerning war.

*Wars do not end, he thought suddenly. They become stories, told to children. They become causes that are taken up by those who were not even born when the war started. But they don't end. We are a fierce race, we men. We will give up even our short, precious lives for revenge- no for justice. No wonder the immortals fear us. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.57)*

As he thinks about the Norns, his wife, and their son Isorn who was killed in the war against the storm king, he thinks of ways to end the enemy without his son being lost. All these may reflect his disagreement with the war yet it has become something essential to survive because both sides want to end the other side so that the war ends. Again, the duke's deep internal conflict is presented through the passage. The chosen words by the author show that the duke is against war, but his principles and duties both as a duke and a father who had lost his son in a war require him to defeat the enemy. The words (revenge--- justice) clarify his internal struggle. Revenge might be for Isorn's sake or for his land that had been occupied by the Norns. Though it might not be a noble cause to start an endless war, that's why he shifted to

use the word (justice) instead to justify his cause and to avoid the feeling of guilt about what losses it might cause. His thoughts reflect his agonies and ethical challenges due to an inevitable war and bloodshed.

At the Three Ravens Tower, as the mortals follow the Norns, deadly clashes between both forces occurs. Inside the tower, the Norns are attempting to defend themselves against Isgrimmur's forces. One of the images of this conflict is presented by the author as he explains: *A few White Foxes tried to hold the tower, but its portals had not been fairy-magicked and Rimmersgard axes soon splintered the doors and knocked them from their hinges. Terrible fights took place in the darkened stairwells and in the uppermost chamber between the great beaks, but at last the final Norn died, pinned against a wall by several spears. The besiegers dragged the pale creature's body to the hole in the bottom of the beak and shoved it through. It spun slowly down the long drop to the ground and bounced when it struck, like a discarded fish head. Thane Brindur had sustained many wounds but none of them were mortal. He licked his lips and grinned as one of the barber-surgeons cleaned and stitched the worst of them. "I told you," he growled. "Fairies can die like anyone else once you shove a yard of iron into them." Isgrimmur, who in his time had killed more than his share of Norns, did not bother to reply to Brindur's comment. "The rest of the White Foxes are gone. That was but a token force. I counted only a few score corpses. The rest have fled back to their city. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.81).*

This is an example of external conflict, and as it appears from the passage the Norns (White Foxes) have lost the battle and most of them have escaped, leaving only a few to distract and delay the mortal forces from chasing them to Nakkiga. According to the description given in the passage, a terrible battle occurs until the last Norn dies. This severe conflict reflects the darkness that the war causes and the destructions it brings.

Again, as the siege of Nakkiga begins, fierce battles occur. The author presents them in a dark, and horror framework, in a way that it provokes fear and suspense within the reader.

*But the Northmen were determined not to lose their chance to destroy the Hikeday's, and so they chose the best climbers from their ranks and set them to scale our great mountain and silence its defenders. Terrible battles took place along the steep mountain tracks, in its darker places, even before the steaming vents that gave forth forward from Nakkiga's flaming heart. And though our Sacrifices fought bravely, they were greatly outnumbered by the mortals, who could spend men like cheap coins, and at last the Northmen were able to bring their great war engine to the gates. Soon the Northmen had found nearly all of our tunnels along the mountainside, and many pitched battles were fought. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.113)*

The image is dark and bloody as the conflict continues as the words (pitched battles) show. This shows the determination of the Northmen to achieve their aim which lies in destroying the Hikeday'a. The Sacrifices fought back bravely as described in the passage, both words (determination – bravely) reflect the fierce conflict between the forces. The fighting then focuses on the area around the large Nakkiga gates.

As the image gets darker, one of the nobles of Nakkiga take it upon himself to save the city. He decides to go out and face the mortals choosing three scores of brave sacrifices, but they were outnumbered and destroyed. In another passage that shows this bloody conflict, Williams says:

*The mortals swarmed like rats, and though Nekhaneyo fought his way through their unending numbers until he had almost reached the Northmen's leader, he fell at last, hacked and almost bloodless, a few scant steps from the mortal duke. The rest of his brave Sacrifices were soon surrounded and pulled down. So ended Nekhaneyo's Ride, and it seemed at that moment that Nakkiga's doom was sealed. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.115)*

Mortals' march is described in a figurative way like swarming rats, this shows that their approach was so fast and in great numbers. The confrontation is heated up as Nekhaneyo



fighters fiercely to get to Northmen's leader. As the clash gets fiercer, the image gets darker and the doom of Nakkiga gets closer.

Another example of conflict presented in this epic fantasy is one with a revenant. This occurs in the third part during the siege of Nakkiga between Isgrimnur as he lays in a dark starless night, taken by nostalgia to his family. With his disturbed psychology and divided inner thoughts concerning the war. He drifts in and out of a dream about his son Isorn charging at a fence and running away as he does so, and behind him, nothing is visible save for darkness an endless pit, with the duke hopelessly trying to save him. Awoke helpless and speechless something hit his tent's side. The conflict as presented by the author is a horrifying, fearsome one because it was a dark night and the foe was unknown as described by the duke:

*.... A dark shape rose from the wreckage. For a brief moment the duke thought he had been right in his first guess, that it was a bear or some other large animal, the thing was crouched and hard to make out except for a gleam of broken teeth. Then it struggled upright and he could see it full in the starlight. It was man-shaped, draped in rags, dusted with snow and tattered until they were little more than cobwebs, but the eyes above the grinning jaws were empty black holes. Duke Isgrimnur had only a moment to gape at this incomprehensible apparition before it lurched toward him, muddy hand grabbing at the empty air. The duke lifted kvalnir and moved crabways, keeping the great blade between him and the dismal thing. The night was full of despairing cries, but when Isgrimnur called he heard no answering shouts, and he felt a moment of utter terror thinking all his men might have been attacked and killed in their sleep. The thing with no eyes stumbled toward him like a drunkard, head wagging, and jaws snapping loosely. ( The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.129.)*

The writer presents a dark image of a conflict with a revenant, the description raises fear and suspense. As the duke draws his sword, he recognizes that the bracelet on the creature's hand is a token that he had given to his soldiers after the battle of Hayholt. He was shocked to realize that the revenant was one of his own men.

The struggle with the revenant leads to a state of chaos in the camp. The darkness continues, along with fear, agony and disturbed psychology, in page (130) of the text the author explains the eerie struggle in a figurative way:

*Now the struggling figure looked like two men huddled in a single costume for some holiday merriment, neither half able to get the other to cooperate....The duke was unsettled to see how many of the shadowy shapes around him were not his living soldiers but corpses animated by witchcraft. He began shouting again for his men, but before any of them reached him he had to kill two more of the terrible things, including one that had only one leg but still hopped slowly after him with intent to murder.*

Terror was stealing the duke's breath surrounded only by darkness, fear and eerie corpses of his own men, corpses that were animated by witchcraft. Nonetheless, he fought back bravely by taking off their heads and cursing the Norns. The image presented reflects the decay and darkness brought by war, and the choices that the forces try to win over the other even if it takes to use the black art of witchcraft. The agony and fear it brings. The same kind of conflict is presented as Porto faces another revenant; again, dark and shadowy imagery is presented:

*A man shaped-figure came staggering toward him out of the dark. At first he thought it was some hideously wounded Northman- which, in a way, it was, although this one's wounds had killed days or weeks earlier. The thing barely had eyes, just gleaming wetness deep in the sockets, and its rotting shroud exposed gaping, bloodless wounds in its face and chest. The dead, he realized, but also strangely unsurprised. The Norns have raised the dead. Our dead. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.133)*

The first sentence raises suspense and fear as the movement of the man-shaped figure is described as looking hideous and staggering toward Porto, who becomes terrified and paralyzed with shock and fear as he finds out that the hideous creature was once a normal

human being. He fights bravely and kills it as he suddenly hears shouts of triumph, a word that brought a lost hope of peace and prosperity, a reaction that may show his inner conflicts concerning war, agonies, and a yearning desire to end the war which has been described as (a cold hell) by the author as he again uses dark images figuratively to fulfill his message. Williams further elaborates he says:

*In the gray before dawn, the mountainside looked like some mad artist's depiction of Hell itself- a cold hell, not a lake of fire, but a place of corpses- and near corpses slowly whitening beneath drifting snow. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.135)*

The rising of the dead is a gothic element, and it is used by the Norns as a means to defend themselves and distract the mortals and plant fear in them as the samples showed, they were terrified and shocked but they overcame that and continued their battles to obliterate the remaining Norns. Men soon rebuilt their troops, and as they surrounded the mountain, the duke asked for parley since due to difficulty of trying to get in their stronghold many more innocent blood must have been shed so a parley seemed a good way to end the bloody conflict and both sides apparently were convinced with it. Ultimately, this parley led Viyeki to discover a conspiracy being woven in darkness by his master Yaarike, the high magester of the order of builders, Muyare, marshal of sacrifices, and Akhenabi.

Viyeki went through sleepless nights, and long internal conflicts after the mysterious way the long war ended due to the mountainside collapse that led to the death of General Suno'ku. He lived in suspicion until he finally decided to confront his master about his dilemma. This is presented in part five of the book, "The Long Way Back".

*Viyeki knew that what he really needed was certainty, or at least understanding. What he needed was for all his painful, confused thoughts to give him some peace. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.175)*

This reflects the instability he was living in, restless nights and days, and his desire for peace and understanding may also have reflected his loneliness. What fed his doubts and fueled his internal conflict was the heirloom of Yaarike's family " The Heart of What was Lost" which the latter gave away to be buried with the empty coffin of Suno'ku. It remained a question that tormented Viyeki throughout all his waking hours.

*After a long day spent breathing stone-dust in the sweltering depths of the mountain, Viyeki wanted nothing more than to return to his house, to order and quiet. But Akhenabi's cryptic words gnawed at him, and he knew rest would be as elusive as it has been for many nights now. The only thing that might quiet his mind was finding answers to the questions that tormented him, though he knew hearing them might destroy his world. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.183)*

As the passage shows, Viyeki finally decided to face the bitter truth, even if it might destroy his world, because his struggle has reached a point where peace and rest have become elusive. The confrontation with Yaarike led Viyeki to a state of disillusionment and confusion. Muyare, Yaarike, and Akhenabi planned the plot to kill Sun'oku because they saw her as a challenge to their authority because she had a strong religious conviction and the ability to convince others of the truths she held dear. She was someone who would never give up the struggle against the mortals until no one of their people were left as explained by Yaarike as the following samples show:

*How could he live each day from now on knowing that all he had thought simple and true was instead as tangled and foul as the roots of a rotting tree? (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p.194)*

*Whatever might follow from this moment, everything had changed. (The Heart of What was Lost, 2017, p. 194)*

War has led Viyeki to go through both external and internal conflicts, restless nights and disturbed state of mind, confusion and disillusionment. but finally, he decides to accept it, transforming into a more confident character who can see around corners.

#### 4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The literary phrase "conflict" refers to a battle between two opposing forces. It is essential to the storytelling process in all literary works. As demonstrated by the current work under study, which includes internal and external forms, it can take many distinct shapes. The conflict is what propels each character in the novel, because it is through these conflicts that the characters are compelled to make their identities known.

In *The Heart of What was Lost* the basic conflict is between two different races that include mortals against fairy people known as Norns or, Hikedaya (Cloud Children) in a legendary place called Osten Ard. This conflict is presented by Williams in a fantasy and horror framework that plants seeds of fear and suspense within the reader.

The external and internal conflicts are presented through the choice of some samples from the text of the novel that reveals the agony of the characters, how their ethics are challenged as both sides of conflict strive for peace both physically and spiritually. They also explain the disappointment, destruction, decay and confusion brought by war and the yearning desire of both sides for peace and prosperity. War only leads to shadowy ends and gloomy roads.

Sluding when speaking with Isgrimnur at the end of the war said that he would like to by a farm. Farm symbolizes the peaceful environment that both races need to lead a normal, prosperous life. The case is the same with the Norns as Yaarike's explanation about conspiracy shows and it has already been discussed.

The researcher recommends the application of psychoanalytical criticism on the novels of Tad Williams since most of them are about war in an imaginary world so the application of such a theory reflects the negative consequences of war and violence on the psychology of the human being.

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## مملانی له نێوان مروف و نهمرهكان له رۆمانی دلی ئەوهی له دهست چوو ی تاد ویلامز

ئەفین ارشد فارس

بهشی زمانی ئنگلیزی، کۆلیژی زمان، زانکۆی سهلاحه ددین-ههولێر

aveen.faris@su.edu.kdr

### پوخته

مملانی له ئەدهیدا دهتوانرێت پیناسه بکریت و هک ئامیڕیکی ئەدهبی بۆ دهربرینی خۆراگرتنیک کهوا پالەوانی چیرۆکیکه بۆ گه‌یشتن به به ئامانج و خه‌ونه‌کانی دۆزیویوه. ناته‌با‌یه‌ک له‌وانیه دهستی دهره‌کی ئیدائیت یاخود له‌ناوخۆوه سه‌ره‌ه‌ل‌ب‌دات. له‌و کاته‌دا روده‌دات کاتیک ناکۆکی له‌گه‌ل سه‌روشتی ده‌وروبه‌ری هه‌ییت یاخود له‌گه‌ل خۆییت. (مملانه‌ی فه‌لسه‌فه له ئەدهب)

(دلی ئەوهی له‌دهست چوو) رۆمانیکی فاتنازیه و ناوه‌پۆکی داستانه‌که‌ی له‌دۆر ژیا‌نی ئەفسانه‌یی ویلامزی ئۆستن ئارده. چیرۆکه‌که باسی مملانی درێ‌خ‌یا‌ه‌نی ئیوان مروف و په‌ریه‌کاندا. له‌کاره‌ی له‌ژێر لیکۆلینه‌وه‌دا، روده‌دات له‌نیو سال دوا‌ی رۆمانه‌که درێ‌خ‌په‌ده‌ری روده‌دات پێشوی ئیوان ئەم دوو ره‌گه‌زه‌یه. ئامانجی توێژینه‌وه‌که بۆ نیشاندانی ئەو شێوازه‌یه که ویلامز مملانی به‌جۆره‌ جیا‌وازه‌کانی نیشانداده‌ت بۆ ئەوه‌ی دهر‌ئه‌نجامه نهرێ‌یه‌کانی شه‌په‌روه‌ها توێژینه‌وه‌ش یه‌کیکه له‌و رێ‌گایانه‌ی که نیشان ده‌دات چۆن ئەم مملانییه‌ په‌نگدانه‌وه‌ی ئازار و ته‌حه‌دای کاره‌که‌ره‌کانی هه‌ردوو‌لایه‌نی مملانی‌کان. و شه‌په‌ر ته‌نها خراپوون به‌دوا‌یدا‌یت. که ئەوه‌ش له‌ رێ‌گه‌ی شیکردنه‌وه‌ی ووردی ده‌قی رۆمانه‌که ده‌ب.

و شه سه‌ره‌تایه‌کان: مروف، نهمره‌کان، مملانی، فاتنازیا

## الصراع بين البشر و الخالدين في رواية قلب ما قد فقد لتاد ويليامز

افين ارشد فارس

قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية اللغات، جامعة صلاح الدين - اربيل

aveen.faris@su.edu.kdr

### ملخص

الصراع يعتبر وسيلة او اداة ادبية تستخدم لايضاح العقبات التي تواجه بطل القصة في طريقه لتحقيق اهدافه وأحلامه. النزاع يمكن ان يكون له مسببات خارجية او قد يكون بين الشخص وذاته. العمل قيد الدراسة هي رواية خيالية في عالم اوستن ارد لتاد ويليامز تتحدث عن الصراع بين البشر و الخالدين وهي تكملة لاحداث سابقة بين العرقين. الهدف من الدراسة هو إظهار الطريقة التي يصور بها ويليامز الصراع بأنواعه المختلفة ليعكس العواقب السلبية للحرب على الشخصيات. الدراسة هي أيضا محاولة لإظهار كيف تعكس هذه الصراعات الآلام والتحديات الأخلاقية للشخصيات من جانبي الصراع وأن الحرب لا يمكن إلا أن تؤدي إلى الاضمحلال والظلام. يتم ذلك عن طريق تحليل دقيق لنص الرواية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحرب ، البشر والخالدون ، الصراع، الفاتنازيا