

Multiple Intelligences Analysis in George Bamber's Return to Dust

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ABSTRACT

Multiple intelligences theory offers a framework to understand diverse cognitive abilities beyond traditional IQ. This study aims to explore the multiple intelligences of the main character, James Howard, in George Bamber's radio drama Return to Dust, using Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory. Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, the study transcribed and classified the character's monologues and dialogues to identify instances of linguistic, mathematic, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. The findings indicate that linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences are the most dominant, each accounting for 25% of the observed intelligences. Spatial and interpersonal intelligences each represent 15%, while mathematic and kinesthetic intelligence accounts for 10%. Naturalistic and musical intelligences were not found in this audio drama. This study shows that the main character uses linguistic intelligence through vivid figurative language, mathematic intelligence through rational thinking, and spatial and kinesthetic intelligence in dealing with physical changes. Interpersonal intelligence is seen from his interactions with other characters, while intrapersonal intelligence is reflected through self-awareness and emotional reflection. This study confirms drama as a medium that depicts diverse cognitive and emotional abilities, expanding the understanding of intelligence in literature

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a kind of writing that expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings and attitudes toward life (Rees, 1973). According to Sutardi (2011:4) in Hasibuan et al. (2022) literary work is an expression of human that include of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, spirit and belief in a form of illustration of life, which can arouse fascination with language and described in written form. Common literary work is the imitation of what happens in real life. It can be seen through the main topic that literary work usually consists in that mostly brings up the issues in real life, such as social, culture, slice of life, love, friendship and others. Based on the explanation above, literary work is any writing or verbal work that is used to be a tool to deliver the feelings, expressions and ideas. Literary work can be written in the form of fiction such as short stories and novels, also be performed as drama.

The word "drama" is derived from the Greek which is δράμα (drama), means action, deed or play. According to Ferdinand Brunetierre, drama is one a kind of literary work performed through movement or action that evoke or hook the audience by its plot. While Tarbiyah et al. (2024) mentioned that according to Longley (2019), in literature, drama is the stage performance of written dialogue to depict events, either fictional or non-fictional. Also mentioned that as reported by Betti (2015) every tragedy contains six components in order to be considered good which are

(1) plot, (2) character and (3) thought, which explains the tragedy's goals aim to accomplish, (4) spectacle, which demonstrate how it attends to accomplish the goals, and (5) dictation, and (6) music which tells the means must be used. Drama in literature has the power of live performance that invites the audience to feel the emotion and the feelings made in the plot through the act of the players, the dialogue and the expressions from the players and the other six elements of the drama play.

As mentioned by Longley (2019) that drama could be either fictional of non-fictional and one of the examples of fictional drama is *Return to Dust* by George Bamber. *Return to Dust* is a science fiction drama in a form of radio play that tells about a scientist named James Howard as its core of plot. The drama starts with the voice of James Howard recording a tape for Dr. Bader which is his colleague, telling him that Howard is getting shrinking by the time. It happens because Howard accidentally exposes himself to a kind of chemical that causing him to shrink uncontrollably. James Howard records the tape in order to let Dr. Bader know where will Howard be after the shrinking process, also to instruct Dr. Bader to do some procedures that might reverse the effect of shrinking. At the end of the drama, Howard tells that Dr. Bader must publish the thesis under James Howard Howard's name, not Dr. Bader's name, then Howard shouts out loudly until no voice left and the drama ends.

In George Bamber's *Return to Dust* with the scientist as the core, it shows the application of intelligence as the characterization. Intelligence is a fundamental ability that sets humans apart from other animal species. Despite its importance in defining human behaviour, the neural networks responsible for intelligence are not well understood (Hearne et al. 2016). Intelligence is often

associated with cognitive abilities, such as problem solving. Sadiku et al. (2020) stated that through intelligence, humans can do many things such as learning, reasoning, applying logic, recognizing patterns, solving problems, making decision, retaining information, managing emotions, and using language to communicate. Gebremeskel et al. (2024) stated that intelligence is natural as well as nurtured. Human intelligence is regarded as any information that can be gathered from human sources. It involves learning from previous experiences. Another definition of intelligence is defined as something that can be found, adapted, shaped, and can choose context (Sternberg, 2014). This could be from education, work experiences, or a situation one goes through. According to Barbey (2018), intelligence arises from the small-world topology of brain networks and the dynamic reorganization of its community structure, facilitating system-wide flexibility and adaptation.

Furthermore, Xiong (2025) mentioned that Gardner (1983) believes that the traditional definition of intelligence does not fully cover all kinds of abilities shown by human beings. Gardner proposed the existence of eight separate intelligences (Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Naturalist and Spatial). Multiple Intelligence Theory in 1983, as was revealed by Dr. Howard Gardner, accepted all over the world today in the theory of multiple intelligences people have at least one of these eight types of intelligence that is to say (Kılıç and Sert, 2015). Each of these cognitive competencies were independent of each other, so that the same individual might be strong in one intelligence but weak in another one (Ferrero et al. 2021). According to Gardner, these intelligence domains are equal. (Ahmad, 2022).

George Bamber's *Return to Dust* consists of dialogues and monologues. An example of multiple intelligences is in the dialogue:

Miss Pritchard (on phone): "Hello?"

James Howard: "Miss Pritchard! Can you hear me? Get Dr. Bader!"

Miss Pritchard: "Mr. Howard? Hello?"

James Howard: "I'm on top of the desk! The phone fell on the floor! I'm only six inches tall! You've got to get me help!"

Miss Pritchard: "Hello...are you there, Mr. Howard?"

James Howard: "Yes, I'm here!"

Contextually, the dialogue happens when Miss Pritchard finally calls Howard and at this moment, Howard was so small and could not reach for the phone on the floor while Howard was on the desk. Miss Pritchard could not hear Howard's voice because he was so small. This dialogue shows that Howard has the ability of interpersonal intelligence, proved by the sentence in bold, "Yes, I'm here!" where Howard is able to recognize the tone of Miss Pritchard and response it. George Bamber's *Return to Dust* also consists of monologues in the drama, an example of multiple intelligences is in the monologue:

James Howard: "I almost gave up when you hung up, Dr. Bader. But then I remembered a simple law of mathematics. No matter how much you divide a thing, there's STILL something left!"

The context of this monologue is a moment where James Howard is recording some messages for Dr. Bader. At that time, the secretary of Dr. Bader called Howard eventually, but the phone fell down to the floor while Howard had become so small. Howard is so upset, until he does something to cheer up by remembering a simple law of mathematics. Theoretically, the way Howard said the phrase in bold “a simple law of mathematics” indicates that Howard poses the logical-mathematic intelligence which is included in the Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences theory. This theory will be explained more detail in the literature review.

Multiple intelligences or MI theory is commonly used in education to help develop the abilities of the students, for instance in a previous research done by Gomez and Garcia (2020) used film to be analyzed by the students that can develop their multiple intelligences as proposed in the MI theory by Howard Gardner. A research done by Simanjuntak, et al. (2023) used MI theory to analyze the intelligences that a character possessed in 2009 film entitled “An Education” and it is found that the character is superior in some intelligences, such as linguistic, logical-mathematics, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. The other research, Martins (2024) used the MI theory to analyze the English text-book and found out that the text-book accommodate all kinds of multiple intelligences. Another similar research by Saracoglu (2024) analyze a chapter in student’s English text-book using the context of MI theory. Multiple intelligences theory is currently used in linguistic to analyze the language feature. Another similar research was done by Fadhil and Prastiwi (2024) that uses MI theory to analyze a 2010 movie “The Karate Kid” and it is found out that this movie possesses the potential of teaching multiple intelligences for the audience.

The signs of intelligences that the character possessed in this drama and throughout the plot, the researchers are interested in conducting a study entitled “Multiple Intelligences Analysis in George Bamber’s Return to Dust”. This study explores the multiple intelligence in a drama play entitled “Return to Dust” by George Bamber, specifically identifies the types of multiple intelligences that its character possessed. The character of drama being analyzed is the scientist James Howard Howard. The difference between this study and the previous studies is that the previous studies used the theory to analyze a textbook for educational purpose and to analyze a film, while this study explores the use of multiple intelligences theory in a drama.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, revolutionized the understanding of human intellect by suggesting that people have not one, but eight or more distinct intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2006b, 2006c). Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, and Gardner (2011) explain that these intelligences are used by individuals, both independently and together, to produce meaningful creations and solve problems relevant to their societies. The theory identifies a range of intelligences. These include linguistic, logical- mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-

kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1999). Gardner's framework identifies the following eight intelligences:

Linguistic Intelligence

This intelligence involves the ability to analyze information and create products using oral and written language, such as speeches, books, and memos (Gardner, 1999). Individuals with strong linguistic intelligence often demonstrate excellent verbal skills, a rich vocabulary, and a talent for writing and storytelling. Example: In drama *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller Dialogue

Proctor : "I have given you my soul leave me my name!"

Danforth : "Quail not before God's judgment in this, sir."

Proctor : "You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs!"

The words "soul" and "name" are abstract and symbolic, reflecting identity, moral integrity, and reputation. The verbs "given" and "leave" indicate intentional actions. This sentence shows the ability to use language effectively, so it is included in Linguistic Intelligence.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

This intelligence is characterized by the ability to develop equations and proofs, perform calculations, and solve abstract problems (Gardner, 1999). People with high logical-mathematical intelligence excel at reasoning, recognizing patterns, and thinking deductively.

Example: In drama *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard Dialogue

Valentine : "If you could stop time, perfectly, and you knew all the position of all the atoms in the universe, you could compute the entire past and future but you can't, and that's the problem."

Hannah : "Is that what you do?"

Valentine : "No, I'm just talking. It's what they do. Theoretical physics. Cosmology. It's proper turn-on."

These words relate to scientific and mathematical concepts such as time, space, particles, and calculations. Valentine explains determinism and the limitations of human knowledge. The word "compute" indicates a logical and mathematical process, reflecting the ability to think abstractly and logically, so it is included in Logical-Mathematical Intelligence.

Spatial Intelligence

This intelligence involves the ability to recognize and manipulate both large-scale and fine-grained spatial images (Gardner, 1999). Individuals with strong spatial intelligence are often adept at visual thinking, map reading, and artistic creation.

Example: In drama *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams Monologue

Blanche: "I lived in a world of atmosphere...I don't know how else to put it. Delicate perfume of blooming jonquils and the music of the sky I used to pretend that I was the queen of the Nile!"

The words "Atmosphere," "perfume," "jonquils," and "music of the sky" evoke the senses of smell, sight, and hearing, creating spatial and imaginative experiences. The phrase "queen of the Nile" also triggers visualizations of places

and roles. The ability to form these mental images demonstrates Spatial Intelligence.

Musical Intelligence

This intelligence is the capacity to produce, remember, and make meaning of different patterns of sound (Gardner, 1999). Those with high musical intelligence demonstrate sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, melody, and tone.

Example: In drama *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare.

Dialogue:

Feste: "O mistress mine, where are you roaming? O, stay and hear; your true love's coming. That can sing both high and low. Trip no further, pretty Sweeting Journeys end in lovers' meeting. Every wise man's son doth know." Words like "roaming," "sing," and "trip" have melodic qualities and form the rhythm, rhyme, and tone of the song. The arrangement of the lyrics in verse and rhyme indicates Musical Intelligence.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

This intelligence involves the ability to use one's own body to create products or solve problems (Gardner, 1999). People with strong bodily-kinesthetic intelligence often exhibit excellent physical coordination, dexterity, and athletic prowess.

Example: In drama *The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project.

Dialogue

(Stage Direction): "Jedediah Schultz enters and paces agitatedly."

Jedediah: "I don't know. I just...I feel like I need to be doing something. I need to be moving or..."

Words like "Enters" and "paces agitatedly" describe physical movement and emotion through stage instructions. Actors convey meaning through body language, demonstrating Kinesthetic Intelligence.

Naturalistic Intelligence

Added in the mid-1990s, this intelligence allows individuals to identify and distinguish among different types of plants, animals, and weather formations found in the natural world (Gardner, 1999). Individuals with high naturalistic intelligence possess a keen awareness of their environment and a passion for nature.

Example: In drama *August: Osage County* by Tracy Lett.

Dialogue

Beverly : "The heat is awful. Just awful. It's like the devil's armpit out there."

Violet : "Don't talk about the heat. I'm roasting alive in here."

The word "Heat" and the phrase "devil's armpit" indicate sensitivity to extreme natural conditions. "Out there" reflects environmental awareness. This ability indicates the presence of Naturalist Intelligence.

Interpersonal Intelligence

This intelligence is the ability to recognize and understand other people's moods, desires, motivations, and intentions (Gardner, 1999). People with strong interpersonal intelligence are typically empathetic, socially skilled, and effective communicators.

Example: In drama *Glengarry Glen Ross* by David Mamet Dialogue

Ricky : "You know what it takes to sell real estate?"

Shelly : "What?"

Ricky : "Brass balls."

The words "Sell," "real estate," and the phrase "brass balls" reflect an understanding of social dynamics, motivation, and strategy in a persuasive context. This indicates the presence of Interpersonal Intelligence.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

This intelligence involves the ability to recognize and understand one's own moods, desires, motivations, and intentions (Gardner, 1999). Individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence are often introspective, self-aware, and independent.

Example: In drama Hamlet by William Shakespeare Dialogue

Hamlet : "To be or not to be, that is the question Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them."

Words such as "nobler," "mind," "suffer," and the metaphors "slings and arrows" and "sea of troubles" indicate deep introspection and self-awareness. This reflects Intrapersonal Intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design. According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive research is particularly useful for obtaining straightforward answers to questions relevant to practitioners and policy makers. It aims to describe, interpret, and understand phenomena based on the perceptions and meanings held by participants or subjects within a specific context. In this study, the method is used to analyze the presence of Multiple Intelligences, as proposed by Howard Gardner, in the radio drama Return to Dust written by George Bamber. The research focuses on how different types of intelligence are reflected through the characters' monologues and dialogues, as well as their actions. This approach is chosen due to its suitability for interpreting both textual and spoken data from a literary work. The primary data source is the script and audio performance of the radio drama Return to Dust from the CBS Radio Suspense series. The analysis began with the transcription of all spoken monologues and dialogues in the audio drama, which served as the raw data. These transcriptions were then examined to identify and classify segments that demonstrate one or more of the eight types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, naturalist, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Each identified excerpt was analyzed within its context, considering the speaker's intention, the situation in which the utterance occurs, and relevant background information. Finally, the excerpts were mapped onto Gardner's Multiple Intelligences framework, with each categorization supported by theoretical justification based on the defining characteristics of the corresponding intelligence type.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No.	Types of Multiple Intelligences	Quantity	Percentage
1.	Linguistic Intelligence	5	25%
2.	Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	2	10%
3.	Spatial Intelligence	3	15%
4.	Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence	2	10%
5.	Interpersonal Intelligence	3	15%
6.	Intrapersonal Intelligence	5	25%
7.	Naturalistic Intelligence	0	0%
8.	Musical Intelligence	0	0%
Total		20	100%

Linguistic Intelligence

Monologue:

James Howard: "All you have to do, Dr. Bader, is just look – look to see me. My world is such a different place now. Books are as huge as buildings, and pencils seem like telephone poles.

Contextually, this monologue happens when James Howard is getting shrinking into a really small size that Howard is almost cannot be seen anymore, and Howard is still recording a message for Dr. Bader. Theoretically, Howard poses the linguistic intelligence proved by the sentence in bold "Books are as huge as buildings, and pencils seem like telephone poles" which uses the figurative language simile by comparing the books to buildings, also comparing the pencils to telephone holes.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Monologue:

James Howard: "As you are not at home, and have not yet arrived at your office, it occurred to me there exists a distinct possibility that I might not be able to contact you before it becomes too late. I calculate that if I continue to shrink at my present rate of speed, it is possible that I will become invisible to the human eye sometime before midnight."

Contextually, this monologue is the moment after James Howard tries to contact Dr. Bader, but the call is picked up by the secretary and Dr. Bader is still unreachable. At this time, Howard is recording to instructs Dr. Bader as a way to stay alive. Theoretically, James Howard's response is an example of logical-mathematical intelligence proved by the state, "I calculate that if I continue to shrink at my present rate of speed, it is possible that I will become invisible to the human eye sometime before midnight," where James Howard employed quantitative reasoning and inductive logic in his effort to face an unusual and unexplainable phenomenon and also to understand his condition. Therefore, through the coordination of observation, pattern recognition and abstract thinking within a situation or context of real personal crisis highlight that Howard possesses the logical-mathematical intelligence.

Spatial Intelligence

Monologue:

James Howard: "I'll have everything I ever dreamed of. But not unless Dr. Bader gets the instructions. So, I'll resume taping. But I can't reach the start button on the recorder! These books...they're like a grand staircase to the tape deck!"

Contextually, this monologue happens when James Howard expresses his sad feeling by saying that he could have his world better after the things Howard achieved, particularly his own thesis. However, it seems so hard to be true because Howard becomes so small that time. Because of it, the desperation is cast away by Howard and it cheers him up to keep on trying, to keep on recording a message for Dr. Bader. Then, he tries to reach for the start button of the tape, but everything is so big at this time. Theoretically, this monologue reflects the spatial intelligence, proved by the sentence in bold "these books... they're like a grand staircase to the tape deck!" that shows the ability to visualize the space and size of another object that similarly looks like the object Howard is looking at.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

Monologue:

James Howard: "Who would think... I would have to use both hands... to dial a telephone."

Contextually, this monologue happens when Howard already becomes extremely small, but Howard has not given up yet at this time and still tries to contact Dr. Bader by dialing the telephone. The problem happens that time is that Howard is smaller than the telephone until Howard figures out the correct way which is using both hands to dial a telephone to Dr. Bader. Theoretically, this monologue displays bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, proved by the sentence in bold "I would have to use both hands... to dial a telephone" showing that Howard is aware of how the smaller body interacts with the environment around him shows how sensitive he is to his physical condition. Howard does the problem solving by observing the size of a phone that appears larger than he is and then attempting to adjust his hand movements accordingly. Howard demonstrates remarkable bodily intelligence through adaptability and fine coordination. This all reflects the strong connection between thought and movement, which is a clear sign of kinesthetic intelligence.

Interpersonal Intelligence

Dialogue:

James Howard: "Now, look, don't pull that "Dr. Bader isn't in" stuff with me. You tell Dr. Bader I HAVE to talk with him!"

Miss Pritchard: "I'm Sorry, Mr. Howard, he's not in"

James Howard: "Look, this is a matter of life and death!"

Miss Pritchard: "I'll tell him when he gets in. Is there anything I can do?"

James Howard: "There's nothing ANYONE can do but Dr. Bader. He's the only man in the world that can help me."

This dialogue takes place during James Howard's initial contact with Miss Pritchard, the secretary, at a moment when he is not yet fully become small but has only begun the process of shrinking. Despite the surreal nature of his physical transformation, Howard retains a strong sense of urgency and rationality in his

communication. Theoretically, this moment reveals Howard's interpersonal intelligence, as highlighted by his emotionally charged plea: "He's the only man in the world that can help me." This statement, though brief, is packed with psychological and communicative significance. In a high-stress situation, Howard instinctively shifts from a logical appeal to an emotional one. His tone becomes increasingly imploring, reflecting his ability to adapt his language and emotional cues to fit the situation. Even though the interaction is mostly one-sided, with Miss Pritchard providing limited response, Howard subtly calibrates his speech to sympathy and prompt action. His capacity to interact effectively under pressure, while navigating complex emotional states, demonstrates his sensitivity to human relationships and social cues as key markers of interpersonal intelligence.

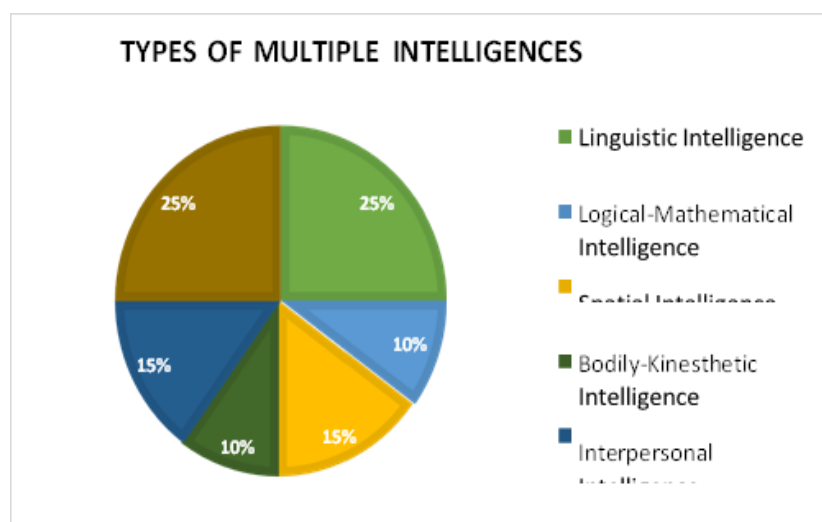
Intrapersonal Intelligence

Monologue:

James Howard: "I wonder what my world will look like if no-one ever finds me. Oh yes, Dr. Bader, the slide under the microscope is labelled carefully. Of all the slides I've labelled in my lifetime, I hardly thought the last a one might become my epitaph"

Contextually, this monologue happens when Howard is preparing for making a label on a petri dish to mark that he will be inside it soon when he becomes so small. Howard also mentions the position of the elements needed, so that it will not be difficult for Dr. Bader to help him reverse the changes on his body. Theoretically, in this monologue, Howard possesses the intrapersonal intelligence, proved by the phrase in bold "I hardly thought that the last one might become my epitaph" shows that Howard is so afraid of being gone by using the word epitaph which reflect the symbol of death.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



This study confirms that the application of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory in *Return to Dust* by George Bamber plays a significant role in uncovering the intellectual and emotional layers of the main character, James Howard. Through the character's monologues and dialogues in the drama

presents eight types of intelligences in varying proportions. The analysis reveals that linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences are the most dominant, each appearing at 25%. This dominance indicates that the drama heavily relies on introspective reflection and the power of language to convey the character's emotional journey and psychological transformation. The use of strong figurative language and introspective thoughts illustrates how the narrative employs verbal expression and self-awareness to build character depth and evoke emotional resonance from the audience. The analysis also reveals that logical-mathematical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences are the least frequently represented, each accounting for only 10%. This suggests that rational thinking, scientific reasoning, and physical adaptation to environmental changes are not the central aspects of the story's development. Nevertheless, these elements still contribute to character portrayal, as seen when James Howard attempts to logically comprehend his shrinking condition or physically adapt in order to survive. In conclusion, *Return to Dust* is a drama that predominantly conveys its conflicts and themes through the strength of language and the internal understanding of its main character. The intelligences portrayed do not merely reflect intellectual capacity but also reveal how human beings confront extreme changes with expression, awareness, and emotional resilience. The dominance of linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences positions this drama as a literary work that emphasizes psychological and emotional dimensions rather than logical or physical actions.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research is needed related to the topic of Multiple Intelligences Analysis in George Bamber's *Return to Dust* in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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