

**SOCIAL CONFLICT OF THE MAIN CHARACTER
PORTRAYED IN BARRIE'S *PETER PAN***



A Thesis

*Submitted to Faculty of Cultural Science Hasanuddin University in Partial
Fulfillment to Obtain Sarjana Degree In English Department*

WRITTEN BY

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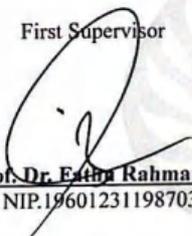
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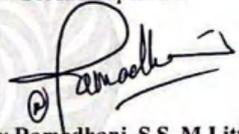
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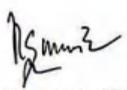

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The undergraduate thesis by **DISSA FARADILA DJASMIN (F041201124)** entitled **Social Conflict Of The Main Character Portrayed In Barrie's *Peter Pan*** has been revised as advised during the examination on Friday, July 5th 2024 and has been approved by the Board of Undergraduate Thesis Examiners.

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LEGITIMATION

LEGITIMATION

THESIS

SOCIAL CONFLICT OF THE MAIN CHARACTER PORTRAYED IN BARRIE'S

PETER PAN

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On Friday, July 5th 2024 , the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by **DISSA FARADILA DJASMIN (F041201124)** entitled **Social Conflict Of The Main Character Portrayed In Barrie's *Peter Pan*** submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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Makassar, 5th July 2024

The Writer,

Dissa Faradila Djasmin



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| COVER | i |
| APPROVAL FORM | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| DECLARATION | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| LEGITIMATION | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| AGREEMENT | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | vii |
| ABSTRACT | xii |
| ABSTRAK..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER I..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Identification of the Problem | 4 |
| 1.3 The Scope of the Problem..... | 5 |
| 1.4 Statement of the Problem..... | 5 |
| 1.5 Objective of the Study | 5 |
| 1.6 Sequence of Chapter | 5 |
| CHAPTER II | 7 |
| Previous Study..... | 7 |
| Structuralism Approach | 10 |



| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.3 Social Conflict Theory..... | 18 |
| CHAPTER III..... | 23 |
| 3.1 Research Methodology | 23 |
| 3.2 Source of Data..... | 23 |
| 3.3 Method of Collecting Data..... | 23 |
| 3.4 Technique of Data Analysis | 24 |
| 3.5 Procedures of Data Collection | 24 |
| CHAPTER IV | 26 |
| 4.1 Structural Aspect of the Novel Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie. | 26 |
| 4.2 The Social Conflict portrayed in the main character Peter Pan | 43 |
| 4.3 The Problem Solving of Main Character Social Conflict..... | 52 |
| CHAPTER V..... | 60 |
| 5.1 Conclusion | 60 |
| 5.2 Suggestion..... | 61 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 62 |
| APPENDICES..... | 64 |



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ABSTRAK

Dissa Faradila Djasmin. 2024. Konflik Sosial pada Tokoh Utama dalam *Peter Pan* karya Barrie. (Dibimbing oleh **Fathu Rahman** dan **Rezky Ramadhani**)

Penelitian ini membahas penokohan dalam novel *Peter Pan* yang mengisahkan perjalanan kehidupan Peter Pan, seorang anak laki-laki yang menolak untuk tumbuh dewasa dan selalu berpetualang, menikmati kehidupan yang bebas. Melalui petualangannya, Peter bertemu dengan berbagai makhluk dengan karakter dan kepribadian yang berbeda, dari mana dia belajar banyak hal berharga. Studi ini berfokus pada konflik sosial yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Peter Pan, dan menganalisis bagaimana dia menghadapi masalah-masalah tersebut sebagai bentuk mawas diri dan pedoman hidup manusia.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan strukturalisme murni untuk menganalisis unsur intrinsik seperti penokohan, alur, latar, dan tema. Selain itu, teori konflik sosial dari Lewis A. Coser digunakan sebagai landasan untuk menganalisis masalah sosial yang terjadi pada tokoh utama dalam novel *Peter Pan*. Metode kualitatif dan deskriptif juga digunakan untuk menganalisis data penelitian yang diambil dari novel tersebut.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa masalah sosial umum seperti konflik terkait tema pertumbuhan, peran gender, perebutan kekuasaan, kecemburuan, dan ketakutan akan kedewasaan. Penulis juga menemukan cara tokoh utama mengatasi masalah sosial tersebut melalui pemahaman, memaafkan, berperilaku adil, dan tidak egois.

Kata Kunci : *Masalah Sosial, Pendekatan Strukturalisme, Peter Pan.*



ABSTRACT

Dissa Faradila Djasmin. 2024. Social Conflict of the Main Character Portrayed in Barrie's *Peter Pan*. (Supervised by **Fathu Rahman** and **Rezky Ramadhani**)

This research discusses the characterization in the novel *Peter Pan*, which narrates the journey of Peter Pan, a boy who refuses to grow up and constantly seeks adventure, enjoying a free-spirited life. Through his adventures, Peter encounters various beings with different characters and personalities, from whom he learns valuable lessons. The study focuses on the social conflicts experienced by the main character, Peter Pan, and analyzes how he addresses these issues as a form of self-awareness and guidance for human life.

The research employs pure structuralism to analyze intrinsic elements such as characterization, plot, setting, and theme. It also utilizes Lewis A. Coser's theory of social conflict to examine the social issues faced by the main character in the novel *Peter Pan*. Additionally, the study uses qualitative and descriptive methods to analyze the research data, which is derived from the novel itself.

The results reveal several common social issues, including conflicts related to themes of growing up, gender roles, power struggles, jealousy, and the fear of adulthood. The writer also identifies how the main character resolves these social conflicts through understanding, forgiveness, fairness, and selflessness.

Keywords: *Social Conflict, Structuralism Approach, Peter Pan.*



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains how the writer chooses a literary work, namely *Peter Pan* by Barrie. The writer explains the introduction of the research, which consists of background of the study, identification of the problem, the scope of the problem, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, and sequence of the chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

Literature, as an artistic way of expressing human experiences, has always been closely connected to society. Through its various forms—such as novels, plays, poetry, and essays—literature not only mirrors the social conditions of its time but also delves into the complexities of human nature and societal structures. M.H. Abrams, a well-known literary theorist and critic, emphasized literature's role in capturing the spirit of its time. In his book *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Abrams argues that literature acts both as a mirror, reflecting the social realities and conflicts of its era, and as a lamp, shedding light on human experiences and providing insights into social issues (1958: 52). He asserts that literature is deeply embedded in its social and cultural context, playing a crucial role in examining and sometimes challenging social conflicts. Agreeing that literature is intertwined with society and conflict means recognizing its multifaceted role in reflecting



realities, exploring important issues, influencing public opinion, giving marginalized voices, and fostering empathy. Literature is not just an artistic expression; it is a powerful tool for understanding and addressing

the complexities of human society. Through its diverse narratives, literature continues to highlight the conflicts that shape our world, offering both reflection and potential solutions for change.

Literary works are divided into several types with various genres. One of them is Children's Literature, which work intended for children as a reading medium adapted to their interests and age categories. Even though children's literature intended for children, it can be enjoyed by adult. The value of literature is not diminished by the intended audience; however, if children's literature is read by adults, there will be deep meaning and nostalgia for them. In addition, there will be a perspectives and point of view from adults regarding the actions or events in the literary works. According to (Oby, 2010: 3), Children's literature, seems to rest on three criterias: The first is whether the heroes are children or teenagers. This has to do with the main character being relatable to the readers—the children themselves—so that they can understand the story. The second is whether the themes, ideas, relationships, and language, are simple or complex. Simple because it uses language that is light and easy to comprehend for both children and adults, and complicated for children but understandable by adults due to its distinctive speech that employs various systematic patterns to express all essential words in literary works. Thirdly, moral lessons are often taught in children's literature. Children's literature is a powerful tool for teaching moral lessons to young readers. It is not only entertain but also educate, helping children

important values and principles that will guide them throughout their



The object of the writer's research is children's literature entitled *Peter Pan*, which was written by one of the Scottish writers named J.M. Barrie, born in Kirriemuir, Angus, Scotland, on May 19, 1860. *Peter Pan* was published in 1911. J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* tells the story of the adventures of a boy named Peter Pan who lives in Neverland, a magical island where children never grow up. Peter Pan is magical and has the ability to fly. Peter Pan then visits the Darling family home in London. There, he meets Wendy Darling and his brothers, John and Michael. Peter Pan is intrigued by the adventure stories that Wendy tells his younger siblings and invites them to come to Neverland with him. However, they are confronted by the evil Mr. Hook who hinders their adventure.

Personally, the writer has loved this *Peter Pan* story since childhood. The story itself are so unique for the writer's childhood memories. There are tons of children's stories around us, and one of them is the children's story of *Peter Pan*. Every child knows and understands the general story of *Peter Pan*, but as we grow up, we understand that there are complex ideas within the novel itself. This *Peter Pan* novel is worth analyzing because there are many problems that occur in the story, such as psychological aspects, gender and identity issues, romantic aspects, and social conflict issues. Therefore, the author is interested in analyzing social conflicts happen in main character Peter Pan in the novel because the novel describes social conflicts that often occur in the real world.

Social conflict in literature refers to the portrayal of conflicts stemming from moral issues and tensions within the narrative. It explores clashes between social groups like classes, races, genders, or cultures, shedding light on



struggles, injustices, and power imbalances in society. Through these, literature prompts reflection on social structures, human experiences, and the complexities of societal dynamics.

Therefore, it is important to have an understanding of the various interpretations of conflict and this novel tells about several social conflicts in human life, such as those carried out by Peter Pan himself, which will make readers think about how to solve the problems they are facing. The writer also assumes that social conflict has the power to influence behavior, thoughts, attitudes, and relationships with character Peter Pan to other characters in the novel.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

After reading the novel *Peter Pan* by Barrie, she identified many problems that could be analyzed :

1. Psychological aspect, which comes from the personality of the main Characters that determined by Id, Ego, and Superego.
2. The Gender roles aspect to understand the main character's understanding of gender in two different settings.
3. The Romantic aspect focuses on the feelings and emotions built up in the main character.
4. The Social Conflict aspect focuses on discussing the social conflict experienced in the novel.



1.3 The Scope of the Problem

The writer will try to focus on analyzing the social conflict in the novel. This research is limited to the kinds and causes of social conflict studies by using the theory functions of Social Conflict by Lewis A. Coser (1956) in Barrie's novel *Peter Pan*.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

These are the problems that will be analyzed in this research based on their scope:

1. What are the types of social conflict that occur in main character Peter Pan in Barrie's novel *Peter Pan*?
2. How does the main character resolve their conflict?

1.5 Objective of the Study

The writer hopes the problems above can be addressed by these objectives:

1. To identify the types of social conflict that happen in the main character of Barrie's novel *Peter Pan*.
2. To explain the ways of the main character in solving their social conflict.

1.6 Sequence of Chapter

The present study contains five chapters, which explain the social conflict portrayed by the main character in the novel *Peter Pan*. Chapter One serves as an introductory chapter, covering the research background, problem identification, scope of the problem, research question, and writing sequence to provide an



of the study. Chapter Two is a literature review, providing an in-depth of previous research and theories that serve as a foundation for the

subsequent analysis. Chapter Three outlines the methods employed by the writer in analyzing the novel, including data collection and analysis methods. Chapter Four presents the analysis of the object of research, namely the social conflict portrayed by the main character in the novel *Peter Pan*. Finally, Chapter Five provides a conclusion and recommendations based on the data analyzed in the previous chapter.



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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explain the previous study which related with to the writer's research and explains how the writer chooses a theoretical basis that uses structuralism approach with social conflict theory.

2.1 Previous Study

In an effort to support research that has in-depth and maximal analysis results, the inclusion of relevant research results is needed. The following are some of the results of studies that were found to be relevant to the current research.

Sari (2013), in her thesis *A study of anxiety as depicted in the main character in Peter Pan novel by J.M. Barrie*. The researcher used a qualitative description using psychoanalytic approach of Freud. In her research, she mentions that the objectives of this research are to analyzes Peter Pan's anxiety in the novel and how Peter uses defense mechanisms to cope with his anxiety. The result of the study explains that the study problem is to be solved. Sari's conclusion is that when anxiety emerges, it is not always should be repressed because someday it could emerge again in oppression and bullying. Because the victims bring the anxiety-feeling unconscious mind with them until they grow up.

Hanna (2016) analyzes the conflict between the main characters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood. In her research entitled *An Analysis of the Main Characters' Conflicts in Jane Austen Novel Entitled "Sense and Sensibility,"* the researcher used a qualitative description using the objective structuralism



approach in the novel by looking at the classifications and characteristics in the novel. In her research, she mentions that the objectives of this research are that she wants to analyze the conflict experienced by the main characters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, to find out the problems faced by the main characters in the novel and also the resolution of the problems in the novel. The results of the study explain that Hanna's analysis social and psychological conflicts that happen to the main characters, Elinor and Marianne, and the problem-solving of the main characters. Hanna's concluded that finally some conflicts that happened to Elinor and Marianne, could be solved well so that Elinor and Marianne could love together with their mother and younger sister happily at Delaford.

Kumolontang (2018) analyzes Peter Pan's refusal to become an adult with *Penolakan Peter Pan Untuk Menjadi Dewasa Dalam Novel Peter and Wendy Karya J.M. Barrie*. The researcher uses a qualitative description using an extrinsic approach in the novel by looking at it from a psychological and character perspective to find out the refusal to grow up by the main character. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the depiction of Peter Pan's refusal to grow up and the consequences of this refusal. The results of the study explain that Kumolontang's analysis the forms, reasons, and consequences of Peter Pan's refusal to grow up and do the classification by including several parts of the story. Meanwhile, Peter Pan's rejection has something to do with other figures. In addition, Peter Pan's rejection is illustrated through Peter Pan's actions and



which do not want to grow into an adult. Kumolontang's concluded that n for Peterpan's refusal was because he chose to run away from home and

live with fairies and Peter Pan's past, who felt disappointed with his parents, especially his mother, who had forgotten him and made Peter hate and dislike discussions about adults.

Rahmawati (2021), in her thesis entitles *The social conflict and its impacts on Marianne portrayed in Sally Rooney's Normal People*. She found that there was a social conflict in the novel she studied. The researcher analyzes with literary criticism using the sociological approach and the theory of social conflict proposed by Lewis A. Coser. The purpose of this research is to find out what social conflict occurs in the novel and also the cause and impact of social conflict on Marianne's in Sally Rooney's *Normal People*. The result of the study explains that the researcher found social conflict in this novel. There are 17 realistic conflicts and non-realistic conflict. Researchers found the impact of social conflicts that occurred on Marianne was to become someone who was popular, happy, and humble. She concludes that social conflict can have an impact on the characteristics of the community, both positive and negative.

In the previous study above, it shows that there is a growing body of research on social conflict with various methods and approaches, as well as the objects studied. The first study shows social conflict against the main character in the novel *Sense and Sensibility* (Hanna, 2016) and social conflict and its impact on the novel *Normal People* (Rahmawati, 2021). The two previous studies discuss social conflicts that occur in different objects but use approaches that are related

he researcher is researching. Meanwhile, there are two studies that use object but use a different approach: the first discusses the psychology



and perspective of the main character in the novel *Peter Pan*, who does not want to grow up (Kumolontang, 2018), and the second is a study of anxiety in the main character as depicted in the novel *Peter Pan* (Sari, 2016).

2.2 Structuralism Approach

This part explains the theory used to analyze the object of the study. The writer used structuralism to analyze the novel *Peter Pan*. In the application of literary work, structuralism is an approach that analyzes intrinsic elements of literary work. Structuralism, which originated in France in the 1950s, was inspired by Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). Saussure's assumption is that literary work consists of several elements that are tied together and influence each other through the work and the structure itself. He posited that language is a system of signs constructed by convention and argued that meaning is relational and produced by the interaction between various signifiers and signifieds. Consequently, he maintained that meaning cannot be understood in isolation. In this case, reading carefully is the most important process for understanding the meaning of literary work.

According to Teeuw (2015: 102), structuralism evolved from the formalist tradition since formalism's results are continued in structuralism. In contrast to formalism theory, this theory challenges the view that literature is a medium of communication between the writer and the reader. The structural approach eschews external influences such as biography and social influence, focusing

on the internal elements of literary works. Consequently, the structural approach to literary analysis is closely aligned with the concept of intrinsic



elements. Structuralism, a theoretical framework, is concerned with the fundamental structure of a literary text. In this context, the aim of structural analysis is to identify the intrinsic elements present within the literary work.

The structuralism approach is based on the assumption that literary works are composed of several interrelated elements that are integrated into an autonomous unit. Pradoppo (2001:56) describes the structural elements of literary works as consisting of theme, story facts, literary means, plot, characters, and setting. Elements in literary means usually consist of point of view, language style, atmosphere, symbols, imagery, and also ways of choosing titles.

Furthermore, the various elements within the system have specific roles and functions that support and connect to one another. The structuralism approach also considers the aesthetic dimensions of literary works through the lens of content and form. Of these two elements, language and plot have been identified as playing a particularly pivotal role. Indeed, plot is widely acknowledged as being an integral aspect of a literary work's form, as Werren and Wallek on *Theory of Literature* explain:

This distinction is by no means a simple renaming of the old pair, content and form. It cuts right across the old boundary lines. 'Materials' include elements formerly considered part of the content, and parts formerly considered formal. 'Structure' is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose. (1956:141).

A novel is an expansive work of literature that is more intricate and than a short story. A novel comprises a theme, characters, a plot, and a which the writer can use to illustrate the ways in which literature affects



the emotions, thoughts, and journey of the main character. To understand a literary work, it is essential to first recognize, study, explore, describe, and connect its constituent parts. This process facilitates an understanding of the work as a whole. The structural approach entails a series of steps. The following steps can be applied in the application of structuralism, according to Stanton (2007:36), as follows:

1. Identify the parts of a literary work, including theme, character, setting, and plot.
2. Examine the elements that have been identified so as to explain the theme, characters, setting, and plot of a literary work.
3. Describe the function of each element to find out the theme, character, setting, and plot of a literary work.
4. Connecting each element so that the intrinsic elements can be known in a literary work. Thus, it can be concluded that the results of the analysis result from identifying, studying, and describing the functions and connecting related elements to create all aspects a literary work.

In analyzing the novel *Peter Pan* with structuralism approach, influenced by Saussure's linguistic theories, emphasizes the intrinsic elements of literary works. It diverges from formalism by focusing on internal components rather than external influences, seeking to unveil the interconnected unity within the text.

Through meticulous examination and connection of elements such as theme, plot, s, and setting, the structural approach reveals the comprehensive fabric



of the literary work, providing a profound understanding of its essence and significance.

2.2.1 Characters

Character is the most essential element of a literary work. The author creates the characters within the work with the intention of conveying ideas or events that occur within that work. Upon reading a novel, readers will perceive and experience the stories of the lives of the novel's characters. According to Abrams (2012:26), a character is an individual depicted in a narrative or dramatic work whose attributes are inferred by the reader from the character's words, manner of speech, and actions. The author presents the characters in action and dialogue, allowing the reader to draw inferences about their motives and dispositions based on their words and actions; this is called characterization.

Characterization in literary work has its own characterization. The act of characterization is an attempt to demonstrate the personalities of the characters that are being played. Tjahjono (1988: 142- 143) stated that in regard to the characters' attitudes, characterizations, and ideas, they may be divided into three categories: (1) the protagonist, (2) the antagonist, and (3) the tritagonist characters. The protagonist is a character who exhibits ideal behavior that is widely favored by readers. Their roles reflect the characteristics desired by readers, and they typically convey a positive impression. In contrast, the antagonist is defined as the opposite of the protagonist, as he or she is typically



by readers for the characteristics they portray. This antagonist character
y conveys a negative or unfavorable impression and serves to introduce

conflict into the narrative. Although these two attributes appear contradictory, they are in fact intimately connected, each providing a necessary complement to the other. The last characteristic is the tritagonist, a characterization that occurs with great frequency in literature yet rarely in the author's hands. This means that readers will seldom come across a character with this specific characterization of a tritagonist who has a neutral mediator character compared to the protagonist and antagonist.

2.2.2 Plot

In fiction, plot is an indispensable element. It describes the connection between events in a story and determines the sequence in which they are presented. Put simply, a plot is a series of events, actions, or ideas presented in a logical order. Events in a story are connected through causality, meaning that they are related in some way. The plot can be described as a chessboard. The author moves the pieces in a planned way. It's not easy to write a simple story. The author adds things to make the story more interesting. This makes the story less boring for the reader. The plot is not just in the novel. It is also in plays, dramas, and films.

A plot in a literary work includes exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Freytag (1900) posited that a plot can be divided into five sections. These sections, designated Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution, are collectively known as "Freytag's Pyramid."



a. Exposition

Exposition is the start or first phase of a story. Freytag posits that the exposition serves to establish the tone of the narrative. In general, this section serves to introduce the setting, characters, and essential facts in order to facilitate the reader's comprehension (Freytag, 1900: 32). This section establishes the context and setting in which the conflict between the characters will arise.

b. Rising Action

Rising action is the second phase of a story; the story gets more exciting as events unfold and problems arise. The goal is to build suspense until the climax. Once the inciting incident has occurred, it will then move into conflict and proceed to the climax (Freytag, 1900: 34).

c. Climax

The climax is the most crucial point of the plot, representing the core of the protagonist's and antagonist's internal or external conflicts. The peak of the conflict is marked by a tragedy that intensifies the protagonist's ambition. The protagonist must overcome a series of obstacles until the plot reaches its climax.

d. Falling Action

Falling action is the fourth phase. In this phase, the main character overcomes problems and worries. This phase shows that the story will end soon. It is also the changing course of a story (Freytag, 1900: 37).

e. Resolution



Resolution is the last phase. Resolution illustrates how the story will end, on a positive note or in a negative resolution (Freytag, 1900: 37).

The five elements of the plot pyramid are interrelated with one another in the passage of the plot of a story. The most basic aspect of this process is the introduction of the story, followed by the initial stages of the conflict, which then become the core of the story and the focus of the narrative. The plot progresses as the protagonist seeks to find a solution to the conflict, which is then discovered and resolved by the end of the story.

2.2.3 Setting

The setting is an element of the story. Authors typically introduce characters, environmental conditions, place, time, and atmosphere at the start of a literary work. Abrams said, *“The setting of a scene within the work is the particular physical location in which it takes place.”* (2012:374). This setting provides a full description of the author to help readers visualize the overall plot. This is generally done through narration or character descriptions of the environment. The setting consists of three elements with distinct functions and meanings in a story, but they are interrelated and interconnected, such as the setting of time, the setting of place, and the setting of atmosphere.

a. Setting of time

The novel details various times, including date, month, year, morning, afternoon, evening, and night, or seasonal seasons like winter, spring, or snow. The setting of time, like the setting of place, is considered tangible since the reader can easily identify a specific time in the narrative (Aminuddin, 2011: 67).



b. Setting of place

The author provides a description of the story's location, such as a residence, street, or city, to help the reader visualize the setting. The author may use the term "home" or refer to the city mentioned in the novel. The description of the location assists readers in imagining and visualizing the setting in the novel. This setting is physical since the reader may recognize it through the story's visualization of place (Aminuddin, 2011: 67).

c. Setting of atmosphere

Characters in a novel can experience emotions such as sadness, happiness, or morality based on their situation. It brings the characters to life, improves the environment, and reinforces the story's subject. Mood frequently serves as a lens through which the reader interprets events and behaviors.

2.2.4 Theme

Theme refers to the central idea of a story created by the author prior to its overall structure. The major topic of a story is its conflicts, which are then structured to create a cohesive and purposeful story. According to Stanton (2007:37), a story's theme is what adds meaning and makes it memorable. An author's personal experiences might serve as the foundation for a story's major topic or premise. The struggle between good and evil, growth, maturity, love, freedom, and death. A literary work's topic refers to a human experience that is used to convey a message to readers.



2.3 Social Conflict Theory

Social conflict theory by Lewis A. Coser is the most common issue to discuss about struggles between opponents over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources (Coser in Walker, 2005). In order to devise a theory of social conflict, Coser explores the ideas set forth by Georg Simmel in his classical work, *Conflict*. This essay analyzes conflict in terms of interactive processes and depicts conflict as "a form of socialization." (Coser, 1956: 31). No group can be entirely harmonious, for then it would lack process and structure. Group formation is a result of both association and dissociation, so that both conflict and cooperation serve a social function. Some certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation.

In *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Lewis A. Coser explores the positive and essential roles that social conflict plays in society, challenging the traditional view that conflict is inherently negative. Coser argues that conflict can have beneficial effects for individuals, groups, and society as a whole. He views conflict as a natural and inevitable part of social life, suggesting that it can be constructive and contribute to social cohesion and stability. Coser identifies several positive functions of conflict: it can strengthen group solidarity by uniting members against a common adversary, clarify norms and values by compelling groups to articulate and defend their positions, and promote social change by highlighting injustices and mobilizing efforts to address them. Additionally,

encourages adaptation and innovation by challenging the status quo, power by providing a mechanism for less powerful groups to negotiate



with more powerful ones, and manages underlying tensions by allowing their expression and preventing more serious confrontations.

The conflict shifts from an unsatisfactory relationship to one where the actor's goal is not achieving specific results but releasing tension. Lewis A. Coser identifies two main types of conflict based on their causes and functions: Realistic conflict and Non-realistic conflict, (Coser, 1956: 156) :

1) Realistic Conflict

Realistic conflict is depicted as arising from tangible and objective issues within society (Coser, 1956: 49). These conflicts stem from real-world problems such as competition for resources, political power struggles, or economic disparities. Unlike non-realistic conflicts driven by emotions or symbolic grievances, realistic conflicts are grounded in practical concerns and often revolve around concrete goals or interests.

Coser emphasizes that participants in realistic conflicts typically act rationally and strategically, aiming to achieve specific objectives. These conflicts are characterized by negotiation and bargaining, as opposing parties seek to address their needs through dialogue or policy changes. The issues at stake in realistic conflicts are tangible and measurable, allowing for a clearer understanding of the underlying causes and potential resolutions.

Examples of realistic conflicts include labor disputes over wages and working conditions, political conflicts over policy decisions or electoral issues, and territorial disputes between nations. Through his analysis, Coser stresses the importance of recognizing and addressing the practical dimensions



of social conflict, as understanding these factors is essential for effective conflict management and resolution.

2) Non-realistic Conflict

Non-realistic conflict refers to conflicts that arise from emotional, psychological, or symbolic issues rather than tangible, objective concerns (Coser, 1956: 49). Unlike realistic conflicts, which are grounded in practical considerations such as competition for resources or political power, non-realistic conflicts are driven by feelings, perceptions, and identity assertions.

Non-realistic conflicts often involve deeply held emotions such as anger, resentment, or pride, and may stem from symbolic grievances or historical animosities. Participants in these conflicts may act irrationally or impulsively, expressing their emotions through confrontational behavior or symbolic gestures. The issues at the heart of non-realistic conflicts are often abstract and difficult to quantify, making them less amenable to resolution through negotiation or compromise.

Examples of non-realistic conflicts include ethnic or religious disputes fueled by historical grievances, personal vendettas or feuds based on perceived slights or insults, and social media conflicts that escalate due to emotional reactions and miscommunication. Coser's analysis highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the emotional dimensions of social conflict, as understanding these factors is crucial for effective conflict management and

social media conflicts escalating due to emotional reactions.



Coser's distinction between realistic and non-realistic conflicts helps to understand the nature of social conflicts and their potential outcomes, emphasizing that while realistic conflicts are often resolvable, non-realistic conflicts tend to be more challenging to address.

Hostile impulses do not suffice to account for social conflict, and not every conflict is accompanied by aggressiveness. Conflict simply presupposes a relationship and social interaction. Nevertheless, realistic conflicts are often accompanied by distorted sentiments. There is a distinction between realistic reasons for engaging in conflict on the one hand, and the emotional energies involved during the conflict on the other. There is often failure to realize that conflict may be motivated by these two distinct yet intermingled factors: realistic conflict issues and parties' affective investment in the conflict. The main function of the mediator is to eliminate non-realistic elements of aggressiveness so that opponents can deal more realistically with their competing claims.

In his book, Coser discusses the various causes, consequences, and several approaches to resolving social conflict. Mentioned causes of social conflict, including competition for scarce resources, power struggles, perceived inequalities, social change, and inter-group conflicts. He also highlights the complexity of social conflict, which can arise from various sources within social structures and relationships, such as a mismatch between a group's goals and available means. (Coser, 1956: 22). He emphasizes the need for understanding

addressing these complex issues to prevent and manage social conflict.



Coser's analysis suggests that social conflict can be a catalyst for social change, challenging the status quo and pushing societies to adapt. It can shape an individual's identity and self-awareness and contribute to social cohesion and stability. Conflict can also stimulate institutional innovation and change, prompting the development of new institutions or reforms to address social tensions. (Coser, 1956: 52). Understanding the consequences of conflict can help societies manage and harness its potential for positive social change and development.

While acknowledging that conflict is an inherent aspect of social life, Coser believed that it could be managed and addressed through various means. Coser emphasized the role of negotiation, mediation, formal conflict resolution processes, and addressing structural issues in resolving social conflicts. He advocated for institutional reforms to promote social justice and equality. (Coser, 1956: 151). Coser also proposed the concept of conflict transformation, which focuses on transforming relationships and structures to prevent future conflicts, aiming for long-term solutions and systemic changes.

