

**CONFLICTS IN GEORGE ORWELL'S 'BURMESE DAYS'**



A THESIS

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English Literature*

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**HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY**

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LEGITIMATION

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CONFLICTS IN GEORGE ORWELL'S 'BURMESE DAYS'

BY

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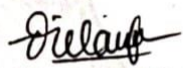
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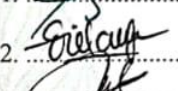


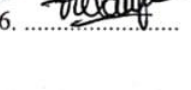

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On May 2023, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by **FATIMAH AZZAHRA** (F041191017) entitled "*Conflicts in George Orwell's 'Burmese Days'*" submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Makassar, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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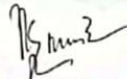


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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis is written by herself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas except the quotations and references.

Makassar, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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Makassar, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Fatimah Azzahra



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## ABSTRACT

**Fatimah Azzahra. The conflict in the novel "*Burmese Days*" by George Orwell.** (Supervised by Prof. Dr. Fathu Rahman, M.Hum and A. ST. Aldilah Khaerana, S.S., M.Hum).

This study analyzes George Orwell's *Burmese Days*. This novel tells the story of an Englishman named Flory who loses his identity as a European in Burma. His principle of worshiping natives caused many conflicts, come into his life. Moreover, his cowardly character allows him to live silently without speaking of his principles. Instead, he put his hope in a girl named Elizabeth, who also has different principles from him.

This study aims to elaborate conflicts that occur to the characters in *Burmese Days* novel by using a structuralism approach and combining Jones' theory about the types of conflict and Thomas' theory about dealing with conflict.

There are several results of the analysis of this thesis. The conflict between Flory and the club members involves his friend Veraswami who conflicts with U Po Kyin. This conflict occurs because Flory's promise to Veraswami to propose his name to become a club member to save his pride, which U Po Kyin had damaged, causes many complaints. There is also an unhealthy love story between Flory and Elizabeth, as well as conflicts between Flory and Elizabeth involving their past and the hopes they have built so far. This analysis also includes how each character deals with the conflicts they experience in the story. All of the characters has their own way to deal with conflict as their characterization in the novel.

**Keywords:** *Conflict, Burmese Days, George Orwell.*

## ABSTRAK

**Fatimah Azzahra. Konflik di dalam novel “*Burmese Days*” karya George Orwell.** (Dibimbing oleh Prof. Dr. Fathu Rahman, M.Hum dan A. ST. Aldilah Khaerana S.S., M.Hum).

Penelitian ini menganalisis *Burmese Days* karya George Orwell. Novel ini menceritakan tentang seorang lelaki Inggris bernama Flory yang kehilangan identitasnya sebagai orang Eropa di Burma. Prinsipnya yang memuja pribumi menimbulkan banyak konflik yang kemudian datang di dalam hidupnya. Terlebih, karakternya yang penakut membuatnya hidup dalam diam tanpa membicarakan apa pun tentang prinsipnya. Ia malah menaruh harapan kepada seorang gadis bernama Elizabeth yang juga memiliki prinsip yang berbeda dengannya.

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengelaborasi konflik yang terjadi pada tokoh utama dan tokoh pendukung di dalam novel *Burmese Days*, dengan menggunakan pendekatan strukturalisme dan menggabungkan teori dari Jones tentang bagian-bagian konflik dan teori dari Thomas tentang cara menghadapi konflik.

Ada beberapa hasil analisis dari skripsi ini. Konflik yang terjadi antara Flory dan member club, ini melibatkan sahabatnya Veraswami yang tengah berselisih dengan U Po Kyin. Konflik ini terjadi karena janji yang telah dikatakan Flory kepada Veraswami untuk mengusulkan namanya menjadi anggota club demi menyelamatkan harga dirinya yang telah dirusak oleh U Po Kyin membuat banyak pihak merasa keberatan. Ada juga kisah cinta antara Flory dan Elizabeth yang tidak sehat, serta konflik di dalam diri Flory dan Elizabeth yang melibatkan masa lalu mereka dan harapan yang mereka bangun selama ini. Analisis ini juga menyertakan cara dari setiap tokoh menghadapi konflik yang mereka alami di dalam cerita. Setiap tokoh memiliki cara tersendiri untuk menghadapi konflik yang mereka hadapi, sebagaimana karakterisasi masing-masing tokoh di dalam novel.

**Kata Kunci:** *Konflik, Burmese Days, George Orwell.*

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Literature is generally defined as a human expression in expressing feelings, ideas and beliefs about what is happening in human life personally, as well as the surrounding phenomena. The expression is conveyed through language and arranged in such a way as to produce a sentence structure that attracts the attention of the reader. Usually, an author will compose a literary work based on the experiences they have experienced, which are explored more deeply based on the author's own imagination. Ramrao (2016: 150) argues that literature is written communication, either in poetic, dramatic, or fictional form, that always communicates human experience and uses narrative form. Even though it comes from the writer's imagination, we may learn many lessons from literary works and learn how the characters behave in facing a conflict. What steps the characters take in overcoming each problem in the novel gives a lot of insight to the reader. According to Badaraco (2006:3), literature can help getting a more realistic view of many business books when talking about things that are needed in many ways, including those related to leadership.

Literary works can be in the form of poetry, prose, and drama. In the form of prose literature, there is one of popular literary work, namely novel. Novels in literary works fall into the category of prose. Novel is a fictional story in written form. A novel usually contains the story of human life in interactions with each

other. Reading novel involves readers in the stories presented in novels, such as love stories, life struggles, adventures, or even horror. According to Nurgiyantoro (2012: 4), a novel is a work in its own world that contains an imaginative model of life, constructed through various intrinsic elements such as events, plots, characters (and characterizations), setting, point of view, etc. which is also imaginative. A novel consists of fictional events whose sentences sometimes give "poetic" that makes the reader feel comfortable reading until the end. The results given by a literary work represent the fiction and expression of the author's feelings. In addition, one of the paradigms in viewing literary works is as a cultural product, which only reflects the reality of the surrounding society. This has an impact on a literary work that is sometimes fictional, and the facts are not always clear (Eagleton, 2005:8).

Conflict is the building block of the novel. Without conflict, the novel will not be able to form let alone touch the feelings of the reader. Conflict is something occurs among characters that triggered by environmental factors, nature, society, or destiny which can be in the form of physical, mental, emotional, or moral resistance (Perrine 1993: 42). Jones (1968: 30) mentions that there are three kinds of conflict namely; social conflict, physical conflict and psychological conflict.

In this study, the writer chooses one of George Orwell's best novels, *Burmese Days*. *Burmese Days* is a novel that tells the story of a character named Flory, who likes to read, often criticizes white people, and glorifies natives. Even so, he has a dark past because of people's insults on his face. The man was stranded in a poor village called Burma, which was still under the British rule.

The poor town is filled with arrogant foreigners. Foreigners constantly drunk while humiliating on natives think they are weak people who deserve to be the worst. Flory feels lonely and become close friends with Dr. Veraswami, an Indian who worships white people. He is described as an educated man who always admires the Europeans. Unfortunately, that sincere friendship causes jealousy in native subordinates. U Po Kyin, a District Head whose body matches his ambition, is greedy; he always wanted to stand on equal footing with the invaders. U Po Kyin used to live in poverty. However, he is adapted at working with minimal capital, namely, trying to appear as a hero in front of people that hiding behind him. He is like an evil politician who looks good.

This novel presents an interesting conflict to study. Burma is filled with the desire of the natives to be treated equally by joining the club. George Orwell wrote satirically about how the natives had to submit to politicians. The main character Flory, wanted to be a tough and honest man. He hated his own people and choose to live with the natives. But his soul is lonely because he is confused between equalizing natives and not wanting to be belittled by his own people. The conflict in this novel is filled by the story of Flory, a middle-aged man with clear desires but afraid of being humiliated. He even loves Elizabeth but is afraid to admit it and hates his past. His personality is unclear and always filled with anxiety. His life lost its sense of optimism. His weakness is then exploited by U Po Kyin, who devises a strategy to destroy Flory so that he can get whatever he wants. U Po Kyin lived the life of a criminal, raised by greed, and believed that money could buy anything, including his future in the afterlife.

Furthermore, two girls who are of different ethnicity appear. They are Ma Hla May and Elizabeth. Ma Hla May is a native girl whose life makes her willing to become Flory's mistress, so the people around her respect her. Then there is Elizabeth, who has a beautiful face but likes to make small talk and always exalts anything that evokes masculine charm. Elizabeth maintains a close relationship with Flory, but differences in principles become a barrier for them, often triggering conflict between the two. In this novel, both become buying pieces of men. Flory's character, who has a good and moral character, makes U Po Kyin ambitious to destroy him. He devises a strategy that will attack not only Veraswami but also Flory. Flory was righteous, but he only kept the truth in his heart. He does not dare to reveal his principles, while U Po Kyin is a skilled sycophant who uses any means to gain wealth and power. All his ugliness brought U Po Kyin to a victory that made him worse than anything else.

In this study, the author focuses on conflict that experienced by the characters in Orwell's *Burmese Days*. The reason I choose this object and topic is there are many interesting things can be learned from each character in this novel. Flory is willing to lose his identity as a white person to be a good person who respects natives. Spending the rest of his life feeling lonely but still struggling to help Veraswami even though his own people humiliated him. Fighting for Elizabeth's love, even though the girl side with Europeans. The conflict in this story is interesting to study because of the struggle of each character to survive in a society that has different views from their principles. The conflict in each character inspires many people to dare to take different steps



according to their expectations, even though it is difficult to realize. In addition, this novel contains historical meaning from George Orwell's journey, which turned complicated again when he worked for the Royal Indian Police in Burma, now Myanmar, from 1922 to 1927. Through his writing, Orwell blew up his anger toward the British and covered it with a fictional story (Afiah, 2022: 214). It is believed that Orwell depicted his experience in Burma into this novel.

## **1.2 Identification of Problems**

Based on the background of the study described above, several problems can be identified, as follows:

- a. Discrimination faced by the Indigenous people of Myanmar and also by the British colonists who colonized Myanmar.
- b. The conflicts that the main characters faces in *Burmese Days* novel.
- c. The social conditions of Myanmar in the 1920s when it was colonized by the British.
- d. Moral value in *Burmese Days* novel.
- e. The impact of colonialism in *Burmese Days* novel.
- f. Portrait of women in *Burmese Days* novel.

## **1.3 Scope of The Problem**

As mentioned in the previous section, the writer has limited the scope of the study into focusing on the conflict that experienced by the main characters in George Orwell's *Burmese Days* and the way the characters deal with the conflict. The conflict is analyzed by structuralism theory.

#### **1.4 Statement of Problems**

- a. What is the conflict experienced by the main characters in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*?
- b. How do the main characters deal with the conflicts?

#### **1.5 Objective of The Study**

- a. To find out the conflict experienced by the main characters in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*.
- b. To elaborate how the main characters deal with the conflicts.

#### **1.6 Significance of The Writing**

- a. Theoretical significance

The writer expects that this study can improve the understanding of literature in terms to apply structuralism theory in describing the conflict in literary works.

- b. Practical significance

The writer expects this study can give benefits for expanding knowledge and capability for the readers to analyze the conflicts in literary works. In addition, the writer also expects this research can provide additional information for those who wants to analyze a similar topic with this study.

#### **1.7 Sequence of Chapter**

1. Chapter I consists of a background of the study which elaborate the main reasons behind the selection of the object and title of the study, the

identification of the problem, scope of problem, the statement of the problem, the objectives of research, and the sequences of chapters.

2. Chapter II involves the previous related studies, structuralism theory, and the concept of conflict.
3. Chapter III is a research methodology consists of the type of research, data collection methods, and data analysis methods.
4. Chapter IV is the findings and discussion, which is the most important part of the research as it contains the results of analysis done by the writer.
5. Chapter V includes the conclusion and suggestion of the whole research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Previous Related Studies

*Burmese Days* is unexpectedly popular that people seem to adopt them as the main object of analysis. The fact that this novel has been used as an object of analysis by many people from different perspectives, the author realizes that there are many related studies that took *Burmese Days* novel as the object of study.

Afiah, Arafah, and Abbas (2022) in their research entitled *Burmese Women Portrait Under the British Imperialism in Orwell's Burmese Days*. This study aims to reveal the portrait of women's life in Burma during British imperialism. This study used a qualitative method based on Laurenson and Swingewood sociological approach. The results of this study indicate that women were portrayed as British male slaves. Women were depicted worthless; they were only seen as entertainment for English men. Moreover, some Europeans have concubines to spend time with them or kill their boredom. It seems that in those days, women were created for English men as dolls to be played with as much as they wanted, they could easily be tossed after English men had grown tired of them.

Another research was conducted by Almuthahhari (2021), the research entitled *The Orientalist in Orwell's Burmese Days: A Postcolonial Narratology Criticism*. This study aims to criticize Orwell's Orientalization in *Burmese Days*. This study uses dialectical methodology between theory and method in narrative study and postcolonial, that is focalization theory. This study shows that

Orientalization in the novel hides in the organization of information. The information about, culture, characters, and Orwell's critique of imperialism convey in the description which often uses simile and purple passage, internal, and external focalization so Orwell's information through the narrator seems neutral and objective.

Hanna research (2016) entitled *An Analysis of The Main Characters' Conflicts in Jane Austen Novel Entitled "Sense and Sensibility"*. Hanna focuses on the conflict of the main characters in *Sense and Sensibility* novel. This study used a descriptive qualitative method and applying structural approach. The study aims to analyze the conflicts of the main characters, Elinor, and Marianne Dashwood in order to know the main characters' problems faced in the novel and how the problem solved in the novel. The result of the study shows the research of the main characters' conflicts on psychological conflicts and social conflicts that are happening to the main characters, Elinor, and Marianne. The social conflicts are; Lucy married Robert Ferrar, and the admission of Willoughby. And the problem solving of the psychological conflicts are; Elinor married Edward, and Marianne married Colonel Brandon. Finally, some conflicts that happened to Elinor and Marianne could be solved well so that Elinor and Marianne could live together with their mother and younger sister happily at Delaford. And there is no physical conflict in this novel.

From the elaboration of the previous related studies above, the writer decided to still conduct research in the same field with different methods, limitations, and different objects. The first previous study used the same object of

study with this research namely Orwell's *Burmese Days*. But this research focuses on the main character's conflict, while the previous study focused on the portrait of women in *Burmese Days*. The second previous study also used the same object with this research. But this research focuses on the conflicts that occur in *Burmese Days*. Meanwhile, the previous study focused on Orientalization of Orwell's criticism. The third previous study analyzed the same topic with this research namely the conflict in literary works. The difference of this research with the previous studies is on the novel as the object. This research uses George Orwell's *Burmese Days*. To be able to describe the character's conflict, the writer analyzes it by applying a structural approach.

## **2.2 Structural Approach**

Etymologically, structural comes from the word '*structura*' (Latin), which means shape or building. Structure is an abstract construction that cannot stand alone as a system without other structures and supports.

The structural approach itself has emerged since the Greek times introduced by Aristotles with the concept of Wholeness, Unity, Complexity, and Coherence (Teeuw, 1988: 121-134). The development of the structural approach is heavily influenced by the concept of linguistic structure developed by Ferdinand de Saussure which is essentially related to the concept of sign and meaning or as proposed by Luxembourg as a significant-syntagma.

As explained by Pradopo (2007: 75) structuralism is a structure with closer elements. Each element in structuralism has a meaning that is interrelated with the other elements. This approach examines literary works as autonomous works and

regardless of social background, history, author biographies and everything outside of literary works. It can be concluded that the structural approach is a literary approach that analyzes the elements of the structure that build the literary work itself. These elements are called intrinsic elements that consist of characters and characterizations, setting, theme and plot.

The steps for using structural analysis according to Endraswara (2008: 52) are as follows:

1. Building a theory of appropriate structure with the genre under study.
2. Do a careful reading, note the structural elements that are contained in the reading.
3. Analyze the elements of the theme.
4. Analyzing the characterizations, plot, setting, point of view, and mandate.
5. Connecting structural elements builder to realize coherence of meaning structure
6. Interpreting the interrelationships between elements carefully.

Based on the explanation of the structural approach, in this study the author only focuses on the intrinsic elements of the novel. Meanwhile, in general, novels have two aspects, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements of literary works, namely characters and characterizations, settings, themes and plot. While the extrinsic approach analyzes the relationship between content and other disciplines such as history, religion, psychology and biography.

## 1. Character and Characterization

### A. Character

Rollins (2010:5), stated that characters are fictional characters included in the story. Characters in literary works have their own meaning, which depends on how the author describes them. Abrams (1981:20) also stated that basically, the character can be divided into two categories. The major character is an important figure who is the center of a literary work. The major characters fill the biggest action in the story, their activities determine the plot and ultimately the outcome of their journey as the major character. However, the major character is not always the protagonist. A protagonist is a central figure who will face a conflict. The major characters are identified based on their purpose in the story, whether they support conflict or hinder conflict resolution. In general, minor characters are flat characters and do not really matter to the plot. The existence of minor characters is only to support the major characters, either in resolving or hindering the conflict resolution of the major characters. In other words, minor characters only play a role in a small contribution in the development of the story.

According to Judith (2003: 38), there are several types of characters.

1. Characters based on development are as follows;
  - a. *Dynamic character*, are characters that change significantly during the work;
  - b. *Static characters*, are the characters that not change significantly during the work.



2. Characters based on function are as follows;

- a. *Protagonist*, is the main character that we know in general;
- b. *Antagonist*, is a character who is opposed to the protagonist. This character goes against the main goal in a story.

#### B. Characterization

Characterizations are used by most writers to help readers understand more about the characters in the novel. According to Lestari (2014: 14) characterization is the way the writer of the novel presented the character and how he or she describes his/her character in the story. Characterization is also the most important part of a story. Recognizing characterization helps the reader get deeper into the contents of the story because each character's characterization shows the goals they want to achieve in the story.

## 2. Setting

Apart from characters and characterizations, there is also a setting in a literary work. Setting is the environment surrounding the events in the story. According to Klarer (2005:33), setting is another aspect that is included in prose fiction analysis and relevant to other genres. The term "setting" denotes the location, historical period, and social environment in which the action of the text develops. The setting is the environment that surrounds the events in the story. Setting can also be a specific time (day, month, and year), weather, or historical period (Stanton, 2007:35). From the explanation above, it can be concluded that setting is an important element in a literary work. This is important to provide

information to the reader regarding the time, location, and atmosphere of the story.

### **3. Plot**

Plot has a story and one of the main aspects of literary works. Usually, literary works plot is arranged sequentially (Ade, 2008: 40). Rollins (2010: 84) explains that the stages of events in the plot of a story can be arranged as follows:

- a. *Exposition*, is the initial stage containing an explanation of the occurrence of events and places of introduction from each actor who supports the story.
- b. *Rising Action*, namely the hot situation because of the perpetrators in the story that began to conflict.
- c. *Climax*, the peak situation when the conflict is at the highest levels until the perpetrators get their own levels of fate.
- d. *Falling Action*, in which the conflict level has decreased so that tensions in the story have begun to subside to the conclusion or settlement of the story.
- e. *Resolution*, is the end of the plot in a story. This part shows how the conflict in the story is solved.

### **4. Theme**

Theme can be the principle of the novel that leads the readers to enter and explore every sentence of the story they read. Peck and Coyle (2007:88), explain that a theme is a big idea or concept that is confronted. By determining a theme, one can imagine how something in the form of expression is revealed from the

whole story. By understanding the theme, people can become guests of content. An interesting theme will make people curious to witness the entire story. Therefore, it can be concluded that the theme is the controlling idea or overall insight of a work of fiction. Theme can also refer to life generalizations implied by the story. Theme may be the author's thoughts on a topic or views of human nature. The theme is the underlying meaning, a significant contribution by the writer that describes society or nature and the human condition.

### **2.3 The Concept of Conflict**

Conflict is an important part of literary work. Stanton (2007: 31) states that the two basic elements that build plot are conflict and climax. The importance of presenting conflict in a story cannot be denied because, without conflict, the plot of a story will not be interesting. Conflict in a literary work can occur because of differences of opinion, revenge, jealousy, betrayal, and so on (Nugriyanto: 179). From this explanation, conflict can occur because of an event experienced by the characters in the story, where many events tend to be unpleasant, so the characters feel uncomfortable.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that conflict has a close relation with character. Perrine (1993: 42) explains that conflict occurs between the main character and other characters who are influenced by environmental factors, nature, society, or destiny and one character with another character which can be in the form of physical, mental, emotional, or moral resistance. The tension or disagreement that occurs by the characters is called conflict. Characters can cause conflict with themselves, with other characters, or

with the environment. Because when it comes to conflict, it will always be associated with characterizations.

Jones (1968: 30) states that there are three types of conflict that are grouped into two parts, there are as follows:

1. External Conflict

- a. Social Conflict: Social conflict is a conflict that occurs because of social contact between humans. This conflict arises because of the conflict between one character and another. Social conflicts often occur in debates, wars, and other cases involving social relations between humans.
- b. Physical Conflict: Physical conflict is conflict involving humans with nature and the environment. It is caused by a clash between a character and the natural environment. Such conflicts are classified as natural conflicts. This type of conflict usually occurs when the character cannot control or make good use of the environment around people. Conflict will arise if there is a mistake in the relationship between humans and nature.

2. Internal Conflict

- a. Psychological Conflict: Psychological conflict is human pressure on himself/herself. It is like how the characters feel uncomfortable with the condition of their soul, causing conflict within himself/herself. This type of conflict usually occurs in the form of a character's struggle

against himself/herself. Decisions taken by a character affect whether a character overcomes problems within himself/herself or not.

According to Thomas (2002), there are five ways strategies in deal with conflict, such as competing, collaborating, avoiding, compromising or negotiation, accomodating.

- a. *Competing*, is aggressive actions that concern themselves, suppress other parties and behaving uncooperatively. This type of action is carried out when a decision must be made quickly. Choose to defend their respective opinions and try to achieve a win by using the information they have.
- b. *Collaborating*, listening to each other regarding interests between parties, empathetic communication, and satisfying both parties. In this situation, there is a power balance between the two parties.
- c. *Avoiding*, occurs when one party avoids discussing problem-solving, behaves unclearly or does not want to build a commitment. Actions like this are usually carried out in situations where there is a danger of physical violence, there is no opportunity to achieve goals, or the situation is complicated and impossible to solve.
- d. *Compromising or Negotiation*, occurs when each party takes a middle ground. In this action, it is not clear who wins and who loses. This action is effective in situations where both parties or one-party refuses to cooperate while at the same time, a way out is needed and when the end goal is not an important part.

- e. *Accommodating*, occurs when one party sacrifices his/her own interests and prioritizes the other party's interests. This action is taken when one party realizes that it does not have many opportunities to advance its interests or when there is a belief that acting further will damage its relationship with other groups.