



## CHARACTER CONFLICTS IN THE NOVEL CINTA ANAK KARAENG BY AHMAD SAHIDE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms of character conflict in the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a literary psychology approach. The data were obtained through library research, with the novel serving as the primary data source and supported by relevant scholarly articles and journals. Data collection was conducted using close reading and note-taking techniques, while data analysis involved data reduction, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that character conflict in the novel consists of internal and external conflicts. Internal conflicts are experienced mainly by the characters Karaeng Asmi and Daro in the form of psychological struggles, emotional dilemmas, fear, and anxiety caused by contradictions between personal desires and rigid traditional norms. External conflicts arise from confrontation between individual characters and family authority as well as social traditions that enforce caste-based stratification. The study reveals that internal and external conflicts are closely interconnected, with social pressure intensifying psychological turmoil. These conflicts reflect broader socio-cultural realities within the Karaeng community and demonstrate how tradition functions as both cultural identity and an instrument of social control. This study contributes to Indonesian literary studies by highlighting the significance of character conflict in novels rooted in local cultural contexts.



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## INTRODUCTION

Literary works, particularly novels, represent the complexity of human life by presenting psychological, social, and cultural issues through their characters. As a form of long prose fiction, the novel portrays human experiences in a comprehensive and in-depth manner, allowing various conflicts to emerge as reflections of real-life situations (Nirwana, Ibrahim, & Dinar, 2023; Pemila, Shomary, & Rahayu, 2021). Conflict, therefore, becomes an essential intrinsic element in shaping narrative dynamics, revealing characters' personalities, relationships, and the values underlying the story.

Previous studies have consistently shown that character conflicts in novels can generally be classified into internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict refers to inner or psychological struggles experienced by characters, such as emotional turmoil, dilemmas, anxiety, and conflicting desires. External conflict, on the other hand, arises

from opposition between a character and other characters, society, social institutions, or the surrounding environment (Hasrin Wulan, Ruum Sya'baan, & Sulfiah, 2023; Nirwana et al., 2023). These two types of conflict are interconnected and jointly construct the psychological dynamics of characters within literary texts.

A number of earlier studies on character conflict in novels predominantly employed a qualitative descriptive method, utilizing close reading and note-taking techniques combined with content analysis. This methodological approach has been considered effective in uncovering the forms, types, and dynamics of character conflicts through textual data such as words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues found in novels (Pemila et al., 2021; Sumadi, 2018). Such studies also reveal that character conflicts are often influenced by differences in principles, social pressure, power relations, and cultural values that constrain the characters' lives.

Furthermore, the literary psychology approach—whether based on psychoanalytic theory, human needs theory, or personality dynamics—has proven capable of providing deeper insights into characters' motives, attitudes, and actions when facing conflicts (Ismanto, Rakhmawati, & Wardani, 2023; Fachrudin, 2020; Lestari & Hanifah, 2024). Through this approach, conflicts are not merely seen as narrative devices but as manifestations of characters' psychological conditions shaped by internal impulses and external pressures.

The novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide presents character conflicts that are deeply rooted in tradition and social stratification within the Karaeng community of South Sulawesi. The conflicts depicted in this novel illustrate the tension between personal desires and rigid customary rules, particularly those related to social status, lineage, and family authority. Similar to other novels with strong local cultural backgrounds, tradition in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* functions as a dominant source of both social and psychological conflict for the characters (Sumadi, 2018; Nurhuda et al., 2023).

Compared to previous studies that have examined character conflicts in novels with urban, religious, or general psychological settings, research focusing on *Cinta Anak Karaeng* remains limited. Most existing studies tend to concentrate on themes of love, family, or identity conflicts in more mainstream literary works, leaving novels that foreground local cultural systems and traditional power relations relatively underexplored (Hasrin Wulan et al., 2023; Nirwana et al., 2023; Pemila et al., 2021). This condition indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation.

Based on this background, the present study aims to describe the forms of character conflict in the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide, specifically focusing on internal and external conflicts experienced by the characters. By employing a qualitative descriptive method and a literary psychology approach, this study is expected to contribute to the enrichment of Indonesian literary studies, particularly in understanding character conflict in novels that highlight local cultural contexts and their relevance to social realities.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, as the primary objective was to describe and interpret forms of character conflict presented in the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the data analyzed were in the form of words, phrases, sentences,

and dialogues that reflect psychological and social conflicts experienced by the characters, rather than numerical data.

The type of research used in this study was library research. The primary data source was the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide, while secondary data sources consisted of scholarly articles, journals, and books related to character conflict, literary psychology, and conflict theory in literary studies. These secondary sources were used to strengthen the theoretical framework and to support the analysis of the data.

Data collection was conducted using a close reading technique combined with note-taking. The researcher carefully read the novel repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline, characters, and conflicts. Relevant data related to character conflicts were identified and recorded systematically. The data included narrative descriptions, monologues, dialogues, and actions of characters that indicated internal conflicts (psychological struggles within the characters) and external conflicts (conflicts between characters and other characters, society, or cultural norms).

The data analysis technique applied in this study was descriptive qualitative analysis. The analysis was carried out through several stages. First, data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on textual units relevant to character conflict. Second, the data were classified into categories of internal conflict and external conflict based on established literary conflict theories. Third, the data were interpreted using a literary psychology approach to explain the psychological dynamics underlying the conflicts experienced by the characters. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on patterns and findings identified during the analysis.

To ensure the validity of the data, theoretical triangulation was employed by comparing the findings with concepts and interpretations from previous studies and relevant theories of character conflict and literary psychology. This triangulation helped to strengthen the credibility of the analysis and to minimize subjective bias in interpreting the literary text.

## FINDING

The analysis of the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide reveals that character conflicts are a dominant element in driving the narrative. Based on the qualitative descriptive analysis, the conflicts experienced by the characters can be categorized into two main types: internal conflict and external conflict. These conflicts are closely related to the psychological conditions of the characters and the rigid social structure governed by Karaeng tradition.

### a) Internal Conflict

Internal conflict in the novel primarily manifests as psychological struggles experienced by the main characters, particularly Karaeng Asmi and Daro. These conflicts occur within the characters themselves and are marked by emotional turmoil, dilemmas, fear, and inner tension caused by opposing desires and values.

Karaeng Asmi experiences profound internal conflict as a result of her position as a woman born into the Karaeng lineage. On the one hand, she possesses personal ideals concerning humanity, justice, and equality. On the other hand, she is bound by strict customary rules that prohibit members of the Karaeng family from forming romantic relationships with individuals outside their social caste. This internal struggle becomes evident when Karaeng Asmi repeatedly rejects marriage proposals from men who are not

descendants of Karaeng, despite her awareness that such rejections conflict with her personal beliefs about human equality.

Another form of Karaeng Asmi's internal conflict emerges through her feelings of love for Daro, a man who does not belong to the Karaeng lineage. Her affection for Daro places her in a painful dilemma between following her heart and obeying the demands of tradition and family honor. This conflict generates feelings of anxiety, guilt, and emotional distress, as Karaeng Asmi realizes that her love is considered a serious violation of customary norms.

Similarly, Daro experiences internal conflict when he falls in love with Karaeng Asmi. His inner struggle arises from his awareness of the rigid social hierarchy that separates him from Karaeng Asmi. Daro's love is accompanied by fear, uncertainty, and a sense of inferiority, as he understands that his relationship with a Karaeng woman is deemed unacceptable and dangerous within the social order. This internal conflict reflects a psychological battle between his emotional attachment and his rational understanding of the social consequences he may face.

#### **b) External Conflict**

In addition to internal struggles, the novel presents various forms of external conflict involving interactions between characters and the social environment. External conflict in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* primarily occurs between Daro and the Karaeng family, as well as between individual desires and the collective authority of tradition.

Daro becomes the main target of external conflict after his relationship with Karaeng Asmi is discovered by her family. Members of the Karaeng family perceive Daro as a threat to family honor and cultural purity. As a result, he is subjected to intimidation, threats of violence, and social exclusion. These actions demonstrate how tradition is used as a legitimizing force to justify oppressive behavior and physical threats against individuals who challenge established norms.

Furthermore, external conflict is also evident in the form of social pressure exerted on Karaeng Asmi by her extended family. She is confronted with accusations, surveillance, and coercion aimed at forcing her to end her relationship with Daro. This conflict highlights the dominance of collective cultural values over individual freedom and underscores the power imbalance between personal agency and traditional authority.

Overall, the findings indicate that internal and external conflicts in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* are interconnected. Internal conflicts experienced by the characters are intensified by external pressures imposed by family and society, while external conflicts are rooted in the psychological resistance of the characters against unjust social norms. These intertwined conflicts form the central tension of the novel and serve as a critical reflection of social stratification and cultural rigidity within the Karaeng community.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate that character conflict in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide is constructed through a close interaction between internal and external conflicts, both of which are deeply influenced by psychological conditions and socio-cultural structures. This pattern aligns with previous studies on character conflict in novels, which emphasize that internal and external conflicts are not isolated phenomena but mutually reinforcing elements in shaping character development and narrative tension (Hasrin Wulan, Ruum Sya'baan, & Sulfiah, 2023; Nirwana, Ibrahim, & Dinar, 2023).

The internal conflicts experienced by Karaeng Asmi and Daro reflect psychological struggles that arise from conflicting values, desires, and social expectations. Karaeng Asmi's inner turmoil illustrates what literary psychology scholars describe as a conflict between personal ideals and internalized social norms. Her desire for equality and humanity clashes with the rigid customary rules of the Karaeng tradition, resulting in anxiety, guilt, and emotional distress. This finding supports previous research which suggests that internal conflict in literary characters often emerges from contradictions between individual aspirations and external value systems that have been internalized by the characters themselves (Ismanto, Rakhmawati, & Wardani, 2023; Fachrudin, 2020).

Similarly, Daro's internal conflict can be interpreted as a manifestation of psychological pressure caused by social stratification and power imbalance. His feelings of fear, inferiority, and hesitation indicate an internalization of caste-based discrimination imposed by the Karaeng social structure. This phenomenon corresponds with earlier studies that argue that internal conflict frequently develops when characters are positioned in marginal or subordinate social roles, forcing them to negotiate between emotional needs and rational awareness of social consequences (Lestari & Hanifah, 2024; Nurhuda et al., 2023).

External conflict in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* primarily manifests through confrontation between individual characters and collective social authority. The threats and intimidation directed at Daro by the Karaeng family illustrate how tradition operates as a mechanism of social control. This finding is consistent with Sumadi's (2018) argument that external conflict in novels with strong cultural backgrounds often functions as a representation of power relations, where dominant groups enforce norms through coercion and violence. In this context, tradition is not merely a cultural heritage but a legitimizing tool for maintaining social hierarchy.

Moreover, the external pressure exerted on Karaeng Asmi by her family reflects the limited agency afforded to individuals within rigid traditional systems. Her experience resonates with findings from previous studies that highlight how female characters in culturally bound narratives often become sites of conflict due to their position at the intersection of family honor, social expectations, and personal desire (Hasrin Wulan et al., 2023; Pemila, Shomary, & Rahayu, 2021). Thus, external conflict in the novel reinforces patriarchal and hierarchical values embedded in the Karaeng tradition.

The interrelation between internal and external conflicts in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* confirms the view that psychological struggles of literary characters cannot be separated from their social environments. External oppression intensifies internal turmoil, while internal resistance provokes further external conflict. This reciprocal relationship strengthens the narrative tension and underscores the novel's critical stance toward rigid social stratification and cultural absolutism. In this regard, the novel not only portrays personal suffering but also offers a broader social critique of traditions that prioritize lineage and status over humanity and justice.

Overall, the discussion reveals that the conflicts depicted in *Cinta Anak Karaeng* extend beyond individual emotional struggles and function as a reflection of broader socio-cultural realities. By situating character conflict within the framework of literary psychology and cultural power relations, this study contributes to existing scholarship by highlighting how local traditions can shape, constrain, and even endanger individual identity and emotional well-being.

## Relevance of Research Findings to School Learning

The analysis of Ahmad Sahide's novel "Cinta Anak Karaeng" (Love for Karaeng Children) on the element of character conflict is relevant to Indonesian language and literature instruction, both at the junior high and senior high school levels. Its relevance can be seen in students' ability to identify and develop character conflict. This ability is crucial for Indonesian language and literature teachers when teaching short story writing, as students must master how to construct character conflict to develop their writing related to the short story. This illustrates the fundamental and crucial role of students in understanding character conflict. Conflict is an essential element in developing the plot of a fictional text. The development of the plot of a narrative work is greatly influenced by the structure of the conflict presented in a literary work, especially novels. One of the analyses of the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide on the element of character conflict has relevance in learning Indonesian in grade VII, both in semester 1 and semester 2. Table 4.1 shows that the relevance of the study of character conflict in the novel has relevance to the following Basic Competencies (KD): (3.3) identifying elements of narrative texts (fantasy stories); (4.3) retelling the contents of narrative texts; (3.4) analyzing the structure and language of narrative texts; (4.4) presenting creative ideas in the form of stories orally and in writing by paying attention to the structure and use of language; (3.15) identifying information about local fables/legends that are read and heard; (4.15) retelling the contents of local fables/legends; and (3.16) analyzing the structure and language of local fables/legends that are read and heard. Based on the review of the Indonesian language subject syllabus at grade VII level it can be said that the results of this study are relevant to the teaching of Indonesian language in junior high schools. The relevance is that it can serve as a reference for teachers on how to describe character conflict in literature lessons in grade VII, and it can serve as a reference for students in analyzing character conflict in a narrative story assigned by the teacher.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that character conflict in the novel *Cinta Anak Karaeng* by Ahmad Sahide is a central narrative element that reflects the interaction between individual psychology and rigid socio-cultural structures. The analysis shows that the conflicts experienced by the characters can be categorized into two main forms, namely internal conflict and external conflict, which are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Internal conflict is predominantly experienced by the main characters, Karaeng Asmi and Daro, in the form of psychological struggles, emotional dilemmas, fear, anxiety, and inner tension. These conflicts arise from the contradiction between personal desires, ideals of humanity and equality, and the internalized norms of Karaeng tradition that strictly regulate social relations and marriage based on lineage and social status. The characters' internal struggles illustrate how deeply social values and traditions can penetrate individual consciousness and shape psychological responses.

External conflict, on the other hand, manifests through confrontation between individual characters and the collective authority of family and tradition. The threats, intimidation, and social pressure faced by Daro and Karaeng Asmi demonstrate how cultural norms function as instruments of power to maintain social hierarchy and control individual behavior. In this context, tradition is not merely a cultural inheritance but also

a mechanism that legitimizes exclusion, discrimination, and violence against those who challenge established norms.

The findings further indicate that internal and external conflicts in the novel are inseparable. External pressures imposed by family and society intensify the characters' internal turmoil, while internal resistance against unjust norms triggers broader social conflict. This reciprocal relationship highlights the novel's critical perspective on social stratification and cultural rigidity within the Karaeng community.

Overall, this study contributes to literary studies by providing insight into how character conflict in novels with strong local cultural backgrounds reflects broader social realities. By applying a qualitative descriptive method and a literary psychology approach, this research underscores the importance of examining both psychological and socio-cultural dimensions in understanding character conflict. The results of this study are expected to enrich discussions on Indonesian novels that foreground local traditions and to serve as a reference for further research on character conflict and literary psychology in culturally specific contexts.

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