

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Study

The word alienation is usually used to describe feelings of separation within a group of people. In a literary work, alienation can be experienced by main characters in novels or other literary works. The term "alienation" is generally characterized in today's life. Alienation is a term that most people can easily understand in terms of their familiarity with writings such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology.

This section aims to provide a review and compare previous studies that have the same theme as the research I made. The first journal that I will review from Hana Fauziah with the title *Alienation of man as reflected in Jhon Grisham's Theodore Boone: the activist*. This journal was published on December 2, 2020 which discusses alienation in John Grisham's novel, in her research Hana uses the theory of Karl Marx. In her research Hana focuses on 3 parts, the first is alienation from activity, the second is self-alienation and the last is alienation from others. The conclusion from her research is that John Grisham is indeed trying to criticize modernism through the concept of alienation. Also, the destruction of the environment and damage to human civilization is proof that the policies of authorities such as infrastructure are almost never intended for the public interest except for certain interests and such policies have been proven to alienate humans from their activities, and themselves.

The second is article from Margareta Ngore, Nasrullah, and Jonathan Irene Sartika Dewi Max, entitled "*Alienation in the Main Character in Chris Cleave's The Other Hand Novel*". This journal examines the alienation experienced by the main character, Little Bee, in the novel. Through a psychological approach and using Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation, the study identified five forms of alienation experienced by Little Bee, namely powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-alienation. The results show that these experiences of

alienation profoundly affect Little Bee's characterization, which is expressed through indirect characterizations, such as actions, dialogues, and environments. This study makes a significant contribution to understanding how alienation can be embodied in fictional characters and offers valuable insights for further research on similar themes.

The third is me as the author of this journal used an article from Hajaratul Wardani which was published in September 2016 with the title *Alienation in the Main Character as Reflected in Barbara Delinsky's Together Alone: Social Psychological Approach*. Wardani explored the concept of alienation using a social-psychological approach, particularly in Barbara Delinsky's novel *Together Alone*. The research highlighted how alienation manifests in the main character, primarily through workaholism and feelings of powerlessness. These forms of alienation were analyzed within the context of Marxist theory, which associates alienation with the worker's disconnection from both their work and social relations. Wardani's descriptive qualitative study found that alienation led to significant impacts on the character's psychological well-being, particularly loneliness and a sense of estrangement from family and society. The research also addressed the role of social psychology in understanding the character's mental state, which was influenced by both external work pressures and internal psychological conflicts. This study provides a critical examination of alienation as it pertains to social and personal identity within modern capitalist societies.

The fourth is journal from Narendra Kumar Singh & Dr. Cahaya Jain, with the title *The Theme of Alienation in the Major Novels of Doris Lessing* which was published in January 2018 this journal explored the theme extensively in the works of Doris Lessing, emphasizing that alienation manifests as a disconnection between individuals and their social or moral environments. They highlight how Lessing's characters, such as Mary Turner in *The Grass is Singing* and Ben Lovatt in *Ben in the World*, are depicted as estranged figures. Singh and Jain argue that the theme of alienation is pervasive throughout Lessing's novels, influencing her portrayal of family, gender, and societal relationships. Despite significant work on themes like

feminism and communism in Lessing's writing, their study identifies a gap in the exploration of alienation, which they seek to address comprehensively.

The last journal from Yossa Galuh Darhantian titled *Marxist's Alienation in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men Characters* was published 2016 and explores how the characters in Steinbeck's novella experience alienation in a capitalistic society. The study focuses on the characters' feelings of isolation and disconnection, especially under the pressures of class division and economic struggle. Using Karl Marx's theory of alienation, Darhantian identifies how capitalism leads to the alienation of the ranch workers, specifically George and Lennie, from their labor, their fellow workers, and their personal identities. The journal concludes that the exploitative nature of capitalism is the root cause of the characters' alienation, which manifests in both their personal and professional lives

2.2 Characterization

Characterization is the process of creating and portraying characters in a work of fiction, where the characters often have significant differences from each other as well as different beliefs and behaviors from the writer or author. Characterization includes the way the characters describe or portray themselves, even though the characters are not real and only exist in the context of the story, they still serve as a representation of the character (Safrudi, 2014). In a story, characterization involves not only how a character is developed but also how they interact with other characters. Through this process, writers try to convey a message to the reader as well as provide an understanding of the fictional world they have created.

Effective characterization plays an important role in deepening and strengthening a narrative. By carefully crafting characters with traits and motivations, writers create a dynamic and engaging fictional world that can resonate with readers. A character often reflects complex emotional and psychological dimensions, which can reflect broader human experiences and social issues. Interactions between characters, influenced by their unique personalities and backgrounds, not only advance the plot but also reveal underlying themes. This dynamic enhances the realism of the

narrative and allows readers to establish a deeper connection with the story, thus enriching their overall reading experience.

2.3 Psychological Approach

In this section, the researcher outlines the psychological approach employed to analyze the theme of alienation in the novel *Milk Fed*. This psychological approach, which displays the impact of psychology on each literature and literary criticism (Masyhur, Fitratullah, & Kasih, 2023). This approach focuses on understanding how alienation affects the mental and emotional states of the main character, utilizing psychological theories and concepts to provide a deeper insight into her experiences. By applying psychological frameworks, the research aims to explore how feelings of isolation, detachment, and disconnection manifest in the character's behavior, thoughts, and interpersonal relationships.

The psychological approach involves examining the character's internal struggles through various lenses, such as cognitive-behavioral theory, which looks at how negative thought patterns and beliefs contribute to feelings of alienation. Additionally, psychodynamic theory may be employed to explore how unconscious conflicts and past experiences influence the character's sense of self and her interactions with others. By analyzing the character's emotional responses and psychological mechanisms, the study seeks to uncover the underlying causes of her alienation and the impact it has on her overall mental health. This approach not only enriches the understanding of the character's psychological profile but also provides a framework for discussing the broader implications of alienation within both the narrative and real-life contexts.

2.4 Erich Fromm Theory

Erich Fromm (2002), according to him alienation is a condition in which humans experience themselves as strangers, but he does not clarify alienation as a condition of solitude but explains that humans face themselves. It can be seen that someone who is alienated thinks that he is something that exists from a human creation that

must submit to its creator, and vice versa.

To understand how alienation as depicted in Melissa Broder's novel *Milk Fed*, this study utilizes Erich Fromm's theory of alienation and social psychology. These theories offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing the feelings of alienation experienced by the main characters in the novel, as well as the broader social context that influences the phenomenon. Erich Fromm's alienation theory is a part of social and psychological thought that highlights how individuals feel alienated, focusing on both psychological and social aspects. Here are the key elements of Erich Fromm's theory of alienation:

1. Alienation from Self

Fromm says that alienation is a condition in which individuals feel separate from themselves, losing touch with the essence of their humanity. This means that a person no longer feels a part of themselves and acts out of accordance with their inner desires and needs. Individuals may feel deep dissatisfaction and anxiety, as they live according to external expectations (such as social norms or job pressures) instead of following what they truly want or need.

Example: It is like a successful person who has a position and an abundance of wealth and riches, but feels empty and unhappy. Although he has a high position and a large income, he feels alienated from his true desires, such as the desire to be creative in art or spend time with his family. The pressure from society to be successful and competitive made him neglect his own needs.

Here are some Key Elements of Self-Alienation:

- Detachment from Emotions and Thoughts

Individuals experiencing self-alienation often feel that they no longer recognize or understand their own emotions and thoughts. They may feel like they are in an emotional fog, where feelings and thoughts are unclear.

- Body and Physique

Self-alienation can also appear in the form of alienation from the physical body, such as not feeling a connection between their body and their mind, and can also include eating disorders, where individuals feel that their body does not reflect their true identity.

2. Alienation from Others

Individuals may feel alienated from others in society, human relationships have become superficial and transactional, driven by the need to adapt to social and economic expectations. In modern society, people often feel lonely despite being in a crowd, as they are unable to form deep and authentic relationships. Causing social relationships to become unsatisfying, which can lead to feelings of loneliness, emotional alienation, and the inability to feel connected to others on a deep level.

Example: This alienation occurs when individuals feel unable to establish meaningful relationships with others. They feel emotionally isolated and disconnected from those around them and their relationships with others feel superficial.

3. Alienation from Work

Fromm identified how individuals feel alienated from their work. Instead of work being a means for self-expression and personal achievement, it often becomes an unfulfilling and meaningless routine. This is especially the case in capitalist societies, where work is often dictated by economic necessity and not by personal needs or interests. It makes work no longer a source of pride or satisfaction, but rather a burden that must be carried to survive, and this can deepen feelings of alienation.

Example: A worker in a factory who does the same job every day, such as assembling parts of a product without ever seeing the end result. He doesn't feel connected to his job because he is just doing monotonous repetitive tasks. For him, work is just a means to earn money, but it does not provide personal meaning or pride.

4. Alienation from Nature

Humans in modern society often feel alienated from nature. The process of

industrialization and urbanization has taken people further away from their natural environment, which once provided a sense of balance and connectedness. This loss of connection with nature contributes to a broader sense of alienation, both from oneself and from the world around.

Example: In modern life, people tend to get separated from nature due to busy urban life and technology that changes the way we interact with the outside world. This is someone who is always caught up in technology and digital life, without realizing the beauty or importance of connecting with nature. A character in the novel who lives in a big city like Los Angeles may be disconnected from his natural environment due to being caught up in the urban lifestyle and materialism.

Alienation theory can contribute in three ways: the first by suggesting potential mechanisms mediating the relationship between social class and health, the second by distributing the persistence of the 'paradox' of health inequality in developed countries welfare, and third place psycho-social determinants of health in general theory of class and inequality in capitalist society (Overseen & Kelly, 2022).

In this analysis, Erich Fromm's theory of alienation will be used to understand how the social and economic systems in the novel create conditions of alienation for Rachel and also will help analyze Rachel's feelings of alienation from a psychological and social perspective, especially in relation to herself and others. These theories allow readers to see not only how alienation affects Rachel personally, but also how the wider social context contributes to her experience of alienation and it has no purpose or provide no inner satisfaction. This feeling of emptiness can manifest as despair, depression, or existential anxiety, where one is constantly searching for meaning but never feels like they find it.