

**STRUGGLE IN LIFE IN *BEAUTIFUL WORLD, WHERE  
ARE YOU* NOVEL BY SALLY ROONEY**

**THESIS**



**UIN SUNAN AMPEL  
S U R A B A Y A**

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## ABSTRACT

Afiani, L. (2023). *Struggle in Life in Beautiful World Where Are You Novel by Sally Rooney*. English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisor: Dr. Abu Fanani, S.S., M.pd.

This study aims to discuss the struggle in life faced by the four main characters in the novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* by Sally Rooney. They are Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon. This study also aims to find out the reasons that occur as a result of the struggle in life experienced by the main characters. Therefore, this study focuses on the main research questions; (1) How is struggle in life described in Sally Rooney's novel *Beautiful World Where Are You*? (2) What are the social contexts that influence the main characters in Sally Rooney's novel *Beautiful World Where Are You*? What impact did the struggle have on Sally Rooney's novel *Beautiful World Where Are You*?

This study uses a qualitative method. The researcher also uses the theory of Realism from George Lukacs to examine the struggle in life experienced by the main characters and analyze the data. Data collection was carried out by first reading the novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* by Sally Rooney and then sorting the data according to the results of the research.

The conclusion of this study reveals that Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon experience struggles in life regarding their respective jobs. Alice struggles with the popularity she gets from the books she publishes until she becomes depressed because of the expectations from her fans. Felix who struggles with jealousy because his job is heavier but doesn't make much money and has to give in and do as Alice wants because she is richer than Felix. Eileen who has to be looked down upon by her own family, especially her older sister, because her job as an editor for a literary magazine can't make much money. As well as Simon who was oppressed by his boss and finally had to do all the work of his boss.

**Keywords:** struggle, realism, reflection, struggle in life.

## ABSTRAK

Afiani, L. (2023). *Perjuangan Hidup dalam Novel Beautiful World, Where Are You karya Sally Rooney*. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: Dr. Abu Fanani, S.S., M.pd.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas tentang perjuangan dalam hidup yang dihadapi oleh para karakter utama dalam novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* karya Sally Rooney. Mereka adalah ALice, Felix, Eileen, dan Simon. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui alasan dan dampak yang terjadi akibat perjuangan kelas yang dialami oleh para karakter utama. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini fokus pada pertanyaan peneliti utama; (1) Bagaimana perjuangan dalam hidup digambarkan dalam novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* karya Sally Rooney? (2) Faktor apa yang mempengaruhi perjuangan dalam novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* karya Sally Rooney? (3) Dampak perjuangan apa yang terjadi pada novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* karya Sally Rooney?

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Peneliti juga menggunakan teori dari marxis dari Karl Marx untuk mengkaji perjuangan kelas yang dialami oleh para karakter utama dan menganalisis data. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara membaca novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* karya Sally Rooney terlebih dahulu lalu memilah data yang sesuai dengan hasil penelitian.

Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa Alice, Felix, Eileen, dan Simon mengalami perjuangan dalam hidup hal pekerjaan mereka masing-masing. Alice yang berjuang dengan kepopuleran yang dia dapatkan dari buku-buku yang ia terbitkan hingga ia menjadi depresi karena ekspektasi dari para penggemarnya. Felix yang berjuang dengan rasa iri nya karena pekerjaannya yang lebih berat namun tidak menghasilkan banyak uang dan harus mengalah dan menuruti kemauan Alice karena dia lebih kaya dari Felix. Eileen yang harus direndahkan oleh keluarganya sendiri, khusus nya kakak perempuannya, karena pekerjaannya sebagai editor majalah sastra tidak dapat menghasilkan banyak uang. Serta Simon yang tertindas oleh atasan nya dan akhirnya harus melakukan semua pekerjaan atasan nya.

**Kata Kunci:** perjuangan, realitas, cerminan, perjuangan dalam hidup.

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

According to Sumaatmadja (in Maftuhin et al., 2016: 11), humans as living beings exist in the midst of other humans (social environment), in a cultural context (cultural environment), and the universe (natural environment). Besides having different characteristics, humans also have various similarities between humans. Therefore, humans are very interesting to study and observe every process of their life.

Literary works have an important role in society, because literary works are a reflection of the social conditions that occur in the world so that the work inspires people's feelings to think about life. Social problems and events that are experienced, felt, and seen by the author then give birth to ideas or ideas that are set forth in his work. One thing that cannot be denied is the fact that a poet or artist in general always lives in a certain time and space. In it, he will be involved with various problems that exist in society. In this context, literature is not something that is autonomous and stands alone, but something that is closely tied to the social situation and conditions in the environment in which the work is born (Nyoman, 2011: 24).

Reflections on life can be found in literary works, because in it there is a story of a character's life journey that was successfully built by a writer for readers

to enjoy. One of the literary works that can detail a story or life story is a novel. According to Nurgiyantoro (2013: 17), what is presented by the novel is a world on a larger and more complex scale which includes various life experiences that are considered actual, but all are still intertwined.

According to Nurgiyantoro (in Nilawijaya and Awalludin, 2021: 15), defines a novel as a work of fiction that offers a world, that world contains an idealized, imaginative, and constructive model of life through its intrinsic elements. According to Nurgiyantoro (2013: 30), a novel has building elements in it, so there must be an assessment before entering into research problems, especially those related to the intrinsic elements of a novel. Because the intrinsic elements of a novel are the elements that (directly) participate in building the story.

Struggle is an effort made or contributed by a person or group that can influence an event with hard work full of challenges to achieve something you want to achieve (Ikenberry, 2016). According to Soekanto (2009: 212) in his book *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, states that struggle is "a dynamic aspect of position (status)". Someone occupying a position in society needs to carry out his struggle, as explained by Soekanto (2009: 213) that struggle includes norms associated with one's position or place in society. Struggles between society are very diverse, such as struggles in life, social struggles, struggles in work, and struggles in economic terms (Rummel, 1997).

Struggle in life seem to be related in the present, as shown by Sally Rooney in her novel, *Beautiful World, Where Are You*. Tells the story of four main characters named Alice, Eileen, Simon, and Felix who have difficulty in living a social life. Alice and Eileen are best friends since college, both in their 29 or 30s. Alice is a successful novelist who has recently had a nervous breakdown and has chosen to temporarily disappear. He starts seeing Felix, a warehouse worker he met on Tinder and goes to Rome with him. Meanwhile, Eileen is an editorial assistant at a literary magazine in Dublin. She starts an ordinary relationship with Simon, a handsome childhood friend. At first, Felix rejects a relationship with Alice, saying that Alice likes Felix to misbehave with him which makes Alice appear morally superior. Simon doesn't really go after Eileen either (though he's always loved her), saying that he pushes people away. Alice and Eileen also have tension in their friendship, as each feels they care more than the other. In the end, both partners and friends have relationships that can be more vulnerable to each other because there are so many differences in each of them. Like Alice who was finally depressed because of her fame and wanted to return to being an unfamous Alice, Felix who was insecure about Alice's work that could make a lot of money while he was only a worker in a warehouse, Eileen who was always ridiculed as an old woman and her job as an editor at a magazine literature is not attractive and does not make much money, and Simon, who wants to become a social worker and help the community, instead gets an office job as a politician. Each of them experiences social pressures from around them which in the end requires them to

continue to struggle in social society so that they are unconsciously experiencing a class struggle which has an impact on their career and social life.

The social reality in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* provides a reflection of the phenomena that occur in real life, such as difficult economic conditions, situations and conditions that do not support the pursuit of goals, difficult to get opportunities to realize desires, or urgent circumstances to achieve goals. forced to live. All of that can be influenced by the social environment that has a good or bad influence on someone. The environment in question is like the family environment, friendship, and work environment.

Because there are social relations that exist in the life of the main character of Sally Rooney's novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, this research is analyzed based on a sociological review of literary works. This was done because the aim of this research is to focus on the social context that influences the main characters. According to Kurniawan (2012: 11), the sociology of literary works is the second sociological analysis and departs from literary works. That is, an analysis of the social aspects in literary works is carried out in order to understand and interpret their relationship with the social conditions of the people outside them. Analyzing the social context in a novel is related to the social values contained in it (Sulaeman et al., 2020: 611-612). According to Young (in Nugroho and Yasafiq, 2019: 32), social values are abstract and often unconscious assumptions about what is considered right and what is important. Social values are more emphasized as directions for the achievement of social goals of society. Social values can also encourage readers to be able to behave in a better direction.

So that social value is a value that reflects an effort of every human being to be able to adapt to their social environment.

The novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney has never previously examined the struggle of life using Georg Lukacs' theory. Therefore, in research on the struggle for life, researchers look for reference materials and become references. The following is a list of several researchers who have conducted relevant research that can be used as a literature review, such as research from Widya Prameswari Pertiwi, Imam Muhtarom, and Dewi Herlina Sugiarti (2021) with the title *Perjuangan Hidup Tokoh Utama Novel 23 Episentrum Karya Adenita dan Relevansinya terhadap Materi Ajar Sastra di SMA Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra*. The results obtained from this study are: (1) an analysis of the main character's life struggle which includes the struggle to survive, always be grateful, realize dreams, pay off debts, carry out work, get happiness, and to continue a good deed, and (2) context analysis The social influences that affect the main character include the influence of the family environment, friendships, and work. The results of this study are relevant for use as teaching material for literature in high school, especially for writing novels.

The second is research from Moch. Zainul Arifin (2019) with the title *Realitas Sosial Dalam Novel Pulang Karya Leila S. Chudori: Perspektif Realisme Sosialis Georg Lukacs*. The results of this study state that facts such as the existence of political exiles living in limbo in Europe, torture and massacres of victims of wrongful arrests, and so on. This explains how the history that we study

today is only history made by irresponsible persons. Therefore, the social reality in the novel *Pulang* by Leila S. Chudori is the forgotten life of Indonesian society.

Then, the third is research from Leliana Lestari Sain and Risma Kartika Dewi (2022), with the title *Ikal's Struggle Of Life In Andrea Hirata's Rainbow Troops: Struggle of Life*. The results of her research show that Ikal's struggle to get a master's degree from the European Union which led him to become a successful person is that Ikal always studies, reads as many books as possible whenever and wherever, the time he spends is just studying to pass scholarships. Factors that influence Ikal to become a successful person are Ikal who has a very competitive soul and personality, works harder than most people and fate. The reason why the researcher wants to research the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally is because the researcher feels this is a very interesting novel to read and find out the struggles in it. Then, because the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* no one has researched before, both in terms of content and meaning.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

- 1.2.1 How is the life struggle of the main characters in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney?
- 1.2.2 What are the social contexts that influence the main characters in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney?

### 1.3 Significance of The Study

The researcher hopes this research can be useful for academic needs. This research can help students understand the analysis of the novel using Realism Literary Theory especially, to understand about life struggle in this novel. After studying this, students can carry out further research using this research as a reference, in order to develop higher quality research.

### 1.4 Scope and Limitation

The researcher focused on the four main characters that shows indications of struggle in life of the main characters in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney, published in 2021. The researcher uses the theory of realism from George Lukacs to examine the struggles experienced by the main characters' lives.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

**Struggle** is an effort made or person or group who contributes that can influence an event with hard work full of challenges to achieve something you want to achieve (Ikenberry, 2016).

**George Lukacs** is a literary sociology figure who uses the term "mirror" as a characteristic in all works. Reflecting, according to him, means compiling a mental structure. A work does not only reflect "reality" but more than that gives us "a bigger, fuller, more lively and more dynamic reflection of reality that may go beyond common understanding".



**Realism Theory** is the theory about literary movement that represents reality by describing ordinary everyday experiences as they exist in real life. It depicts familiar people, places, and stories, especially those of middle and lower class society. Literary realism seeks to tell a work and story as truthfully as possible without dramatizing or romanticizing it.

**Struggle in life** is very necessary in the life of a human being who lives in this real world, so that it can be said that one has to struggle or try to achieve the desires or goals to be achieved both in the material and immaterial fields.



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## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter used contains the theoretical framework used by the researcher in analyzing the novel and some previous study related to the research topic.

#### **2.1 George Lukacs's Theory of Reality**

George Lucacs is a literary sociology figure who uses the term “mirror” as a characteristic in all works. Reflecting, according to him, means compiling a mental structure. A work does not only reflect “reality” but more than that gives us “a bigger, fuller, more lively and more dynamic reflection of reality that may go beyond common understanding”. A literary work does not only reflect individual phenomena in a closed manner but rather is a “living process”. Literature does not reflect reality like photography, but rather as a special form that reflects reality (Suwardi, 2003:89).

The relationship between socio”ogy and literature is mediated by reality. More specifically, this relation has been explained in socio-objective which analyzes the objective of literary works with law and sociological theory to relate sociological relations between literary works and society. This indicates that literature is a mirror of society. Literature always describes the real world. Therefore, literary imaginary social reality also represents the actual reality. It is from this concept that the relationship between sociology and literature is mediated by actual social reality (Heru Kurniawan, 2012: 89).

Georg Lukacs explains that the concept of literature is a “reflection” of an open system. Realist literary works must reveal the basic patterns of contradiction in a social order. “Reflection” is a special characteristic of literary works. Novels (literary works) reflect reality, not by painting faces that only appear on the surface, but by giving us (readers) “a reflection of reality that is truer, more complete, livelier and more dynamic” Selden (in Sariban, 2009: 22).

Georg Lukacs’ socialist realism originates from the views of Marx. Georg Lukacs’ theory of socialist realism is closely related to Marx’s theory of Marxism. Lukacs supports Marx’s opinion. Initially, Marx, with his concept of economic determination, conceptualized that literature as a product of the superstructure, its existence is determined by the economic basis (infrastructure) (Kurniawan, 2012:45). However, what Lukacs uses as a basis is regarding Marx’s definition of the conditions regarding the relationship between theory and practice to be possible “it is not enough if thought must try to realize itself: reality must also strive towards thought.” Or, as he put it in an early work: “then, one will realize that the world has long taken the form of a dream which only needs to be mastered consciously in order to be mastered in reality” (Lukacs, 2011:24).

This definition from Marx was used as a basis by Georg Lukacs who explained that if a class wants to understand society, then that class must see society as a whole. The consequence of this is that a class will be both the subject and the object of knowledge. Thus, then the unity of theory and practice becomes possible (Lukacs, 2011:24).

Based on this, Georg Lukacs views that realism is an art theory that is based on dialectical contemplation between artists and their social environment. At the time of creation, he mediates with the objects around him. Artists are not only driven by their environment, but they are also moving their environment (Karyanto, 1997:9). This opinion explains that social realism is a theory derived from reflections and investigations as well as the interactions carried out by artists with nature, society which are the objects of their studies. Artists must fully understand the object of study and its social environment when creating a work of art. This is in line with the explanation of Georg Lukacs who said that beautiful art is one that expresses the truth of reality (Karyanto, 1997:12).

Selden provides an explanation of the concept of social realism as follows. There is a class division in society: bourgeoisie and proletariat, employer class and working class. Literature is basically the struggle of the social class. Every literature is tendentious, there is no literature which is neither literary nor tendentious. Every literature is political. Therefore, literature can be seen from three aspects: the evolution of literature, literature as a mirror of social class, as well as the function of politics and class struggles in society (Selden in Sariban, 2009:22).

Based on this opinion, it can be said that realism is the struggle carried out by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in an environment that is influenced by political and tendentious nature. This struggle is not just an imitation of reality but is a class struggle carried out in society.

Georg Lukacs said that there are three links between the realist literary artist and his social environment. First, a realist places the unity of society as the main focus. Second, a realist will use the meaning of life as his point of view in seeing the reality of his society. And third, the present is the center of social movement which is influenced by the past and will determine the future (Lukacs in Karyanto, 1997:62). This opinion clearly describes the relationship between the writer and the community. The author makes society as an object to create literary works.

### **2.1.1 Realism Theory**

Literary works are born because of a process that the author goes through in terms of the creator, a literary work is the creator's inner experience about people's lives in a certain period of time and cultural situation. Literary works are created for society. Therefore, the author must be able to influence the reader to believe in the truth that is stated. One effort to convince the reader is to approach the truth taken from the reality that exists in society. The state of society in one place at a time when a literary work is created will be illustratively reflected in a literary work. Literary works usually contain clear pictures of a place at a time with various human actions. Humans with their various actions in society are objects of sociological study. As Marx said (Faruk in Ika, 2019), the social structure of a society, as well as the structure of its institutions, its morality, religion, and literature, is primarily determined by the conditions of life, especially the productive conditions of that society's life.

Literature as a mirror of society considers that literature is an imitation of people's lives. According to Ian Watt (Damono in Ika, 2019) literature as a reflection of people's lives is a function of literature to reflect people's lives into literature. Literature generally tries to present the condition of society as accurately as possible in order to be able to describe the original life of the people of its era.

Lukacs uses the term "mirror" as a feature throughout his work. According to him, reflecting means constructing a mental structure. A novel does not only reflect 'reality' but more than that gives us "a larger, fuller, more lively and more dynamic reflection of reality" that may transcend common understanding. A literary work does not only reflect an individual phenomenon in a closed manner but rather is a 'living process'. Literature does not reflect reality as a kind of photography, but rather as a special form that reflects reality. Thus, literature can honestly and objectively reflect reality and can also reflect subjective impressions of reality (Selden, 1991:27)

Social reality is social events that occur in a real literary work. Social reality in literary works shows an event that occurs in the real world which is re-imagined by the author in a work. In literary works, there are many interactions between individuals that form an event. Events between individuals give rise to social phenomena in literary works. These symptoms are the result of the author's imagination resulting from imaginatively constructed reality. The relationship between the author's imagination and the reality that shows reality in literary works (Kartikasari, 2014).

Literary realism is a literary movement that represents reality by describing ordinary everyday experiences as they exist in real life. It depicts familiar people, places, and stories, especially those of middle and lower class society. Literary realism seeks to tell a work and story as truthfully as possible without dramatizing or romanticizing it (Muhtarom, 2004).

Literary realism was part of the realist art movement that began in 19<sup>th</sup> century France and lasted into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It began as a reaction against 18<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism and the rise of the bourgeoisie in Europe. Romanticism's works were considered too exotic and out of touch with the real world. The roots of literary realism lie in France, where realist writers published works of realism in novels and in serial form in newspapers. The earliest realist writers included Honoré de Balzac, who infused his writings with complex characters and detailed observations of society, and Gustave Flaubert to Georg Lukacs, who crafted realist narratives as we know them today (Nadal, 2004).

Lukacs emphasizes the view of real realist works as works that give artistic feelings originating from the imaginations they convey. The imaginations have an intensive totality corresponding to the extensive totality of the world. The author does not provide an abstract picture of the world but rather a wealth of imagination and the complexity of life to be lived to form an ideal social order. So, the goal is solving contradictions through historical dialectics (Yahyanejad, 2015).



### 2.1.2 Struggle in Life

Struggle is an effort made by a person or group of people to achieve something they want through the processes and obstacles faced in the community. Struggle in one's life is very necessary in the life of a human being who lives in this real world, so that it can be said that one has to struggle or try to achieve the desires or goals to be achieved both in the material and immaterial fields (Ikenberry, 2016).

Life is a struggle, meaning in this life there must be an effort from us to be able to move forward. When a person has no enthusiasm to move forward, it is certain that person will be a loser for the rest of his life. The person can only blame circumstances, themselves and others. For that whoever we are, if we want to be successful then there must be a struggle in this life (Soekanto, 2009). Seeing the understanding above, if we examine it more deeply, it would be better for us to struggle as much as possible to achieve the success we want to achieve, we often hear words like fight to the end, the meaning of words like that we have to fight try as much as possible in this life, so that we can reap the fruit of success that we plant when we struggle.

Struggle is an effort full of difficulties to get something better. The meaning of life has a broad meaning and can be interpreted in many ways. Each individual has a different way of living life, and has a different meaning in interpreting life. Life is not just a routine that is done every day. Life is more meaningful when you learn to interpret life with positive things for yourself and others around you. Life is still breathing and moving. To live is to experience life



in a certain way. Life is getting sustenance by means of something. Life is an opportunity for individuals to devote their abilities to others. Life is an opportunity to share joys and sorrows with loved ones. Life is an opportunity to know people. Life is an opportunity to serve people. Life is an opportunity to love and care for others. Life is an opportunity to always be grateful for what God has given in this life. Life is an opportunity to learn and continue to learn about the meaning of life itself. In fighting for something you want, you can't just achieve it right away, but go through various processes. In this process, do not despair, all the problems faced must have a way out. Parents, friends, friends, family, relatives and people around are the place to solve the problems they face. To fight for something, you aspire to requires intention and an unyielding soul. Always be grateful for what God has given and believe that God will give the best for anyone.



UIN SUNAN AMPEL  
S U R A B A Y A

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In accordance with the type of research, the data to be discussed is qualitative data. According to Moleong (2005: 157) qualitative data can be collected through interviews, observations, documents. The data to be used is the content contained in the novel such as; characterization, plot, setting, theme and message, and point of view leading to class struggle as expressed by the author in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney.

##### **3.1.1 Data Source**

This research has two data sources, primary and secondary data. The primary data source was the *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney, published in 2021. This research focused on the four main characters including Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon. And the secondary data sources used in the form of books, journal articles, and several previous studies that related to the issues.

##### **3.1.2 Instrument**

The research instrument was the researcher himself (human instrument) who analyzed Sally Rooney's novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* in a qualitative descriptive manner using a Marxist approach. Qualitative research is often interpreted as research that does not carry out calculations or numbers (Moleong, 1989: 2).

### **3.1.3 Data Collection Technique**

The researcher collects data in the following steps:

1. The researcher reads the novel three times for deeper understanding of the content of the novel.
2. The researcher made a data table to analyze each chapter.
3. The researcher classify data topics
4. The researcher also sort and select topics that are in accordance with Marxist theory to find class struggle.
5. Then, the researcher analyzed the data related to the problem and determined the class struggle experienced by the four main characters, namely Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon.

### **3.2 Data Analysis Technique**

1. The researcher will divide into two significant issues that specifically include the social class experienced by the main characters and the class struggle experienced by the main characters.
2. The researcher explains the class struggle experienced by the main characters.
3. The researcher analyzes two significant issues.
4. The researcher concludes the findings and provides suggestions according to the research question being analyzed.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher will analyze the struggle in life experienced by each four main characters in the novel.

#### **4.1 The Struggle in Life in the novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* novel by Sally Rooney**

In people's lives there are problems in a social class, society itself divides the class that is within them as experienced by the characters in the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, written by Sally Rooney. Tells about the four characters who have difficulties in the social struggles they experience caused by the social class they have. In this novel, there are Alice Kelleher who is a famous writer, Felix Brady who is a warehouse worker, Eileen who works as a writer in a literary magazine and Simon who is just an ordinary office worker. Felix and Eileen are a picture of the proletariat class in terms of the work and life they experience, meanwhile Alice and Simon can be both, bourgeois or proletariat too.

Alice is a woman who is a writer or novelist that has struggle with her fame. Alice Kelleher is a wildly successful writer living in New York City who is celebrated as the voice of a generation but is uncomfortable with the requirements of being famous. She is also a picture of the upper class and famous as seen in her chat with Felix's friends when Felix's house was having a small party where they opened Alice's paragraph site,

“Hunched over his phone now, the man said: Here, she’s famous. Alice did not respond, did not return Felix’s gaze. Danielle bent down over the screen to see. “Look at that”, she said. “She’s got a Wikipedia page and everything”. Felix slid off the countertop and took the phone out of his friend’s hand. He laughed, but his amusement did not seem completely sincere. “Literary work,” he read aloud. “Adaptations. Personal life. That section must be short,” said Alice. “Why didn’t you tell me you were famous?” she said. In a bored, almost contemptuous tone of voice she answered: “I told you I was a writer” (Rooney, 2021, p.38).

Pressure has resulted in what used to be called a nervous breakdown. In fact, it is still called that by Alice who moves from the asylum to the mansion by the sea where she lives free until the owners can break it down.

Simon Costigan is a liberal politician’s political consultant and advisor who is also Eileen’s childhood friend. This can be seen from the messages that Eileen and Simon sent when they were far apart and Simon, who was on duty at that time, said on Eileen’s sentence:

“send me a photo of your room”. The next message was a photograph of a hotel room interior, with a double bed taking up most of the floor space. On the bed was a purple duvet and a folded quilt in a different shade of purple. Eileen: “and now one with you in it.....”. Simon: “Haha” Simon: ‘Senior political adviser caught sending explicit images from the War of Independence commemoration ceremony’. And when Eileen first told Alice about Simon in “Everything in life is incredibly beautiful, Eileen wrote in a message to Alice. I can’t believe it’s possible to be so happy. Simon moved back to Dublin around that time, to work as a policy adviser for a left-wing parliamentary group” (Rooney, 2021, p. 29).

He is also deeply religious to the point that he seriously entertains the idea of entering the priesthood as Eileen tells Felix,

“I like him a lot, as a person, she said fairly. And I respect him. He works as an adviser to this tiny little left- wing parliamentary group, even though he could make buckets of money doing something. He’s religious, you know” (Rooney, 2021, p. 69).

The on/off relationship between Simon and Eileen is just one of the things that makes the idea a little prickly. The fact that Simon earns only slightly more than Eileen shows a class to them.

Felix who is a warehouse worker looks like the proletariat which is dominated by workers as in the sentence

“Ah, it’s not as unusual as that. I wonder what you wrote about, but I won’t ask. I work in a warehouse, outside town.” “Doing what?” “Well, doing what,” he repeated philosophically. “Collecting orders off the shelves and putting them in a trolley and then bringing them up to be packed. Nothing too exciting.” (Rooney, 2021, p. 3).

His job is just to collect the goods according to the code and put them in their place and then wrap them when someone orders them.

Eileen Lydon, Alice’s best friend from Trinity, works at a literary magazine for poor wages. Is a woman who works as an editor in a literary magazine which she is very passionate about and enjoys but only gets a very small salary and it doesn’t match the work she does as Rooney conveys in her novel,

Eileen was dating a PhD student named Kevin, and through him had found a low-paid but interesting job as an editorial assistant at a literary magazine. At first she was just copy-editing, but after a few months they allowed her to start commissioning new pieces, and at the end of the year the editor invited her to contribute some of her own work. Eileen said she would think about it. (Rooney, 2021, p. 29).

Eileen’s social class can be seen from the jobs she gets compared to Alice. Which at first she was just an employee at a bookstore whose job was only to stick prices on the shelf until finally she became an editorial assistant for a literary magazine which at that time she got thanks to her boyfriend. Who even though the pay is not much, but he really likes her job.

However, Alice here seems to have two personalities. She can be both a proletariat and a bourgeois. Her career as a famous writer who made a lot of money, of course, made her a bourgeois among her friends. Have a lot of money, luxury homes, good food and so forth. But on the other hand, she is also a proletarian when it comes to fans and readers of her books. Because Alice felt that she became famous and had a lot of money also because of the fans and readers who bought her books. That is why, she is demanded to be a perfect person by her fans just like the book she wrote. Therefore, she also gets the same impact from capitalism as her other friends which we will discuss below.

#### **4.1.1 The struggle at work**

Alice discussed this in her email reply to Eileen when she was in Rome attending a meeting with other writers at an event. Alice told her struggle when she met these writers and they pretended to care about the issues that were happening at that time, even though they only cared about their writing to be uploaded in the New York Times. It was they who created the side of capitalism in the form of writing and their concern for other writers. They think that the writings of writers who are not published in the New York Times are writers who are not successful and are not worthy of associating with those whose writings are uploaded by the New York Times. As Alice said in paragraph,

I just don't care what they think about ordinary life or ordinary people. As far as I'm concerned they're speaking from a false position when they speak about that. Why don't they write about the kind of lives they really lead, and the kind of things that really obsess them? Why do they pretend to be obsessed with death and grief and fascism – when really they're



obsessed with whether their latest book will be reviewed in the New York Times? Oh, and many of them come from normal backgrounds like mine, by the way. They're not all children of the bourgeoisie. The point is just that they stepped right out of ordinary life – maybe not when their first book came out, maybe it was the third or fourth, but anyway it was a long time ago – and now when they look behind them, trying to remember what ordinary life used to be like, it's so far away they have to squint. (Rooney, 2021, p. 78)

This paragraph is a fragment of Alice's reply letter to Eileen and tells everything when she was having a meeting in Rome with other novelists. Alice said that there are lots of novelists and writers who write about the realities of real life and they say they are fed up with what is happening in the world even though they don't know anything about it. Alice just thought, why don't they write about the realities of their own lives and pretend they care about death, grief and fascism. Whereas what they are only obsessed with is whether their book will be reviewed in the New York Times or not. At the end of the day, all they want is to make a lot of money with the books they produce.

Felix, who is a worker in a warehouse, has a heartbreaking story. Behind him trying to like his job he also felt compelled to work like that. When he is alone with Alice, he talks about how he got the job which is shown in the paragraph,

He cleared his throat then and said: "I felt a bit like that after my mam died. Last year. I just started thinking, what's the fucking point of life, you know? It's not like there's anything at the end of it."

"Not that I really wanted to be dead or anything, but I couldn't be fucked being alive most the time either. I don't know if you would call it a breakdown. I just had a few months where I was seriously not bothered about it – getting up and going to work and all that. I actually lost the job I had at the time, that's why I'm at the warehouse now."



“Yeah. So I kind of get what you’re saying about the breakdown. Obviously the experiences would be different in my case, but I see where you’re coming from, yeah.”

Alice said again that she was sorry for his loss and he accepted her condolences. (Rooney, 2021, p. 43)

The conversation above is the reason why Felix ended up working in a warehouse because he was grieving before because his mother died so he became stressed and didn’t care about anything for months and in the end, he lost his job at that time.

There was a moment when Eileen was visiting her friend’s party and was involved in a conversation between the working class and the meaning of the workers themselves who belong to the haves not class, as in paragraph

“Yeah, working doesn’t make you working class. Spending half your pay cheque on rent, not owning any property, getting exploited by your boss, none of it makes you working class, right? So what does, having a certain accent, is it?”

With an irritated laugh he answered: “Do you think you can go driving around in your dad’s BMW, and then turn around and say you’re working class because you don’t get along with your boss? It’s not a fashion, you know. It’s an identity.” (Rooney, 2021, p. 84)

A chattering conversation between Eileen and Gary about the real working class. Gary said that no one has a working-class background. However, Eileen replied that many who work to make money to pay rent, have no property, are always scolded by their boss and still not be called working class is ridiculous. Gary still denied because it was an identity from the start, not a trend.

But from the conversation between Eileen and her friend it can be concluded that not all who work can become the haves because they still pay taxes

and rent for the house they live in, as well as pay interest on their debts as in paragraph,

“I know you work at a literary magazine,” he said.  
 “Jesus. I have a job, in other words. Real bourgeoisie behaviour.”  
 Darach said he thought they were just using the same term, ‘working class’, to describe two distinct population groups: one, the broad constituency of people whose income was derived from labour rather than capital, and the other, an impoverished primarily urban subsection of that group with a particular set of cultural traditions and signifiers. Paula said a middle-class person could still be a socialist and Eileen said the middle class did not exist. (Rooney, 2021, p. 84)

From the Eileen and Gary debate it can be concluded by Darach that the ‘working class’ is argued to describe two distinct groups of the population: one, the broad constituency of people whose income comes from labor rather than capital, and two, the urban subsection of the poor. They discussed the working class and discussed the differences between the two. But when Paula said there was a middle-class group, Eileen denied it because according to her, there was no middle class, only the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The differences between Felix and Alice are noticeable in their respective jobs. Felix as a warehouse employee and Alice as a writer who is invited to various events have different pressures in their work. As in paragraph,

That morning, while Felix was at work, Alice had a phone call with her agent, discussing invitations she had received to literary festivals and universities. While this phone call took place, Felix was using a handheld scanner to identify and sort various packages into labelled stillage carts, which were then collected and wheeled away by other workers. Some of these workers greeted Felix when they came to collect the boxes, and others didn’t. He was wearing a black zip-up, with the zip pulled right up, and occasionally he tucked his chin under the raised collar, evidently cold. While speaking to her agent, Alice made notes on her laptop in a draft email with the subject heading ‘summer book dates’. After the phone call, she closed that email and opened a text file containing notes for a book review she was writing for a literary magazine in London. In the

warehouse, Felix was pushing one of the tall steel stillage carts along an aisle of shelves illuminated by white fluorescent bulbs. Occasionally he stopped, squinted at a label, checked his scanner, and then scanned the item and placed it into the cart. Alice ate two pieces of buttered bread from a small plate, cut up an apple, made herself a cup of coffee and opened a draft email to Eileen. (Rooney, 2021, p. 175)

The paragraph above shows the work of Felix and Alice that they are doing at one time. Felix, who had just left in the morning for work, while Alice just sat back and opened an invitation from her agent via her email. Then when Felix feels cold at work, Alice feels warm with her work that can be done at home which only requires a laptop while looking at the reviews she is working on. And when Felix was doing work by lifting a lot of things, Alice stayed at home while enjoying a cup of coffee and dishes that she made herself at home. From their work, it can be seen that the representation of the poor is doing various kinds of hard work to earn money, while the rich can do whatever they like without thinking about spending a lot of money to spend.

Actually, Alice also felt the same way when she became a writer. Alice felt alienated when she became famous like her dream when she was little. Shown in paragraphs,

When I was younger, I think what I wanted was to travel the world, to lead a glamorous life, to be celebrated for my work, to marry a great intellectual, to reject everything I had been raised with, to cut myself off from the narrow world. I feel very embarrassed by all that now, but I was lonely and unhappy, and I didn't understand that these feelings were ordinary, that there was nothing singular about my loneliness, my unhappiness. (Rooney, 2021, p. 190)

This paragraph is Alice's outpouring of heart to Eileen through the letter Alice sent. Alice's struggle before becoming a famous writer was just being poor who

had nothing, and had other high-class dreams like traveling the world, living a glamorous life, being praised for my work, marrying a great intellectual. But all of that did not match what Alice expected, in the end Alice was not happy after all her wishes were achieved.

#### 4.1.2 Struggles in the family

As a poor person, Felix is faced with a complicated problem with his older brother regarding the house left by his mother. Damian, Felix's brother, told Felix to agree to sell the house due to their financial problems, but Felix still refused.

As in paragraph,

See, when our mam died, Damian went on, she left us both the house, yeah? Together. And we agreed we were going to sell it. Are you following me? You're a smart lady, I'm sure you are. Anyway, I can't sell it without his signature on all these documents. And in the last few weeks, he's just disappeared. Won't answer my calls, texts, nothing. What do you think that's about? Alice said quietly that it was none of her business. You'd think he'd be happy to have a bit money coming his way, Damian added. God knows he's been short of it often enough. Anything else you want to rat on me about while you're here? Felix asked. (Rooney, 2021, p. 239)

This paragraph is a conversation between Damian who is Felix's brother, Felix and Alice when there is an event at his brother Felix's house. The conversation about the house Damian wanted to sell but Felix didn't agree to or didn't sign right away. Damian explained the possibilities why Felix didn't agree, namely because he would get very little money, even though at that time Felix needed no matter how little money it was.

Being Felix is not easy. Under the pressure of poverty, he was unable to do anything at that time except sell his only house which was his memory of his mother before she died due to his older brother who looks more powerful and has wealth than him. The oppression he got from his own feelings made him complicate his own life as when he told Simon at that time which can be seen in the paragraph,

Simon asked how he felt about selling the house and he gave a strange, hard laugh. It's funny, he replied. I'm avoiding my brother for the last six weeks trying to get out of signing it over. Isn't that mad? I don't know why I'm doing it. It's not like I want to live there. And I really need the money. But that's me, can't do things the easy way. He splashed his hand through the water again aimlessly. (Rooney, 2021, p. 209)

This paragraph is a conversation conducted by Simon and Felix. Simon asked how Felix felt having to sell his house. Shows a struggling lower class who has no money without having to sell something he owns, because Simon has never felt that way. Felix explained that he didn't want to sell his house because of his high ego towards his older brother who wanted to sell the house which he really needed from the sale.

Meanwhile Eileen, who is the youngest and has an older sister named Lola, feels alienated by her own family because her parents seem to defend and love Lola more than her. Seen from the conversation between Mary, her mother, and Eileen when they fought because of their family's financial problems. Her mother felt that Eileen was unable to support her family because her job did not generate much money as in the sentence,

"Eileen held her fingertips lightly against one of her eyelids for a moment, and said: Aren't you complaining to me about your life right now

Mary started crying then. Eileen watched her uneasily, and said: I really care that you're unhappy, I just don't know what you want me to do. Her mother was covering her face, sobbing. What did I do wrong? She said. How did I raise such selfish children? Eileen sat back against the sofa as if she was giving the question serious thought. What outcome do you want here? She asked. I can't give you money. I can't go back in time and make you marry a different man. You want me to listen to you complaining about it? I'll listen. I am listening. But I'm not sure why you think your unhappiness is more important than mine. Mary left the room." (Rooney, 2021, p. 26)

Mary seemed to only care about her own life without ever understanding Eileen's feelings, and all the problems were borne by Eileen alone.

The struggle was also experienced by Simon who felt ignored by his parents, especially his father because of his work. His father who hoped that Simon would work in the social field but was different from his reality. As in the paragraph,

But he seems to think I want to go around saving people because it makes me feel powerful and virile or whatever. The funny thing is that my job has absolutely nothing to do with helping people. Maybe if I was a social worker or a doctor or something, but I actually just sit in an office all day. I don't know. Last time I was home we got into this truly bizarre conflict because I woke up with a headache one morning. He didn't talk to me all day, and then in the evening he gave me this big long speech about how much my mother had been looking forward to seeing me and how I had ruined her whole weekend by having this headache. He can never say he's angry with me himself, he always has to project his feelings onto Geraldine, like it was a personal insult to her that I had a migraine. He has a thing about migraines, because she gets them as well, and he's convinced they're psychosomatic. (Rooney, 2021, p. 123)

The paragraph explains about Simon's condition who feels alienated by his parents. His father wants Simon to work in social fields such as medicine or something that can help others. However, Simon's work has no social relationship at all who only sat all the day at the office. So that oneday, Simon experienced a conflict with his parents because he woke up late because the migraine attacked



his head. But his parents seemed to not accept this reason because it was all the consequences of a lot of office work so he believed that it was psychosomatic.

#### 4.1.3 Struggle for love and friendship

The image of Felix as “the haves not” paired by Alice as “the haves” looks very striking when Alice becomes a woman who has more power in terms of finance than Felix. Felix, who feels that he has nothing more than Alice, so he inevitably makes him submit to Alice and obey all of Alice’s wishes, whatever Alice wants to do to Felix. As in paragraph,

“I’m going to Rome next week”, she said. “Because the Italian translation of my book is coming out. I wonder if you’d like to come with me”. He showed no surprise at the invitation. He put out his cigarette by rubbing the lit end on the wall of the shed in several repeated strokes. The dog let out one more yelp, down at the end of the garden. “I don’t have any money”, Felix said. Well, I can pay for everything. “I’m rich and famous, remember?” This drew a little smile. “You are weird”, he said. “I don’t take that back. How long are you going for?” “I’m getting there on Wednesday and then coming home again Monday morning. But we can stay longer if you prefer.”

Now he laughed. Fucking hell, he said. (Rooney, 2021, p. 43)

The paragraph above is about Alice’s invitation to Felix to come with her to Rome. Felix, who was indeed poor and did not have enough money to go to Rome, said that he did not have money to go with him. So that’s where Alice shows her strength as a “the haves” by saying that she is rich enough to finance Felix to go with her to Rome. Felix, who was initially hesitant, was still trying to convince Alice to come with him with her persuasions as if he could stay there a little longer. But Alice seemed to convince Felix with a little coercion that in the end Felix had no other choice not to comply with Alice’s wishes.

Eileen, who is Alice's best friend, provides a significant comparison with their respective lives. Being poor like Eileen also has its own struggles but facing Alice's not too confident attitude and trying to understand it. As in paragraph,

Okay, I make about 20k a year and pay two-thirds of that in rent for the opportunity to live in a tiny apartment with people who dislike me, and you make about two hundred thousand euro a year (?) and live alone in a gigantic country house, but for all that I don't think I would enjoy your life any more than you do. Anyone capable of enjoying it must have something wrong with them, as you point out. (Rooney, 2021, p. 61)

The paragraph above is a reply to Eileen's email for Alice, who previously discussed Alice's depression. Eileen also compares the income they get from their respective jobs and proves that Alice's life is richer and more luxurious than Eileen's life, whose income is meager. Eileen says she earns about 20k per year but has to cut it by renting smaller apartments and having neighbors with people who don't like her. While Alice earns about two hundred thousand euros per year and can choose to live anywhere and in any environment, including in a luxurious house in a village where Alice is currently living.

Back to Felix, who eventually learns about Alice's feelings for him. Finally, Felix expressed the complaints he experienced if they were likely to be in a relationship. With their class difference, Felix told Alice what was his concern as in the paragraph,

I'll give you that. You're not easy to get the upper hand on, are you? Obviously I'm not going to manage it. It's funny, because you carry on like you'd let me walk all over you, answering my texts at two in the morning, and then telling me you're in love with me, blah blah blah. But that's all your way of saying, just try and catch me, because you won't. And I can see I won't. You're not going to let me have it for a minute.



Nine times out of ten you'd have someone fooled with the way you go on. They'd be delighted with themselves, thinking they were really the boss of you. Yeah, yeah, but I'm not an idiot. You're only letting me act badly because it puts you above me, and that's where you like to be. And I don't take it personally..... Because you have to be perfect, don't you? No, you really have a way about you, I must say. And I'm sorry, alright? I won't be trying to take a jab at you again. (Rooney, 2021, p. 183)

This paragraph shows Felix's heart for Alice. Felix felt that Alice was just playing with his heart. Felix doesn't trust Alice who loves Felix because Felix feels different from Alice's class. Felix feels that Alice thinks Felix is a fool because Alice, who is a rich person, wants to love him and will play with Felix with his status as a rich person, such as trampling on Felix's pride and acting like a boss for Felix.

The relationship between Alice and Felix when they first met wasn't that close judging by their conversations. But the longer they know each other, there are things that are new to each of them like Felix who is always surprised when he learns new facts about Alice. For example, when knowing Alice's identity on Wikipedia, which was found by his friend,

*"She laughed and said: "How insightful. Why don't you put that on my Wikipedia page?" Danielle laughed then too. A little colour had come into Felix's face. He turned away from Alice and said: "Anyone can have one of those. You probably wrote it yourself". As if she were beginning to enjoy herself, Alice responded: "No, just the books". "You must think you're very special", he said. "What are you being so touchy about?" said Danielle. "I'm not," Felix replied. He handed the phone back to his friend and then stood leaning against the fridge, arms crossed. Alice was standing at the countertop just near him". (Rooney, 2021, p. 39).*

This paragraph contains a conversation between Danielle, Felix's friend, Alice, and Felix. By accident, Alice reveals herself as a novelist and they find out about

her who turns out to be a famous writer. However, there was a marked change in Felix's expression with him saying that Alice must feel herself very famous. But immediately responded by his own friend why did Felix look so sensitive but was immediately brushed off by Felix by saying no. Here it can be seen that Felix does not like or feels alienated from Alice's achievements, therefore he gives such a response.

The struggle is also shown in Felix's attitude with Alice which alludes to popular women out there. As in paragraph,

Or maybe you're jealous of them." They looked at one another for a moment. Calmly, she said: "I think it's a shame you would speak to me like that. But no, I'm not jealous of anyone who has to degrade themselves for money. I consider myself lucky I don't have to." "Your money hasn't gotten you very far with me, though, has it?" Without flinching she replied: "On the contrary, I've had the pleasure of your company for the last three days. What more could I ask?" (Rooney, 2021, p. 98)

This paragraph is a conversation between Felix and Alice where Felix says that Alice is jealous of young women out there. But Alice replied with certainty by saying that she was not a lowly woman who lowered her self-esteem just for meager money because she could make money from her own efforts without having to humiliate herself and that made Felix speechless. Felix is like looking for something so that Alice feels that she has a shortage in her life by comparing Alice with other women who look better than Alice. That way, Felix indirectly made Alice feel alienated by the shortcomings she had. But Alice's answer finally made Felix speechless.

#### 4.1.4 Environmental struggles

In this novel, the capitalist is shown for the first time when Alice and Eileen exchange messages via e-mail and Alice tells the first thing that happened to her while she was there as in this e-mail, shown from the system which is a capitalist dealing as a local shop with Alice and Eileen who as buyers are described as the proletariat.

“I was in the local shop today, getting something to eat for lunch, when I suddenly had the strangest sensation – a spontaneous awareness of the unlikeliness of this life. I mean, I thought of all the rest of the human population – most of whom live in what you and I would consider abject poverty – who have never seen or entered such a shop. And this, this, is what all their work sustains! This lifestyle, for people like us! All the various brands of soft drinks in plastic bottles and all the pre-packaged lunch deals and confectionery in sealed bags and store-baked pastries – this is it, the culmination of all the labour in the world, all the burning of fossil fuels and all the back-breaking work on coffee farms and sugar plantations. All for this! This convenience shop! I felt dizzy thinking about it. I mean I really felt ill. It was as if I suddenly remembered that my life was all part of a television show – and every day people died making the show, were ground to death in the most horrific ways, children, women, and all so that I could choose from various lunch options, each packaged in multiple layers of single-use plastic.” (Rooney, 2021, p. 14)

In the email quoted above, Alice thinks about the capitalist process of exploitation, poverty, and waste when she wants to buy lunch at a local shop.

Here Alice not only makes clear the Marxist claim that inequality is systematically structured in capitalist production and exchange, but its character also reflects the nature of commodities themselves. Instead of making their lives freer, still having to buy lunch presents a kind of dominance by the goods that are inevitable in the form of a life of poverty and never feel what it's like to enter a convenience store. Marx described this as 'commodity fetishism' and it is one of his most valuable thoughts, giving his account of capitalist society how human

beings become unfree as a result of the alienation of their life activities.

According to Marx, capitalism removes human free control over our activities, because to survive most of us have to sell our time to work for others.

Commodities are created as goods and services to be sold in markets, in a process that objectifies the human activities necessary to create those commodities.

Things created by humans have objective power over us.

Eileen also felt the same way as what Alice said in her letter, it can be seen in the reply to Eileen's letter to Alice below,

Alice, I think I've also experienced that sensation you had in the convenience shop. For me it feels like looking down and seeing for the first time that I'm standing on a minuscule ledge at a dizzying vertical height, and the only thing supporting my weight is the misery and degradation of almost everyone else on earth. And I always end up thinking: I don't even want to be up here. I don't need all these cheap clothes and imported foods and plastic containers, I don't even think they improve my life. They just create waste and make me unhappy anyway. (Not that I'm comparing my dissatisfaction to the misery of actually oppressed peoples, I just mean that the lifestyle they sustain for us is not even satisfying, in my opinion.) People think that socialism is sustained by force – the forcible expropriation of property – but I wish they would just admit that capitalism is also sustained by exactly the same force in the opposite direction, the forcible protection of existing property arrangements. I know you know this. I hate having the same debates over and over again with the wrong first principles. (Rooney, 2021, p. 30)

The paragraph above is a reply to an email from Eileen to Alice. Eileen said that she also felt the incident at the convenience store was the same as Alice at that time. Eileen felt that everything in the convenience store was something that was supposed to exist. Eileen says that she doesn't compare her easy life with the lives of people who have experienced adversity. Eileen was just dissatisfied and had no need for cheap clothes, imported food and all that stuff in plastic containers.

Indirectly, Eileen does not support Alice's opinion about all the lives of the poor by saying that capitalism in socialism also has power in the forced protection of existing property.

Eileen said indirectly that capitalism was caused by people limiting their social class, as Eileen wrote in her letter which said:

Everyone is at once hysterically attached to particular identity categories and completely unwilling to articulate what those categories consist of, how they came about, and what purposes they serve. The only apparent schema is that for every victim group (people born into poor families, women, people of colour) there is an oppressor group (people born into rich families, men, white people). But in this framework, relations between victim and oppressor are not historical so much as theological, in that the victims are transcendently good and the oppressors are personally evil. (Rooney, 2021, p. 62)

Furthermore, Eileen in her letter discussed the layers of society that appeared without any origins so that the community itself was classified into two groups, such as victims (people born to poor families, women, people of color) and oppressors (people born to rich families, male, white person). These groups have their respective roles that explain social class between communities so that many victims experience crimes from oppressors.

## **4.2 The Social Contexts that Influence the Main Characters in Novel**

### ***Beautiful World Where Are You* by Sally Rooney**

#### **4.2.1 The influence of the work environment**

As it is known that in this novel there are two main characters who struggle with their job namely Felix and Eileen. Felix is described as a warehouse keeper whose job includes moving goods and placing items in their places so that

when Felix meets Alice and learns that Alice's work can generate more money than Felix, he feels insecure and tries to raise his value so that Alice does not underestimate him. While Eileen is the editor of a literary magazine who is always ridiculed by her own sister, Lola, who says that Eileen has no future with her job because the salary is too small and not comparable to what Eileen does at work. However, Eileen didn't pay attention to Lola's words at all and she proved it by being appointed as one of the writers in the magazine she was working on and she was happy about it.

One of the struggle is capitalism that Alice wants to explain to Eileen about a European-american composer novel as in Alice's email reply to Eileen. Alice explained that there are many inequalities described in the novels. For example, misery and poverty which are always juxtaposed with the main character. As in paragraph,

The problem with the contemporary Euro-American novel is that it relies for its structural integrity on suppressing the lived realities of most human beings on earth. To confront the poverty and misery in which millions of people are forced to live, to put the fact of that poverty, that misery, side by side with the lives of the 'main characters' of a novel, would be deemed either tasteless or simply artistically unsuccessful. Who can care, in short, what happens to the novel's protagonists, when it's happening in the context of the increasingly fast, increasingly brutal exploitation of a majority of the human species? Do the protagonists break up or stay together? In this world, what does it matter? So the novel works by suppressing the truth of the world – packing it tightly down underneath the glittering surface of the text. And we can care once again, as we do in real life, whether people break up or stay together – if, and only if, we have successfully forgotten about all the things more important than that, i.e. everything. (Rooney, 2021, p. 79)

The paragraph above is Alice's explanation why she doesn't read contemporary European-American novels. The view of capitalism which is described by the



main character as a poor and miserable actor is always accompanied by an actor who likes to coerce and oppress. The main character or protagonist experiences exploitation in the majority but don't care about that because the most important thing is the storyline that is not boring. Not much different from what is happening in the world today because there is more and more exploitation of humans but rarely or even no one cares about them because of their social status.

Alice, who is one of the characters in this novel, also feels the struggle that she gets from the fame she gets. Alice is described as a writer who has everything without having to think about the expenses she makes and gets whatever she wants without having to worry about costs. However, it all weighs on Alice to the point of depression. The thing that makes her depressed is that her job as a writer feels alive in the midst of pretense because of the expectations from readers who think Alice's life is comfortable and comfortable and think Alice is as good as her writing. Then Alice has to face Felix's attitude towards her who feels insecure about her job which makes less money compared to Alice.

Being a writer is definitely not as easy as what many people think, as Alice experienced. Alice who is a writer must experience pressure from her own writing because of expectations from her readers. As in the paragraph,

Every day I wonder why my life has turned out this way. I can't believe I have to tolerate these things – having articles written about me, and seeing my photograph on the internet, and reading comments about myself. When I put it like that, I think: that's it? And so what? But the fact is, although it's nothing, it makes me miserable, and I don't want to live this kind of life. When I submitted the first book, I just wanted to make enough money to finish the next one. I never advertised myself as a psychologically robust person, capable of withstanding extensive public inquiries into my

personality and upbringing. People who intentionally become famous – I mean people who, after a little taste of fame, want more and more of it are, and I honestly believe this, deeply psychologically ill. The fact that we are exposed to these people everywhere in our culture, as if they are not only normal but attractive and enviable, indicates the extent of our disfiguring social disease. There is something wrong with them, and when we look at them and learn from them, something goes wrong with us. (Rooney, 2021, p. 78)

The paragraph above is a reply to Alice's email to Eileen, Alice explained that she did not feel free to express herself while writing. Many expectations from fans that make him sick of doing his job. When Alice experiences fame in her life, she wants more and more, and when that happens, she feels psychologically exhausted. Alice also felt that her fans only saw her as a normal and enviable person, but because of that Alice felt depressed and mentally disturbed and thought that she was required to be perfect as a writer like the books she wrote.

#### **4.2.2 The influence of the family environment**

One of the causes of class struggle is economic problems. One of which was experienced by Eileen and her family. Eileen, who is the youngest of two siblings, feels the different attitude given by her parents. For example, when Eileen first got a job as a clerk at a bookstore and her family was having financial problems, her mother seemed to blame their situation because Eileen didn't have a decent job. Compared to Lola, who works as an accountant, Eileen is only working as an editor for a literary magazine, which according to other people is a job that doesn't generate much money, including her own parents. So that Eileen feels the difference her parents did to her and her older sister.



And then when Simon not as expected as his parents dream's job, he suffer cause his father wants Simon to work in social fields such as medicine or something that can help others. However, Simon's work has no social relationship at all who only sat all the day at the office, like in paragraph

But he seems to think I want to go around saving people because it makes me feel powerful and virile or whatever. The funny thing is that my job has absolutely nothing to do with helping people. Maybe if I was a social worker or a doctor or something, but I actually just sit in an office all day. I don't know. Last time I was home we got into this truly bizarre conflict because I woke up with a headache one morning. He didn't talk to me all day, and then in the evening he gave me this big long speech about how much my mother had been looking forward to seeing me and how I had ruined her whole weekend by having this headache. He can never say he's angry with me himself, he always has to project his feelings onto Geraldine, like it was a personal insult to her that I had a migraine. He has a thing about migraines, because she gets them as well, and he's convinced they're psychosomatic. (Rooney, 2021, p. 123)

. However, Simon's work has no social relationship at all who only sat all the day at the office. So that oneday, Simon experienced a conflict with his parents because he woke up late because the migraine attacked his head. But his parents seemed to not accept this reason because it was all the consequences of a lot of office work so he believed that it was psychosomatic. Seems do not care with Simon condition.

#### **4.2.3 The influence of friendship and love relationships**

Eileen, who often feels neglected by her own family, finally seeks her own pleasure through dating a man named Aidan. However, in the end they had to break up because Aidan wanted to pursue his career and at that time Alice tried to comfort Eileen as in the paragraph,

I'm sorry that you felt so terrible after running into Aidan the other day. These feelings are no doubt completely normal. But as your best friend, who loves you very much and wishes the best for you in every part of your life, would it be aggravating of me to point out that you weren't really happy together? I know that he was the one who decided to end things, and I know that must be painful and frustrating. I'm not trying to talk you out of feeling bad. All I'm saying is, I think you know in your heart that it wasn't a very good relationship. You talked to me several times about wanting to break up and not knowing how. I'm only saying this because I don't want you to start retroactively believing that Aidan was your soulmate or that you could never be happy without him. You got into a long relationship in your twenties that didn't work out. That doesn't mean God has marked you out for a life of failure and misery. I was in a long relationship in my twenties and that didn't work out, remember? And Simon and Natalie were together for nearly five years before they broke up. Do you think he's a failure, or I am? Hm. Well, now that I think of it, maybe all three of us are. But if so, I'd rather be a failure than a success. (Rooney, 2021, p. 53)

Alice explains to Eileen that it's not the end of her life because she lost Aidan and feels Aidan is her soulmate. Alice also gave an example of the relationship between Simon and Nathalie who had to break up after five years of dating and still live their lives, because that was God's destiny.

### **4.3 The impact of struggle that experienced in novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney**

#### **4.3.1 Depression**

Alice's depression is a form of struggle that must be lived by Alice.

Previously Alice focused on writing books that voiced the ideas that were in her head. Many years have passed, Alice's books are selling well, bringing her to the peak of success, her profile even has a Wikipedia page, but because of the expectations from those around her, Alice feels pressured at her work as a novelist. The fame she got was solely the demands of work that Alice had to do.

It's not a very good story, she said. I had a nervous breakdown. I was in hospital for a few weeks, and then I moved here when I got out. But it's not mysterious – I mean, there was no reason I had a breakdown, I just did. And it's not a secret, everyone knows. ...

Okay, but what do you mean you had a breakdown? Like, what happened?

She exhaled a stream of smoke through the side of her mouth. I felt very out of control, she said. I was just extremely angry and upset all the time. I wasn't in control of myself, I couldn't live normally. I can't explain it any more than that. (Rooney, 21, p. 43)

In the paragraph above, Alice told Felix that she had a mental breakdown which eventually required her to go to the hospital. As a result of the depression she was experiencing, she became a person who could not control her anger and felt disappointed all the time and made her unable to live normally as before.

Alice who felt with his initial decision as a book writer and felt the feeling of writing for the first time, she felt as a happy person in her life. But everything did not match his expectations when he just debuted as a book writer as in the paragraph,

Looking back now on the period when I wrote the books, I feel like it was a good time in my life, because I had work I needed to do, and I did it. I was perennially broke, and lonely, and anxious about money, but I also had this other thing, this part of my life which was secret and protected, and my thoughts returned to it all the time, and my feelings orbited around it, and it belonged to me completely. (Rooney, 2021, p. 191)

The concern shown by Alice was stated with almost perfect as written in Alice's email reply to Eileen. Alice said that if she kept feeling lonely, anxious, and worried about the initial money until she became depressed. But she also felt that what she had done was the right thing because it was all about her, not about other people.

Depression also hit Felix when he lost his mother who died and required him to sign the sale of his late mother's house. The sadness experienced by Felix made him have to stay silent regardless of his surroundings until he finally had to lose his job and, in the end, he worked in a warehouse after that. As in the paragraph,

“Last year. I just started thinking, what’s the fucking point of life, you know? It’s not like there’s anything at the end of it. Not that I really wanted to be dead or anything, but I couldn’t be fucked being alive most of the time either. I don’t know if you would call it a breakdown. I just had a few months where I was seriously not bothered about it – getting up and going to work and all that. I actually lost the job I had at the time, that’s why I’m at the warehouse now. Yeah. So I kind of get what you’re saying about the breakdown. Obviously the experiences would be different in my case, but I see where you’re coming from, yeah. (Rooney, 2021, p. 43).

Felix called it a breakdown and Alice confirmed it even though their cases were different.

#### 4.3.2 Inferiority

Low self-esteem caused by humiliation is also included as an effect of struggle in this novel. An example is the relationship between sisters Eileen and Lola. Starting with,

Lola who works as an accountant and makes fun of Eileen’s work, who is only a magazine editor and thinks that she can’t make money as in the sentence Lola asked Eileen about her career plans and Eileen said she was happy at the magazine. “Right, for now,” said Lola. “But what’s next” Eileen told her she didn’t know. Lola made a smiling face and said: One day you’re going to have to live in the real world. Eileen walked back to the apartment that night and found Alice on the couch, working on her book. Alice, she said, am I going to have to live in the real world one day? Without looking up, Alice snorted and said: Jesus no, absolutely not. Who told you that? (Rooney, 2021, p. 27).

Because of that, Eileen thought that there was no happy place for her to live from Lola's insults towards her. Lola's insults didn't stop there either. There was one time when Eileen advised Lola about her wedding invitation because she was told by Mary, but Lola's answer hurt like "*Lola: Hmmm do I really want to hear about how immature I am from someone who's stuck in a shitty job making no money and living in a kip at age 30.....*" (Rooney, 2021, p. 82) until finally Eileen stops contacting Lola.

#### 4.3.3 Envious

Jealousy or enviousness is also one of the effects of struggle as experienced by Felix on Alice. For example, when Alice visited the house of Felix's sister, Danielle, they asked about Alice's origins and identity until they learned that Alice was a famous novelist and her bio was written on Wikipedia. But what was in the spotlight at that time was Felix's expression which showed a dislike or jealousy which was clearly seen from the conversation "You must think you're very special", he said.

"What are you being so touchy about?" said Danielle. "I'm not," Felix replied. He handed the phone back to his friend and then stood leaning against the fridge, arms crossed. Alice was standing at the countertop just near him. (Rooney, 2021, p. 39)

Until Danielle reprimands Felix for being too outrageous and makes Alice think that Felix hates her.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusions

This study discusses the struggle in life experienced by the four main characters, namely Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon in the novel *Beautiful World Where Are You* by Sally Rooney. Each of them has social struggle or problems that are experienced in their work environment, family, and friendships. The problems experienced by the main characters include the existence of struggles in their life.

Then the factors that caused their struggle experienced by Alice, Felix, Simon, and Eileen were the influence of the work, family, and friendship or love environment. Exploitative relations are experienced by Felix, who is a warehouse employee whose job is to move goods and lift goods but has to work non-stop but his salary is small. after that, he met Alice whose job was only as a writer but earned a fairly high salary compared to her, which made Felix feel insecure about his work. Then Eileen who is just an editor at a literature magazine and has a very small salary compared to her friends and sister. It was this job that made Eileen often looked down upon by her own family, especially by her sister. The second is the influence of family environment experienced by Eileen. Compared to the other main characters, Eileen and her family experience the biggest economic problems. Because Eileen's job, which was only an editor for a literary magazine, made her family compare with her sister who was an accountant, so Eileen was treated differently. And the third is the influence of friendship or love relations



experienced by Alice. Alice is a writer who has income from the books she publishes, but that all ends up burdening her with the expectations of her fans who think that Alice's personality is as good as the books she writes.

As a result, the struggles in life of Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon, who are the main characters in the novel *Beautiful World Where Are You*, are caused by several factors that ultimately affect them. Alice who has to check up with a psychiatrist once a month, Felix who has to choose to sell his house or stay at his job as a warehouse clerk, Eileen who is constantly insulted by her older sister because of her job as an editor at a literary magazine, and Simon who is struggling as a government employee who has a conflict with his boss.

## 5.2 Suggestions

However, each character has their own resolution with their struggle and ends up doing their jobs in gratitude. Hopefully, by doing this research, everyone can realize that class struggle is still around them and know how to solve it. In addition, the researcher hopes that readers can understand about struggle in life through this research.

For further research, the researcher hopes that future researchers can discuss and use this novel entitled *Beautiful World Where Are You* by Sally Rooney because this novel is very interesting. Maybe further research can use other theories of these characters with other novels or can raise other issues.

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