

**MAIN CHARACTERS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT  
STRATEGIES IN NESBIT'S *THE RAILWAY CHILDREN***

**THESIS**

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**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK**

**IBRAHIM MALANG**

**2024**

**MAIN CHARACTERS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN  
NESBIT'S *THE RAILWAY CHILDREN***

**THESIS**

Presented to  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S.)*

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**MALANG**

**2024**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **Main Characters' Conflict Management Strategies In Nesbit's *The Railway Children*** is my original work. I do not include any material previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

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## **MOTTO**

*“Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and  
got back up again.” – Nelson Mandela*

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is proudly dedicated to my beloved parents, who always pray and support me. Also, to my dear brother, who always encourages me. And for all of my friends who were always there for me to finish this thesis.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise and thanks to Allah SWT. who has giving guidance and strength to the author until the end of writing this thesis. Sholawat to the Prophet Muhammad SAW who demands all of us to the path of truth. This undergraduate thesis is a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in the department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

This thesis would not be completed without any support and contribution from some people. I am very grateful to my advisor, Asni Furaida, M.A. for her patience in providing guidance, and encouragement for this thesis. I would like to express my gratitude to all the lecturers of the Department of English Literature, who have provided useful knowledge during my study.

An infinite gratitude to my beloved parents, Bustomi and Isnaini. Thank you for all your prayers, support, love, and motivation so that I can achieve this degree. I also thank my younger brother, Muhammad Rifqy Ahnaf Aisy, who always encourage me.

I do not forget to thank all my dear friends: Imelda Iza Afkarina and Siti Hanifatur Rohmah from *Asam Lambung's* Squad, Ian, Dewi Khaerunnisa, and all my friends who cannot be mentioned one by one. I am very grateful to them for their support and motivation so that I can complete my thesis as quickly as possible. Thank you for always being there in a good and bad times. May Allah always protect us wherever we are.



The researcher has tried best to complete this thesis, but the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings, both in terms of content and grammar. Therefore, the writer expects suggestions and constructive criticism from the readers for the perfection of this thesis. Hopefully this thesis can be useful in enriching the repertoire of knowledge for readers, especially those who study conflicts in novels.

Malang, 15 August 2024

The Researcher

## ABSTRACT

**Salsabila, Syifa** (2024). *Main Characters Conflict Management Strategies In Nesbit's The Railway Children*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Asni Furaida, M.A.

Keywords: Conflict, management strategies

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The issue of underage child workers has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is caused by children wanting to help their parents improve the family economy. Many minors decide not to continue their schooling, and this issue happens to the main characters, Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis, in the novel *The Railway Children*. This research aims to discover the conflicts experienced by the main characters, Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis, and how they resolved the problem. This research is a literary criticism research and uses a sociological approach. The researcher applied Deetz and Stevenson's Conflict Management Strategy theory to resolve conflicts. This research shows that Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis used four strategies: Pacification strategy to resolve conflict with Bill the Bargee, Albert Perks, and Robertha's conflict with Peter. Second, competition is used by Robertha and Peter when they argue about using the rake. Third, Compromise is used by the children to resolve the conflict with the Station Master. Lastly, Creative Integration is used by the children to resolve conflict with Bill the Bargee after the children help his child at the house fire, conflict with Mr. Perks's birthday party to convince Mr. Perks the gifts were a celebration and not a charity, children's conflict in saving Jim, and Roberta conflict to help his father out of the wrong imprisonment with The Old Gentleman.

## مستخلص البحث

سلسبيلا، شيفا (2024). صراعات الشخصيات الرئيسية واستراتيجيات إدارتها كما هو موضح في رواية نيسبت "أطفال السكة الحديدية". أطروحة جامعية. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية، مالانغ. المشرفة: أسني فريده، ماجستير.

الكلمات المفتاحية الصراع، استراتيجيات الإدارة

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ازدادت مشكلة الأطفال العاملين دون السن القانونية بسبب جائحة كوفيد-19. وهي ناجمة عن رغبة الأطفال في مساعدة آبائهم في تحسين اقتصاد الأسرة. ويقرر العديد من القاصرين عدم مواصلة تعليمهم، وهذه المشكلة تحدث للشخصيات الرئيسية، روبرتا وبيتر وفيليس، في رواية "أطفال السكة الحديدية". يهدف هذا البحث إلى اكتشاف الصراعات التي عانت منها الشخصيات الرئيسية، روبرتا وبيتر وفيليس، وكيف حلوا المشكلة. هذا البحث هو بحث في النقد الأدبي ويستخدم المنهج السوسولوجي. طبقت الباحثة نظرية استراتيجية ديتر وستيفنسون في إدارة الصراعات لحل الصراعات. يظهر هذا البحث أن روبرتا وبيتر وفيليس استخدموا أربع استراتيجيات استراتيجية التهئة لحل النزاع مع بيل البارجي، وألبرت بيركس، وصراع روبرتا مع بيتر. ثانيًا، المنافسة يستخدمها روبرتا وبيتر عندما يتجادلان حول استخدام أشعل النار. ثالثًا، يستخدم الأطفال أسلوب التسوية لحل النزاع مع مدير المحطة وأخيرًا، التكامل الإبداعي يستخدمه الأطفال لحل الصراع مع بيل البارجي بعد مساعدة الأطفال لطفله في حريق المنزل، والصراع مع السيد بيركس في حفل عيد ميلاده لإقناع السيد بيركس بأن الهدايا كانت احتفالاً وليس صدقة، وصراع الأطفال لإنقاذ جيم، وصراع روبرتا لمساعدة والده في الخروج من السجن الخطأ مع السيد العجوز.

## ABSTRAK

**Salsabila, Syifa** (2024). *Konflik Manajemen Strategi Tokoh Utama dalam novel karya Nesbit The Railway Children*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.  
Pembimbing Asni Furaida, M.A.

*Kata Kunci : Konflik,, manajemen strategi*

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Kasus pekerja anak di bawah umur semakin meningkat akibat pandemi COVID-19. Hal ini disebabkan oleh anak-anak yang ingin membantu orang tua mereka untuk meningkatkan perekonomian keluarga. Banyak anak di bawah umur yang memutuskan untuk tidak melanjutkan sekolahnya, dan hal ini terjadi pada tokoh utama yaitu Roberta, Peter, dan Phyllis dalam novel *The Railway Children*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui konflik yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Roberta, Peter, dan Phyllis, dan bagaimana mereka menyelesaikan masalah tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kritik sastra dan menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi. Peneliti menerapkan teori Strategi Manajemen Konflik dari Deetz dan Stevenson dalam menyelesaikan konflik. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Robertha, Peter, dan Phyllis menggunakan empat strategi: Strategi pasifikasi untuk menyelesaikan konflik dengan Bill the Bargee, Albert Perks, dan konflik Robertha dengan Peter. Kedua, kompetisi digunakan oleh Robertha dan Peter ketika mereka berdebat tentang penggunaan penggaruk. Ketiga, Kompromi digunakan oleh anak-anak untuk menyelesaikan konflik dengan Station Master. Terakhir, Creative Integration digunakan anak-anak untuk menyelesaikan konflik dengan Bill the Bargee setelah anak-anak menolong anaknya saat kebakaran rumah, konflik dengan pesta ulang tahun Tuan Perks untuk meyakinkan Tuan Perks bahwa hadiah yang diberikan adalah sebuah perayaan dan bukan sebuah amal, konflik anak-anak untuk menyelamatkan Jim, dan konflik Roberta untuk menolong ayahnya keluar dari penjara yang salah dengan The Old Gentleman.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher includes current issues in the background of the study. In addition, this chapter also contains the problems of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, and definitions of key terms.

#### **A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The percentage of underage child workers increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected their lives in all aspects of life. According to the Central Statistics Agency, the number of child workers in Indonesia that year reached 2.30% and has decreased by 1.82% in 2021. (DataIndonesia.id posted on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023). The phenomenon of employing underage children is found in all classes of society, including the upper, middle and lower classes. The factors that affect this are wanting to help parents to fulfil the family economy. Many of the minors decided not to continue their schooling, both girls and boys from elementary to high school graduates. Based on the news, this problem happened because it was out of someone's control, for example by experiencing conflict. People cannot run away from conflicts, whether with themselves or others.

Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children* is a children's fiction novel about family and friendship. Through a literary sociology approach, this study analyzed the interpersonal conflict interactions experienced by the main characters, Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis, with other characters. In addition, this study also examines the

strategies used by the three characters in dealing with and resolving conflicts in the story by using Deetz and Stevenson' (1986) theory.

According to Febryanto and Lidiman (2021), in literary works, conflicts are created when the main character feels confrontation or obstacles in achieving something. They also stated that problem-solving must occur if there is a conflict, and each character resolves it differently. In the world of literature, plot and conflict are related. Without those two intrinsic aspects, literary works would be uninteresting and flat. In the plot of the story, there are various kinds of conflicts experienced by the main characters in the novel, one of them is social interaction. According to Lewis A. Coser in his book *The Functions of Social Conflict*, conflict is a social interaction between two or more parties that are not only conflicting. In addition, he stated that conflict is part of social interaction that results in change, character development, or group unification in facing challenges together.

There are many researchers who already discussed this novel in different aspects. First previous studies are from Jane Mattison (2010) analyzing the prejudice towards Roberta as the main character. Jane investigated Roberta as the strongest embodiments of the reconciliation possibility between two genders, then this issue integrated into analysis of the motifs of cooperation and forgiveness. The results show that Robertha challenges the anti-female prejudice of male character, which means that her adventure makes the female readers obtaining the pleasure to step outside and experience a different kind of childhood, became more independent and forgiveness to Peter.



Second, Nugraheni (2017) undergraduate thesis inspect the main characters entitled *The Personality Development of the Children Characters as The Effect of The Lower Socio-Economic Life as seen in Edith Nesbit's The Railway Children*. To analyze the works, the researcher on this paper has used a psychological approach. The results shows that the children personality development are affect by their lower socioeconomic condition to became mature and learn every lesson from the experience between themselves, environment, and people around them. Especially the disappearance of their father also makes them to be responsible and grown up to take every decision. In the end, the main characters on the novel learned to accept the condition and adapt on their new environment with the lower socioeconomic life.

Third, Anshori (2016) searched for the empowerment of the children as the main character. The focus of the research was the events in the novel and showing the main characters' empowerment through the character's thoughts, actions, and feelings. The results show that the three types of empowerment are considered essential aspects of children's stories, and they can enrich children's intelligence and emotions during their growing period.

Fourth, Lestari (2009) discussed Roberta's depiction and character development in her thesis. Lestari pointed her research into two significant aspects using Erikson's theory in psychosocial stages. In her research, Lestari analyzes the factors that the main character, Robertha, experienced in developing her mind and actions to handle the situation.

The last present previous studies from Wardyani & Candria (2022) discussed the act of heroism in the novel. This research focused on how the three siblings keep up their spirits and do good for others and heroic acts and figured out the children's commissive speech act of heroism using Searle's (1980) theory and hero functions theory by Kinsella, Ritchie, and Igou (2015). The results show ninety-five commissive utterances to perform actions, and the most common hero functions are enhancing, moral modeling, and protecting. There are no threats expressing hero function in the novel, and the researcher found that commissive utterance types provoke hero functions that carry out heroism. And each of the children has their intention for each utterance.

Furthermore, there are six previous studies that focus on analyzing the main characters conflict. First research is from Diansari Artawan et al. (2020) They analyzing the main character conflict in movie and its script *Five Feet Apart*. By focusing on external conflict faced by Stella Grant, the researcher used William Kenney and Bernhardt theories. The result of the researcher has point out that the main character conflict has faced man vs. man and nature vs nature external conflict. The motives are fulfilling their wants and emotions. They also conclude that the conflict caused by the emotion motive when Will replied to her statement in sarcastic ways. Will did refuse Stella's help to make his things well-arranged. Stella's emotion has created an argumentation with Will. Finally, feeling and attitudes are the last motives. In consequence, Stella lost Abby when she died. This feeling has affected Stella's attitude, which is continuously blaming herself for her death.

Second, analysis on *The Lady with The Dog* by Made Ayu Sintya Paramita Dewi et al. (2023). The analysis used the Psychoanalytic theory by Freud and Conflict theory by William Kenney, which focusing on classifying the conflict, psychological conflict, and also motivation from the main and secondary characters. The story tells about Dmitrich Guoroy, as the main character, who was having an affair with the second character, Anna Sergyvna. The researcher has discovered that both of Dmitrich and Anna experienced the external and internal conflicts. They experienced the external conflicts were caused by their unwell relationship with their goals. Besides, the internal conflicts were happened when they are inability to control their unconscious and the conscious mind. Both of the characters have made a decision to have an affair, because they have a motivation to satisfied their love needs.

Third, Made & Cahyaningsih (2017) paper inspect the aspect of the psychological conflict of the main character in novel entitled *The Guardian Novel*. The researcher focused on the psychological aspect by theory William Kenney (1966). The results show that the researcher found three psychological aspects, which are want, emotions, and feeling. The narrator of the story has described that the wants of the main character named Julie wanted Richard to stop stalking on her again. After having a conflict with Mike, Julie emotion went sad. Lastly, Julie feeling happen when she felt sorry to Richard, because she was unable to go with him anymore.

Fourth, Bramaditha & Qomariana (2020) inspecting the main character conflict in the movie *I am Sam*. By taking notes in each part of the movie, it shows the life

story of Sam. He is a father who raised his daughter named Lucy which is a challenge his maintain mentality. By using the Wellek and Warren (1955) theory about character, the researcher has pointed out that there are two types of characters, there are Protagonist and Antagonist. Followed by the external conflict theory by William Kenney (1966), the researcher found that Sam had an external conflict with Annie and Rita Harrison.

Fifth, Ekapratama et al. (2021) analyze the conflict of Tanya Baskoro, the main character in the Movie *Critical Eleven*. By using William Kenney's theory, the most significant types of disputes faced by the main characters are Human-Against-Human Conflict, with eleven occurrences, then followed by Human-Against-Self Conflict, with six occurrences; there are also five occurrences of Human-Against-Environment Conflict, four occurrences with Human-Against-Nature Conflict. The researcher also used Thomas Kilmann's theory. The researcher discovered that the main character also used conflict management strategies, such as competing, collaborating, and avoiding, to handle their conflicts. Environment, status, and characterization influence Tanya Baskoro's conflict management choice.

Sixth, Damayanti (2021) undergraduate thesis analyzed on Maleficent conflict as the main character in the Novel by Elizabeth Rudnick. The author examines Maleficent conflict using conflict William Kenney theory, and Management Strategies theory from Deetz & Stevenson. The results of the research show that Maleficent had an external conflict with Stefan, King Henry, the warriors, Queen Leila, Knotgrass, Flittle and Thistlewit, Diaval, and also with Princess Aurora. The main Maleficent internal conflicts are with her fear, sadness, anger, arrogance,

impatience, regret, and affection. Maleficent has overcome her conflicts using the conflict management strategies, the researcher has mentioned that Maleficent use Avoidance strategies, Pacification strategies, Competition strategies, Compromise strategies and also Creative Integration strategies.

Based on the previous studies above, this research focused on how Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis managed to overcome the conflict by using the Conflict Management Strategies theory by Deetz and Stevenson (1986). In the story, it shows on how the children manage to survive the low economic struggle by working and making a good relation with the elder person. The researcher chose *The Railway Children* by Edith Nesbit's novel based on reasons that are relevant to the phenomenon of today's life. First, this novel is a classic English story about children that is very interesting to discuss. The novel is about family life and children's ability to solve problems. The beginning of the story shows that they had to move from living in the city to live outside the city near the railway station. The author of the novel mentions that they moved to a small house called The Three Chimneys. Their life was completely changed from living wealthy in Edcombe Villa to poor. Secondly, this story is great for inspiring today's kids who want instant gratification and lots of complaining. This story also inspired the researcher, and hoped that it can be a lesson for every child to always try to achieve something. Although there are many conflicts and obstacles in life, it is important to always support each other to understand each other and survive to live.

Furthermore, this research tries to make a gap from the previous studies. The researcher decided to analyzed the main characters novel *The Railway Children*.

Each chapter on the novel has a conflict from the children's perspective. The reason why the researcher chose this novel to analyze in terms of conflict and its resolution, because the main character is at the young age, Robertha is 12 years old, Peter is 10 years old, and Phyllis is around 8 years old. It is very interesting on how the children at the young age to overcome various life conflicts to survive.

In addition, this research aims to investigate at Robertha, Peter and Phyllis's interactions with others characters, such as social conflict and how they manage to survive by social interaction. Their mother only works as writer, which are making a poem and short story for a small fee. This topic is very important to discuss because, at that young age children are still in the phase of playing and learning. The whole story has a moral value in the literary works, especially on the object being studies.

## **B. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher raises the research question in Edith Nesbit's novel: How are the Conflict Management Strategies done by Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis in Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children*?

## **C. SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY**

The researcher has divided two significances of the study, which is theoretical significance and practical significances.

a) Theoretical Significance

The findings on this research contribute to the sociology of literature. The use of sociological approach in analysis can be done well by providing a deeper explanation external conflict from the main characters, such as social conflict. Then followed by using Deetz & Stevenson theory on Conflict Management Strategies.

b) Practical Significance

The researcher expects this research to be proper for students who want to analyze literary works using the sociological approach viewpoints and theory on Conflict Management Strategies. At the end of this research, the researcher expected to contribute to UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang undergraduate students and the readers as general as a reference.

#### **D. SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

The scope and limitation of this reseach focus on the conflict resolution in *The Railway Children* novel by Edith Nesbit. The researcher does not analyze outside from this topic. This research used a theory of Conflict Management Strategies by Deetz and Stevenson (1986) to investigate the conflict that Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis experienced and how they managed in the Edith Nesbit novel *The Railway Children*.

**E. DEFINITION OF KEY TERM**

1. Conflict Management Strategies: If the conflict happens, the management strategy is needed to know how to solve the problem within thoughts and action that are related to each other. (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986)



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher aimed to explain further about the approach and theory used as the tools in analyzing Edith Nesbit novel, *The Railway Children*.

#### A. Sociological Approach

The researcher uses a sociological approach as a foundation to analyze social interactions in the novel. In his book *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Lewis A. Coser (1956) defines social conflict as an inseparable element of community life. The process of social conflict with a person contains social interaction between characters. Using a literary sociology approach, this approach can serve as a tool to understand how conflicts in novels reflect social tensions and how characters in the story deal with differences relevant to society's conditions.

According to Georg Simmel (1918) in his book *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, conflict is the most crucial element in human life. It has a joyous function and is not always negative. Social interaction always involves individual relations through cooperation, competition, or conflict. This means that social interaction can help us better understand the complexity of human relationships and how differences can be a source of growth and development in society.

Social conflict does not only occur in real life but also literary works, especially novels. Strengthened by the opinion of Escarpit & Pick (1971) in his book

*Sociology of Literature*, he sees literary works as a reflection of society. He emphasizes that literature is closely related to the social conditions behind it. In addition, the sociological approach helps identify the moral or social messages the author conveys through the characters' attitudes in the novel. Moreover, the researcher applied this approach to analyze *The Railway Children*. It can help solve how characters behave and respond to conflicts based on social norms and how characters' conflicts reflect changes within themselves. Ultimately, literature depicts conflict and influences how readers understand and respond to conflict in real life.

### **B. Conflict Management Strategies**

Conflict in literary works is created when the main character wants or pursues something; something else blocks the character's way to reach that. Some of the strategies that need to be used in solving the conflict are called the Conflict Management Strategies theory by Deetz & Stevenson (1986). 'Conflict Resolution' refers to analyzing a person's ability to resolve conflict. This can be achieved through either collaborative action or individual effort. An individual's personality can also influence how they interact with others, both in conflict and in society. The main character deals with conflicts or problems in the novel in many ways.

Conflict can have positive and negative impacts depending on how it is managed. Negatively, conflict can cause tension, hostility, and damage to relationships between individuals or groups. For example, an unresolved conflict can lead to division, violence, and lingering feelings of revenge. However, conflict

can also play a positive role if managed wisely. In this context, conflict can be quickly resolved by improving communication and encouraging innovation. Healthy conflict can deepen understanding, spark creative solutions, and strengthen relationships through compromise and constructive problem-solving.

In addition, Deetz and Stevenson also explain in their book *Managing Interpersonal Communication* that interpersonal communication is essential. Communication skills development is an endless process of trying out new things, feeling more comfortable handling some situations and adapting to a continually changing set of challenges and situations. Managing conflict well teaches negotiation, compromise, and emotional management skills to be better prepared for future conflicts. Therefore, Deetz and Stevenson propose five conflict management issues, and each character uses a different strategy to resolve the conflict.

### **1. Avoidance**

This style is a positive way of managing the conflict because the character avoids the core of the conflict in several ways by defending, distancing, and protecting oneself in encountering the conflict. Avoidance can be a positive energy when participants are tired, angry, and pushed to avoid damaging relationships with friends and family. It is crucial to consider the impact of emotions and not let them dictate our actions. In addition, this strategy does not solve the problem but tends to avoid confrontation. However, this strategy also has advantages and disadvantages. According to Deetz & Stevenson (1986), Avoidance is beneficial

when the conflict is based on a short-lived situation and when it is much better to let the conflict pass rather than to be against it. The intention is to protect the relationship by reducing tension or conflict. On the other hand, the disadvantage of this strategy is that the problem may not be resolved, which may lead to dissatisfaction between parties and trigger negative emotional outbursts that may explode in the future. Therefore, it is important for individuals to consider when to use this strategy and when it is better to face the conflict head-on.

## **2. Pacification**

The pacification strategy blocks the discussion of a conflict by undermining rather than avoiding the conflicting discussion. Pacifying messages deal with the problem but subvert the conflicting discussion. Pacification can buy vital time to think and preplan (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). Pacification is like avoidance; they may have considerable long-term costs, called Blocking Conflict Discussion. This strategy distracts from the core issue by providing a temporary solution or promising future attention. It creates the illusion that the problem has been addressed when, in fact, it has not. The advantage of this strategy is that it temporarily reduces tension for the parties involved in the conflict. On the other hand, the drawback of the pacification strategy is that the problem still needs to be resolved so that the conflict may worsen over time.

### **3. Competition**

The next two is competition, and compromise, which is a strategy to consider communication possibilities when interactants accept the conflict context. Competition is management strategy refers to an instance where each individual in a conflict decides to win to get what they want. This situation is enhanced by good discussion and valuable answers, but they are damaged when people lose sight of the issue and only want to win (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). Competition can lead to various outcomes, from growth and progress to collapse and failure. This strategy often relies on superior strength or position, such as authority, power, or expertise, that people have to impose their will. In addition, it can take the form of force, threats, or pressure that can make the other party submit or accept the outcome desired by the person using this strategy.

The advantage of this strategy is that it can resolve conflicts faster in an emergency. The dominant side can make quick decisions and ensure immediate action without much debate or delay. In addition, this strategy is suitable in competitive situations such as in business or politics. On the other hand, the disadvantages of this strategy can be damaging between parties and ignore the potential win-win solution. Weaker sides may need to be allowed to express their needs or ideas, resulting in a less-than-optimal solution for all parties.

### **4. Compromise**

Compromise is the ability as highly valued in our society as competition. According to Deetz & Stevenson (1986) compromise can be a useful strategy that

requires a thorough understanding of the context of the conflict. This means that the strategy focuses on reaching a solution or a middle point acceptable to all the participants, even if they are still waiting for something to achieve their desired goals. In this strategy, each party must be willing to sacrifice part of its interests or desires to reach a mutual agreement. Compromise strategies have the advantage of creating a balance between the needs and wants of each party that can improve relationships between individuals or groups by demonstrating the ability to work together. Despite sacrificing desires, compromise does not solve the root of the problem as it only focuses on finding a middle ground.

## **5. Creative Integration**

Creative integration is the most complex and energy-consuming strategy we have considered, it is the greatest opportunity to satisfy each participant's goals to enhance the long-term health of the relationship. This strategy's advantage is that it increases the satisfaction of all participants. No one feels disadvantaged or forced to give in, which can increase satisfaction, cooperation, and a collaborative spirit between the conflicting parties. It also encourages creativity in conflict resolution, opening up new opportunities and long-term solutions to resolve conflicts. According to Deetz and Stevenson (1986), this strategy also attempts to break the conflict in a four-step process:

- 1) Firstly, it is important to identify the goals of each participant, which requires both sides to look beyond what they want to do or what they want to have or achieve.

- 2) Secondly, the goals of all participants should be combined and considered as if they were the desires of each person. No one or anything is privileged at the outset.
- 3) Thirdly, activities and resources that may accomplish many, or ideally all, of the listed goals and needs should be identified.
- 4) Finally, a course of action should be chosen and implemented.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **A. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research is literary criticism and employs a sociological approach. This research uses data from *The Railway Children* by Edith Nesbit to conduct this method. Furthermore, the researcher focused on identify and explain the conflict that experienced by the main characters and how the main characters overcome the conflict in the story. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the conflict between characters as a reflection of existing social values. It provides insight into the story's social impact on conflict resolution strategies.

According to Fard, S. F. (2016), literary criticism involves the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of authors and their works of literature, including novels, short stories, essays, plays, and poetry. The researcher collected the data through close reading of the text, where each conflict was identified, analyzed, and related to the Conflict Management Strategies theory by Deetz and Stevenson.

#### **B. DATA SOURCE**

The data are taken from *The Railway Children*, written by Edith Nesbit. The researcher used the second print edition of the novel published by Gramedia



Pustaka Utama in Jakarta, Indonesia. The second print novel was published in September 2022 and has 256 pages.

### **C. DATA COLLECTION**

To collect the data, there are several steps for the researcher to obtain before solving the problems of the study:

1. The researcher did a close reading of Nesbit's *The Railway Children* to understand the story in the novel several times.
2. The researcher highlighted the novel's sentences, phrases, and dialogue related to Conflict and Conflict Management Strategies, which can answer the research question.

### **D. DATA ANALYSIS**

After collecting the data, there are some steps for the researcher to analyzed the data:

1. To understand the conflict experienced by the main characters, the researcher focused on the collected data that consist of conflict identification, process of conflict, and conflict resolution.
2. Identifying conflicts is done to understand the context in which conflicts arise between parties.
3. The conflict is analyzed to elaborate on the interactions that occurred during it and the strategies the parties used to resolve it.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter discussed to answer the research question. By examining the data in this novel, the researcher focuses on how the main characters in novel *The Railway Children* by Edith Nesbit's face the conflict and what strategies they used to resolve the conflict by Deetz & Stevenson.

#### **A. Main Characters Way to Overcome Their Conflicts**

In this section, the researcher describes the Conflict Management Strategies employed by Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis based on Deetz & Stevenson (1986) theory. First, the researcher described kind of conflict. Second, the researcher explained what are the process and what strategy the way Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis overcome their conflict in Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children*.

##### **1. Pacification**

Pacification is like avoidance; it may have considerable long-term costs and is called Blocking Conflict Discussion (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). This strategy distracts from the core issue by providing a temporary solution or promising future attention. It creates the illusion that the problem has been addressed when, in fact, it has not. The children use this strategy when facing conflict with Bill the Bargee. Pacification involves calming down a hostile situation without fully addressing the deeper issues or resolving the underlying dispute. In this case, the children do not

engage Bill in a head-on confrontation, nor do they seek to escalate the situation further. Instead, they focus on de-escalating his anger and misunderstanding.

#### **a) Conflict with Bill the Bargee**

Before the conflict with Mr. Bill, Peter invited Robertha and Phyllis to consider Mr. Perks' birthday plans at Canal Bridge while fishing and enjoying the afternoon sun. At first, Robertha and Phyllis did not want to go there because the boys had thrown them coal on the canal boats. Peter's response triggers Peter's attitude of responsibility, and he argues that he will protect his sisters if something terrible happens again. With one condition from his sister, Peter agreed not to fight with the boys who had pelted them with coal.

*"What you staring at?" growled the Bargee, crossly. "We weren't staring," said Bobbie; "we wouldn't be so rude." "Rude be blessed," said the man; "get along with you!" "Get along yourself," said Peter. He remembered what he had said about fighting boys, and, besides, he felt safe halfway up the bank. "We've as much right here as anyone else." "Oh, 'ave you, indeed!" said the man. "We'll soon see about that." And he came across his deck and began to climb down the side of his barge. "Oh, come away, Peter, come away!" said Bobbie and Phyllis, in agonised unison. "Not me," said Peter, "but you'd better." (p. 141-142)*

The quote above shows the rising conflict between Peter and Mr. Bill. The man approached the three children with a high tone and became angry; he tried to drive away Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis, who were fishing in his territory, but to no avail. Robertha tries to engage with him politely, but Mr. Bill is initially unfriendly and dismissive. Peter's eagerness to protect his sister is disastrous. But this act provokes Mr. Bill's irritation, and he confronts the children aggressively. Robertha and Phyllis try to get Peter to leave to avoid conflict with Mr. Bill.

*Peter was always proud afterwards when he remembered that, with the Bargee's furious fingers tightening on his ear; the Bargee's crimson countenance close to his own, the Bargee's hot breath on his neck, he had the courage to speak the truth. (p. 142)*

*"I wasn't catching fish," said Peter. "That's not your fault, I'll be bound," said the man, giving Peter's ear a twist—not a hard one—but still a twist. (p. 142-143)*

The quote above is the peak of the conflict between Peter and Mr. Bill. Peter tried to lie by saying that he wasn't fishing. Robertha and Phyllis had climbed the bank and were ready to run home, but Mr. Bill approached Peter, who didn't want to move from his position, with a red face full of anger. Bill scolds Peter and is harsh with the children, showing the tension between them due to their unintentional but disruptive behavior. Seeing the conflict between the two getting heated, the two sisters did not run home. Instead, Robertha tries to return to mediate between the two.

*"Who are you a-shoving of?" he said, setting her on her feet. "Oh," said Bobbie, breathless, "I'm not shoving anybody. At least, not on purpose. Please don't be cross with Peter. Of course, if it's your canal, we're sorry and we won't any more. But we didn't know it was yours." "Go along with you," said the Bargee. "Yes, we will; indeed we will," said Bobbie, earnestly; "but we do beg your pardon—and really we haven't caught a single fish. I'd tell you directly if we had, honour bright I would." (p. 143)*

In the quote above, Robertha is just as afraid of Mr. Bill as Phyllis is. The internal conflict of Robertha's responsibility as an older brother occurs again, which in the quote above shows Robertha's attitude towards Mr. Bill by surrendering. Her polite and composed approach eventually softens Mr. Bill's attitude, becomes more understanding, and let go of Peter's ear. Robertha quickly handles the situation with Pacification, when Mr. Bill is angry when he sees the children fishing from the canal bridge. Instead of reacting defensively or aggressively, she takes the time to

explain that they did not mean to cause any trouble. Robertha manages to avoid confrontation by also offering an apology; it shows that apologizing is a powerful way to pacify someone who feels wronged, as it shows respect and a willingness to mend the relationship. By staying calm, explaining their actions, and respecting Bill's authority, the children manage to de-escalate the situation. While this doesn't fully resolve all of the tension or lead to a perfect outcome, it allows them to avoid further conflict and reach a peaceful conclusion. This Pacification strategy reflects the children's maturity in dealing with difficult situations and their ability to remain composed under pressure.

*"The canal may belong to him," he said, "though I don't believe it does. But the bridge is everybody's. Doctor Forrest told me it's public property. I'm not going to be bounced off the bridge by him or anyone else, so I tell you." (p. 144)*

*"Go home if you're afraid," said Peter; "leave me alone. I'm not afraid." (p. 144)*

*"I'm not going to be driven away by any old bargeman, I'm not," said Peter, thickly. (p.145)*

The quote above is Peter's conflict with his eagerness. After the incident, Peter still couldn't believe his fishing action was wrong. He sticks to Doctor Forrest's opinion that the Canal Bridge is public property, and anyone can come to the place. Peter felt hurt, and so did his ears. He still stood by his fishing stance. He also told his sisters to go home, but Robertha and Phyllis preferred to accompany Peter. While accompanying Peter, the children met Bill's wife, Maria. She allowed Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis to fish at the Canal Bridge as long as Mr. Bill did not notice. In the end, the children delayed the conversation about Mr. Perks' birthday celebration. This scene demonstrates the importance of communication and how empathy and politeness can diffuse a tense situation.

### **b) Conflict with Albert Perks**

Albert Perks, the station porter and a friend of a children. He supported his small family with his wife, Nell, and their three children with his skills and proficiency at the Station, especially the railways. Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis made friends with Mr. Perks while patrolling the train arrivals every 9.15. One day, Robertha and Phyllis were having tea with Mr. Perks in his office and were discussing a birthday event. However, Mr. Perks said he hadn't celebrated his birthday long. He feels that looking after his family is more important than celebrating his birthday. The children use a combination of pacification and creative integration. The conflict started when the children decided to gather birthday gifts for Mr. Perks as a kindness and appreciation to him. But, Mr. Perks perceives the act as charity, which hurt his sense of pride.

*"It isn't because he's poor," said Phyllis; "it's because we're fond of him." (p. 158)*

*"Why, Perks is so nice to everybody. There must be lots of people in the village who'd like to help to make him a birthday. Let's go round and ask everybody." (p. 158)*

One day, Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis were also asked for a special bun for a present to their mother while having breakfast. In addition to strengthening their friendship with Mr. Perks, Peter came up with the idea of celebrating his birthday by giving him gifts from the people in the village. The villagers, who like and respect Perks, willingly provide various items such as food, household supplies, and other small presents for his birthday.

*"So you've been round telling the neighbours we can't make both ends meet? Well, now you've disgraced us as deep as you can in the neighbourhood, you can just take the whole bag of tricks back w'ere it come from. Very much obliged, I'm sure. I don't doubt but what you meant it kind, but I'd rather not be acquainted with you any longer if it's all the same to you." He deliberately turned the chair round so that his back was turned to the children. The legs of the chair grated on the brick floor, and that was the only sound that broke the silence. (p. 166)*

All the things collected for Mr. Perks were packed into the perambulator; then, the children went to the little yellow where Mr. Perks lived at half past three. The children waited for Mrs. Perks to open the door. As the presents were unpacked, Mrs. Perks gasped, surprised, and cried. The children managed to calm down Mrs. Perks. Peter thought Mrs. Perks didn't like her gift, so Robertha and Phyllis patted her on the back. Before Mrs. Perks could get carried away with her emotional crying, Robertha quickly distracted her by asking for a plate for the buns they had brought. The fence could be heard from the front of the house, indicating that Mr. Perks was home. Robertha invited Peter and Phyllis to hide in the kitchen to surprise Mr. Perks. However, it turns out Robertha forgot to put labels on the things. The atmosphere starts to panic and heat up when they hear Mr. Perks' angry voice.

*Look here," said Bobbie, desperately, "we'll go if you like—and you needn't be friends with us any more if you don't want, but—" "We shall always be friends with you, however nasty you are to us," sniffed Phyllis, wildly. "Be quiet," said Peter, in a fierce aside. "But before we go," Bobbie went on desperately, "do let us show you the labels we wrote to put on the things." "I don't want to see no labels," said Perks, "except proper luggage ones in my own walk of life. Do you think I've kept respectable and outer debt on what I gets, and her having to take in washing, to be give away for a laughing-stock to all the neighbours?" (p. 166-167)*

Mr. Perks initially dislikes the gifts that Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis bring to him. Because Mr. Perks has a strong sense of pride, he believes he is a working-class man who values his self-reliance and ability to provide for his family without

needing charity. This misunderstanding leads to a conflict between the children and Mr. Perks. In this conflict, pacification strategy by the children is used to calming down Mr. Perks by understanding Mr. Perks emotions. The children manage to explain their intentions, especially Roberta takes lead in explaining the gifts were not given out of pity. Robertha starts to clarify that the gifts were given out of respect and affection rather than pity. When she read the labels, she focusing or soothing his feelings and correcting the misunderstanding from Mr. Perks. This shows that the children are maintaining respect for his pride, instead of arguing, the children take a more gentle and respectful approach.

*"I'm not unhappy about them," said Perks; "I don't know," he added, suddenly wheeling the chair round and showing a very odd-looking screwed-up face, "I don't know as ever I was better pleased. Not so much with the presents—though they're an AI collection—but the kind respect of our neighbours. That's worth having, eh, Nell?" (p. 169)*

Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis have no intention of offending Mr. Perks. After Robertha points out that everyone contributed not because they felt poor for him but because everyone liked and respected him, this explanation helps Mr. Perks understand that the gifts are a token of friendship, not pity. Then, the conflict is solved when Mr. Perks's pride is soothed, and he accepts the gift graciously with gratitude. The children's efforts demonstrate their growing understanding of how to navigate complex social dynamics with empathy.

### **c) Robertha and Peter's Conflict**

Roberta (Bobbie) and Peter are still children, so they naturally fight. In the novel *The Railway Children*, a minor conflict they experience is fighting over the rake



while gardening. As siblings, they naturally have moments of rivalry, and this is one of those moments where both Robertha and Peter assert their desire to complete the task in their way. At first, their conflict was starts as competition. But the competition phase was stopped when Peter gets hurt. After Peter gets hurt, Robertha moves to pacification strategy. Robertha felt guilty, so she shifts her behaviour from being competitive to be supportive. She soothes Peter by apologizing and focus on taking care of Peter.

*"He says you won't be lame or anything," said Bobbie. "Oh, course I shan't, silly," said Peter, very much relieved all the same. "Oh, Peter, I am so sorry," said Bobbie, after a pause. "That's all right," said Peter, gruffly. "It was all my fault," said Bobbie. (p. 182)*

Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis are working together in the garden. However, Robertha and Peter argue about who has the right to use the rake. In the conflict, Peter shows his eagerness that he should be the one using the rake. On the other hand, Robertha feels that she was the first to use the rake. Both are stubborn and do not want to give in to each other, which triggers an argument between them. Robertha realized that her mother did not like sibling fights, so she gave her rake to Peter even though she was still angry. When Peter wanted to take it, Robertha suddenly let go of the rake. As a result of the fight, Peter lost his balance and fell, injuring his leg. Peter's screams of pain made his mother come over. Robertha felt guilty when she found out that Peter's leg was severely injured. Her affection as an older sibling immediately emerged, and this was when their conflict stopped but was not resolved. Robertha's focus shifted to her feelings of worry for Peter. Although this fight was only a minor conflict, Robertha and Peter learned that

differences can trigger fights, and a sense of responsibility and affection between siblings are still a priority.

In the end, Robertha's strategy on pacification is successfully ended the conflict. Her concern for Peter overcomes their earlier competitive situations, they both learn a lesson about cooperating, learning the importance of care and understanding in maintaining harmony within relationships.

## **2. Competition**

Competition is management strategy refers to an instance where each individual in a conflict decides to win to get what they want. This situation is enhanced by good discussion and valuable answers, but they are damaged when people lose sight of the issue and only want to win (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). Competition can lead to various outcomes, from growth and progress to collapse and failure.

### **a) Robertha and Peter's Conflict**

Competition strategy was used by Robertha and Peter when they argue over who gets to use the rake. The conflict started as a competition, Robertha and Peter both feel entitled to use the rake and are unwilling to compromise initially. This is a natural part of siblings life, where each siblings wants to assert dominance or get their way.

*"I wish I'd had a brother instead of two whiny little kiddy sisters," said Peter. This was always recognised as indicating the high-water mark of Peter's rage. Bobbie made the reply she always made to it. "I can't think why little boys were ever invented," and just as she said it she looked up, and saw the three long windows of Mother's workshop flashing in the red rays of the sun. The sight brought back those words of praise:—"You don't quarrel like you used to do." (p. 178-179)*

Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis are working together in the garden. However, in the quote above, Robertha and Peter argue about who has the right to use the rake. In the conflict, Peter shows his eagerness that he should be the one using the rake. On the other hand, Robertha feels that she was the first to use the rake. Both are stubborn and do not want to give in to each other, which triggers an argument between them. The quote above shows the tension between Robertha and Peter; the argument worsens when they mock each other. However, the argument was known to her mother from her study window.

*"Take the horrid rake, then," was the best she could manage. And she suddenly let go her hold on the handle. Peter had been holding on to it too firmly and pullingly, and now that the pull the other way was suddenly stopped, he staggered and fell over backward, the teeth of the rake between his feet. "Serve you right," said Bobbie, before she could stop herself. (p. 179)*

Robertha realized that her mother did not like sibling fights, so she gave her rake to Peter even though she was still angry. When Peter wanted to take it, Robertha suddenly let go of the rake. As a result of the fight, Peter lost his balance and fell, injuring his leg. Peter's screams of pain made his mother come over. The competition escalates when Peter attempts to grab the rake from Robertha with frustration, which results in an accident where Peter gets hurt. This incident forces

Robertha and Peter to stop and reconsider their actions, and this conflict finally resolved by using pacification.

### **3. Compromise**

According to Deetz & Stevenson (1986) compromise can be a useful strategy that requires a thorough understanding of the context of the conflict. This means that the strategy focuses on reaching a solution or a middle point acceptable to all the participants, even if they are still waiting for something to achieve their desired goals. In this strategy, each party must be willing to sacrifice part of its interests or desires to reach a mutual agreement. Compromise strategies have the advantage of creating a balance between the needs and wants of each party that can improve relationships between individuals or groups by demonstrating the ability to work together.

#### **a) Conflict with Station Master**

In *The Railway Children*, the Station Master is a supporting character who plays an essential role in the story, especially in helping the children in various situations. Although his name is not explicitly mentioned in the novel, he is known as the person responsible and professional for the Railway Station in the village. Moreover, in his interactions with Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis, the Station Master shows concern for the safety and well-being of the children. One example was when he politely warned the children not to steal coal from the mine near the station. This

action shows his sense of responsibility as an adult who has a role in maintaining the safety of those around him.

*"Mother," said Bobbie, "mayn't I light a fire? I do know how." And Mother said: "No, my ducky-love. We mustn't have fires in June— coal is so dear. If you're cold, go and have a good romp in the attic. That'll warm you." (p. 39)*

The action of Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis stealing coal started during the rainy season in June. One day, Robertha felt cold during the heavy rain. She asked her mother for permission to light the fireplace to make the house warm. However, her mother was busy writing a story and told her three children not to light it on to save coal and to go to the attic to warm up. This was because they had just moved to the village, so their lives from living in Edcombe Villa, London, were forced to live simply in the village house called Three Chimneys. Peter, the responsible boy he was, had looked around the railway they had visited. Peter had seen a coal mine, and he recognized that coal was a valuable item that could be used to fuel the fireplace at home.

*"Well, then, coal-mines. But don't you let the word pass your lips on pain of torture." "You needn't threaten," said Bobbie, "and I do think you might let us help." "If I find a coal-mine, you shall help cart the coal," Peter condescended to promise. "Keep your secret if you like," said Phyllis (p. 42)*

Peter then planned to pick up the coal that had fallen from the coal wagons near the station. Robertha and Phyllis initially felt that Peter's plan to take the coal without permission was wrong. However, in the end, Peter convinces his sister that the coal that fell from the wagon will not harm the workers there, and no one seems

to care about the scattered coal. Peter also needed help from his sister to collect the coal.

*"Time someone did spy on you, I think," said the Station Master. "Come along to the station." "Oh, don't!" said Bobbie. "Can't you decide now what you'll do to us? It's our fault just as much as Peter's. We helped to carry the coal away— and we knew where he got it." (p. 45)*

Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis performed their stunts at night. On the first day, they managed to bring coal home. Mrs. Viney, the house owner, was confused as to where the coal came from. The three children giggled and felt proud of their stunt, forgetting that what they were doing was wrong. However, the following night, their plan did not go as expected. While they were busy collecting coal, they were caught by the Station Master, who saw them in action.

*"Then why did you?" The Station Master's voice was so much kinder now that Peter replied:— "You know that wet day? Well, Mother said we were too poor to have a fire. We always had fires when it was cold at our other house, and—" "Don't!!" interrupted Bobbie, in a whisper. (p. 46)*

The children were terrified, and Robertha tried to buy time so they would not be taken to the police station. Robertha experienced internal conflict by showing a sense of responsibility as the eldest brother. Before they moved to the village, they had promised their mother to be good children and not trouble her. When interrogated by the Station Master, Peter also experienced internal conflict. Peter said they did not mean any harm, especially Peter, who had a sense of responsibility as a substitute for his father. However, while Peter explained his reasons, Robertha

prevented Peter from telling the Station Master about their economic condition.

Robertha did not want others to feel sorry for their difficult living conditions.

*"Well," said the Station Master, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll look over it this once. But you remember, young gentleman, stealing is stealing, and what's mine isn't yours, whether you call it mining or whether you don't. Run along home." (p. 46)*

In the end, the Station Master gave them advice and forgave them. Robertha and Phyllis were relieved that Peter was not taken to the police station. On the way home, Peter had an internal conflict. He was not convinced that the coal they had collected was a waste. Robertha and Phyllis immediately provided empathy to calm Peter down. Finally, their conflict with the station master did not end at the police station.

*"I didn't think it was stealing. I was almost sure it wasn't. I thought if I took it from the outside part of the heap, perhaps it would be. But in the middle I thought I could fairly count it only mining. It'll take thousands of years for you to burn up all that coal and get to the middle parts." (p. 46)*

Roberta (Bobbie), Peter, and Phyllis face a conflict with the Station Master after they are caught stealing coal. This situation represents an external conflict between the children and the station master against society's rules and authority. The children, understanding what they are doing is technically wrong, sneakily take small amounts of coal from the railway station. However, their actions don't go unnoticed, and eventually, the Station Master catches them in the act. The situation becomes tense because the Station Master, as an authority figure, could easily report them for theft. The children feel a mix of fear and guilt and are confronted with the consequences of their actions.

The researcher found out that Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis handled the conflict with the Station Master by using the Compromise Strategy. A compromise strategy involves both parties making concessions to reach a solution that partially satisfies both sides. In the quotation above, the children admit their fault, express regret, and agree to stop stealing the coal, acknowledging the authority of the station master and the rules they broke. While the Station Master represents the law and could enforce punishment, he chooses leniency and compassion, recognizing that the children's actions were driven by need, not greed. This resolution demonstrates the children's ability to take responsibility and the Station Master's willingness to balance authority with compassion. The outcome is a learning moment for the children, who understand the importance of honesty and the need to find lawful solutions to their problems.

#### **d) Creative Integration**

Creative integration is the most complex and energy-consuming strategy we have considered, it is the greatest opportunity to satisfy each participant's goals to enhance the long-term health of the relationship (Deetz & Stevenson, 1986). This strategy's advantage is that it increases the satisfaction of all participants. No one feels disadvantaged or forced to give in, which can increase satisfaction, cooperation, and a collaborative spirit between the conflicting parties.



### 1. Bill the Bargee House Fire

This strategy was used by Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis to face the nature conflict, house fire. The children manage to put aside their previous conflicts with Mr. Bill. They prioritize the baby's safety over their past disagreements. Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis, the main characters in the novel *The Railway Children*, faced the fire of Bill the Bargee's house. After facing the conflict with Mr. Bill at the Canal Bridge, the children noticed smoke coming from Bill's houseboat. This smoke signals a fire, and they realize their baby, Reginald Horace, and his dog are in danger. At first, Peter didn't care that Mr. Bill's house was on fire, as the man had previously pulled his ear and hurt his heart. Unlike the landslide conflict, they had time to plan a response.

*"It's on fire—that's all," said Peter, calmly. "Serve him right." "Oh—how can you?" cried Phyllis. "Think of the poor dear dog." "The baby!" screamed Bobbie. In an instant all three made for the barge. (p. 146)*

*"Not you!" he shouted to Bobbie; "Me, because I'm wet." (p. 147)*

Peter slipped and fell into the water while running. In the quote above, Robertha and Peter are already at the cabin door; with Peter's courage, he is willing to go in wet and forbids his sister from following him. It turns out that Robertha still follows him from behind. Peter went to look for the baby while Robertha helped Mr. Bill's pet dog. After they came out excitedly, Robertha, with her leadership attitude, told Peter to go to Rose and Crown, where Mr. Bill was. Peter denied it and could not run in his wet and heavy clothes, so Robertha decided to go to Mr. Bill herself.

*"Ye be here at seven to-morrow," he had said, "and I'll take you the entire trip to Farley and back, so I will, and not a penny to pay. Nineteen locks!" (p. 151-152)*

*"So then I said," Phyllis interrupted, "we'd always each wear a red ribbon when we went fishing by the canal, so they'd know it was US, and we were the real, right sort, and be nice to us!" (p. 153)*

Despite their fear and the danger of the situation, the children's bravery shines through. Their ability to act bravely and responsibly in the face of danger reflects their increasing maturity and willingness to help others. Like in landslide incidents, their quick thinking and determination are crucial to preventing a complete disaster. Each of the children plays a role in helping the baby. Their empathy towards Bill and his family drives their motivation to act, and they use a four-step process to resolve a conflict.

1. First, the children's focus is on saving a life, Mr. Bill's child.
2. Secondly, the children take immediate and collaborative action to save Bill's child from the burning barge. Robertha and Peter go into the fire. Robertha saves the dog, and Peter saves the child. Then, Phyllis tries to shush the child and put him to sleep. Then followed by Robertha goes to the Guns and Roses to find Mr. Bill.
3. Thirdly, the children's heroic act of saving the child changes Mr. Bill's behavior. This act of goodwill softens Mr. Bill's stance, ultimately allowing for a more profound resolution of their prior conflict about fishing. Mr. Bill is grateful, and this shifts the dynamic between the two parties from adversarial to cooperative. This is crucial to a creative integration strategy

to find a solution that repairs relationships rather than settling surface-level disputes.

4. Lastly, as a token of Mr. Bill's appreciation and to settle their earlier fishing conflict, Mr. Bill permits the children to fish in the canal using a red ribbon as a tag. Both parties come out of the conflict with something beneficial. The children gain the right to fish without fear, and the red ribbon symbolizes a new understanding and mutual respect for Mr. Bill.

Using creative integration for conflict resolution between the children and Bill, the Bargee created a win-win situation. By saving Bill's child and earning his gratitude, the children made a relationship from tension to cooperation. Both parties' needs are met, the children get permission to fish, and Bill comes to see them as helpful and trustworthy, not nuisances. This resolution is creative because it doesn't just settle the surface conflict. It builds a foundation for mutual respect and cooperation going forward.

## **2. Conflict with Albert Perks**

Second management conflict of creative integration strategy used by the children was in a conflict with Mr. Perks when celebrating his birthday. Once the children's pacification began to soften Mr. Perks resistance, they moved to creative integration to allow both of parties to valued and respected.

*"We'll take the things away if you're unhappy about them," said Peter; "but I think everybody'll be most awfully disappointed, as well as us." "I'm not unhappy about them," said Perks; "I don't know," he added, suddenly wheeling the chair round and showing a very odd-looking screwed-up face, "I don't know as ever I was better pleased. Not so much with the presents—though they're an A1 collection—but the kind respect of our neighbours. That's worth having, eh, Nell?" (p. 169)*

Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis explain that the gifts were not an act of charity, but as a gesture of friendship and respect. They emphasize that the neighbour contributed because they genuinely like and admire Mr. Perks. Creative integration occurs here because the children find a way to meet both their desire to give and Mr. Perks' need to maintain his pride. The children employ this strategy by reframing the situation and finding a solution that respects both children's intentions and Mr. Perks pride. The children tactfully emphasized the fact that everyone contributed to the gifts did so willingly and with joy. In the end, Mr. Perks accepts the gifts. He realized that the gifts are a celebration of him as a person rather than charity for someone needy. This shift is a classic example of creative integrations because it allows the conflict to resolve in a way that honour both the children's good intentions with Mr. Perks.

### **3. Robertha's conflict with The Old Gentleman**

The last conflict resolved by creative integration is used by Robertha with the Old Gentleman. The Old Gentleman is a lifesaver for Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis; his fairy godmother-like kindness has dramatically helped the little family's life. At the story's beginning, the gentleman appears nice when getting off the Green Dragon train every morning. Phyllis believed the Green Dragon's train could bring

them to her father. Moreover, Roberta and Phyllis thought the old gentleman knew their father, so they always waved their love to the old gentleman in the hope that he would meet them on business.

*"Oh, Daddy," she whispered, crushing the paper hard, "it's not true—I don't believe it. You never did it! Never, never, never!" (p. 186)*

*A week later Bobbie managed to get away alone. And once more she wrote a letter. And once more it was to the old gentleman. (p. 192)*

*The Railway Children* novel ends happily, thanks to the kindness of The Old Gentleman. When Robertha and Peter quarrel over using the rake, many people come to visit them. One of them is Mr. Perks; he brings guinea pigs and magazines so Peter can read them when bored. When Robertha brings the magazine, she sees a piece of old newspaper wrapped in a package that says the name of her father, who has been wrongfully imprisoned. After knowing about her father's wrongful conviction, Robertha realizes that she needs someone with power and connections to assist in his case. At first, Robertha talked to her mother about the newspaper she saw. Her mother tried to convince her that her father would be right and asked Robertha to be a good sister to her siblings. So, Robertha decides to write a heartfelt letter to the Old Gentleman, whom she knows has helped them since they arrived at the village. Roberta writes a sincere and emotional letter to The Old Gentleman, explaining the situation with her father. In her letter, she provides details of her father's unjust imprisonment, appealing to his sense of justice and kindness. The following day, Robertha delivered the letter herself to The Old Gentleman. This reflects her maturity and bravery in trying to help her family. It highlights her character growth and her strong sense of responsibility for her loved ones.

*"You're a good child, my dear—I got your letter. But it wasn't needed. When I read about your Father's case in the papers at the time, I had my doubts. And ever since I've known who you were, I've been trying to find out things. I haven't done very much yet. But I have hopes, my dear—I have hopes." (p. 239)*

In this case, Robertha wrote a letter to the Old Gentleman, explaining that her father was in a wrongful imprisonment by using empathy and respectful approach to gain his assistance. She seeking the Old Gentleman's help in resolving their father's wrong imprisonment because she realize that she need a help from a professional people, and The Old Gentleman is a wealthy and influential man with significant resources. While the children are young, powerless, and unfamiliar with the workings of political issues.

*"Yes—I may say great hopes. But keep your secret a little longer. Wouldn't do to upset your Mother with a false hope, would it?" "Oh, but it isn't false!" said Bobbie; "I know you can do it. I knew you could when I wrote. It isn't a false hope, is it?" (p. 239)*

When The Old Gentleman reads Roberta's letter, he is deeply moved by her sincerity and the desperate situation her family is facing. While there is no direct conflict or argument between Roberta and The Old Gentleman, this interaction has emotional tension. Fortunately, The Old Gentleman does not react with anger or dismissal. Instead, he responds with empathy and uses his influence and connections to look into the case. Besides that, the incident with his grandson, Jim, also deepens the trust and relationship between the children and The Old Gentleman. The Old Gentleman's compassionate response resolves this conflict, as he becomes an ally in her quest to free her father.

In conclusion, while the conflict between Roberta and The Old Gentleman is not confrontational, it is marked by Roberta's emotional struggle to seek help and The Old Gentleman's compassionate response. This interaction plays a critical role in the novel's resolution, leading to the eventual release of Roberta's father from prison.

#### **4. Conflict in saving Jim**

Jim is a schoolboy, the old gentleman's grandson, injured in a tunnel while playing a Paperchase. The interaction between Robertha, Peter, Phyllis, and Jim can be considered an external and positive conflict. The conflict begins when the children watch the paperchase game. They see eight players, and one of them is wearing the red jersey. After seeing all the participants enter the tunnel, they immediately move up the hill to wait and see all the participants exit the tunnel.

*"Not yet," said Peter. "That's not the last. There's the one in the red jersey to come yet. Let's see the last of them come out." But though they waited and waited and waited, the boy in the red jersey did not appear. (p. 200)*

*... Phyllis saw a gleam of red, and shut her eyes tight. There, by the curved, pebbly down line, was the red-jerseyed hound. His back was against the wall, his arms hung limply by his sides, and his eyes were shut. (p. 205)*

After waiting a long time, Peter and Robertha agreed that they did not see the red jersey coming out of the tunnel. Peter's anxiety had triggered an internal conflict within him. He initiated the tunnel exploration and led Robertha and Phyllis to stay close and safe. Phyllis felt excessive fear when entering the tunnel, repeatedly asking to get out. However, thanks to the support and protection of Peter and Robertha, it turned out that their suspicions were correct: The red jersey man was found unconscious.

*"Suppose we bathe his forehead with water. No, I know we haven't any, but milk's just as wet. There's a whole bottle." "Yes," said Peter, "and they rub people's hands, I believe." "They burn feathers, I know," said Phyllis. "What's the good of saying that when we haven't any feathers?" "As it happens," said Phyllis, in a tone of exasperated triumph, "I've got a shuttlecock in my pocket. So there!" And now Peter rubbed the hands of the red-jerseyed one. Bobbie burned the feathers of the shuttlecock one by one under his nose, Phyllis splashed warmish milk on his forehead, and all three kept on saying as fast and as earnestly as they could: (p. 205-206)*

This conflict presents an external conflict because the children face several obstacles. First is physical danger; the tunnel is a dangerous place that can also hurt them. Second, the lack of resources like lights and medical supplies to transport Jim out of the tunnel makes Peter and Phyllis find help. Third, the children show bravery and quick thinking. Robertha, as the eldest, takes charge of the situation; this decision reflects their maturity and a growing sense of responsibility. The children can not bring Jim out of the tunnel, so Robertha tells Peter and Phyllis to find some help while Robertha accompanies Jim.



*"You are a nasty man, though, aren't you?" said Phyllis. Peter took a step forward and knocked the man's hand up, so that the shillings leapt out of it and rolled on the floor.  
"(p 218)*

*"I forgive you," she said, "even if Peter doesn't. You're not in your proper senses, or you'd never have done that. I know want of sleep sends people mad. Mother told me. I hope your little boy will soon be better, and—" "Come on, Phil," cried Peter, eagerly  
(p. 219)*

After getting out of the tunnel, Peter and Phyllis found a signal box. They found out that the signalman was falling asleep. The quote above shows the incident between Peter and Phyllis with Signal Man. The signalman initially reacts with confusion and frustration because he realizes that being caught sleeping on duty is a serious offense. Afraid of losing his job, the signalman tries to bribe Peter and Phyllis into silence by offering them money. He hopes to prevent them from telling anyone they caught him asleep while on duty. This bribe attempt is an unethical response to the situation and adds to the complexity of the conflict. Besides that, the signalman broke down because his children were sick. So the children had to pat and thump him for a long time.

*"You might tell us where to go after someone who isn't in a box, though," said Phyllis. "There's Brigden's farm over yonder—where you see the smoke a-coming up through the trees," said the man, more and more grumpy, as Phyllis noticed.*

Peter, however, is not easily swayed by the offer of money. He and Phyllis know Jim's safety is the priority, and they refuse to accept the bribe. This refusal underscores Peter's sense of integrity and responsibility, in contrast to the signalman's attempt to cover up his negligence. The creative integration process

carried out by Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis when saving Jim took several stages in the form of collaboration and empathy:

1. They realize that Jim needs immediate help. This awareness shows their concern by signaling they are ready to take action.
2. After realizing that they cannot get Jim out of the tunnel, Roberta uses her skills to devise a plan to help Jim, which involves telling Peter and Phyllis to look for help outside while Roberta stays and helps.
3. This interaction was about saving Jim and showed their maturity in working together, overcoming significant challenges, and making the right decisions.

In the end, the conflict between Peter, Phyllis, and the signalman illustrates the children's strong moral compass and resourcefulness, even when faced with corruption and negligence. The signalman's attempt to bribe them adds depth to the conflict, showing how the children must overcome physical obstacles and navigate ethical challenges.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing the novel *The Railway Children*, the researcher can conclude and present the suggestions of the whole research.

#### **A. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis done in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the conflicts faced by Robertha, Peter, and Phyllis in the novel *The Railway Children* used four management strategies by Deetz & Stevenson to resolve their problems. First, the children use the Pacification strategy to resolve conflict with Bill the Bargee, Albert Perks, and Robertha conflict with Peter. Second, competition is used by Robertha and Peter when they argue about using the rake. Third, Compromise is used by the children to resolve the conflict with the Station Master. Lastly, Creative Integration is used by the children to resolve conflict with Bill the Bargee after the children help his child at the house fire, conflict with Mr. Perks's birthday party to convince Mr. Perks the gifts were a celebration and not a charity, children's conflict to save Jim, and Roberta conflict to help his father out of the wrong imprisonment with The Old Gentleman.

#### **B. Suggestion**

This research only used Deetz and Stevenson's (1986) theory to analyzed the strategies the characters used to overcome their conflict in Edith Nesbit's novel *The*

*Railway Children*. These limitations make this research can be develop for further research. The researcher considers that the novel can be also studied from another various aspects and approaches. For example, future researchers can analyze the source of conflict using Deetz & Stevenson (1986) theory, which is differing opinions, incompatible roles, incompatible goals, and competition for limited resources. The researcher also gives suggestions for further researchers or readers; you can analyze by comparing literary studies of the ecranisation of novels to movies. Since the novel *The Railway Children* was also made into a movie, future researchers can explore the similarities and differences between the novel and the film. For example, analyze the similarities and differences in plot, setting, and characterization intrinsic elements.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



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