

**THE ROLE OF CONFLICTS TO SUPPORT SUZUME'S  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT DESCRIBED IN MAKOTO  
SHINKAI'S *SUZUME***

**THESIS**

By:

**Fanny Rahmawan**

NIM 210302110065



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK  
IBRAHIM MALANG  
2025**

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**THESIS**

Presented to  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

By:

**Fanny Rahmawan**

NIM 210302110065

Advisor:

**Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.**

NIP 196810202003122001



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK  
IBRAHIM MALANG  
2025**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**The Role of Conflicts to Support Suzume’s Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai’s *Suzume***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, May 16<sup>th</sup> 2025  
The Researcher



Fanny Rahmawan  
NIM 210302110065

## APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Fanny Rahmawan's thesis entitled **The Role of Conflicts to Support Suzume's Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*** has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.).

Malang, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Approved by  
Advisor,



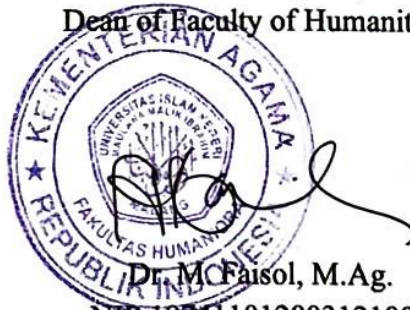
Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.  
NIP 96810202003122001

Head of Department of  
English Literature,



Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.D.  
NIP 198112052011011007

Acknowledged by  
Dean of Faculty of Humanities,



Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.  
NIP 197411012003121003

## LEGITIMATION SHEET

This is to certify that Fanny Rahmawan's thesis entitled **The Role of Conflicts to Support Suzume's Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) in Department of English Literature.

Malang, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Board of Examiners

### Signatures

1. Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M. A.  
NIP 196703131992032002 (Chair)
2. Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.  
NIP 196810202003122001 (First Examiner)
3. Hafidhun Annas, M. Hum.  
NIP 198807292019031009 (Second Examiner)



Approved by  
Dean of Faculty of Humanities,



Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.

NIP 197411012003121003

## MOTTO

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفْوضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

And you will remember what I am telling you, and my affair I leave it to

Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-Seer of (His) servants.

(Surah Ghafir: 44).

***“Kita bisa, selama masih ada rumah untuk pulang dan memulai  
segalanya”***

We can, as long as there's still a home to come back to and start everything  
over.

(Nadin Amizah and Kunto Aji in *Selaras*)

## **DEDICATION**

With support, love, and all goodness, I dedicate this thesis to:

Every breath and heartbeat of mine, Lilik Hermiati and Wantono

Feby Heriawan, Vira Delfi Andini, and Falisha Kara Gantari

My greatest guidance Advisor, Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.

All my friends who are always supportive

All lovers of fiction and Makoto Shinkai

And for myself, Fanny Rahmawan

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Salawat and salam are always poured out to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, along with his family, friends, and followers until the end of time. This thesis entitled *The Role of Conflicts to Support Suzume's Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai's Suzume* is submitted to fulfill one of the requirements to achieve the degree of Bachelor of Literature (S.S.) in the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang.

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Malang, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Author,

Fanny Rahmawan

## ABSTRACT

**Rahmawan, Fanny** (2025) The Role of Conflicts to Support Suzume's Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang. Advisor: Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.

Keywords: *Conflict, character development, Suzume*.

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Conflict, often seen as harmful and destructive, can be an element that aids development and growth. This study aims to describe how conflict can help Suzume's character development in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*. This study uses the concept of conflict and character created by M. H. Abrams. This research uses an objective approach to literature. The research formulated three research statements: 1) What are Suzume's characters before being affected by the conflict? 2) What kinds of conflicts are experienced by Suzume described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*? 3) How do the conflicts support Suzume's character development described in the novel? This research is a literary criticism because the research is conducted to analyze, interpret, and evaluate literary works. Data were collected through close reading and the classification of data relevant to the research questions. The data were analyzed by classifying and describing based on the concept of conflict and character created by M. H. Abrams. The results showed that 1) Suzume has six characters before experiencing conflict, namely selfish, careless, fragile, emotional, caring, and persistent 2) Suzume experiences five types of external conflicts with other characters and five types of external conflicts with the past, guilt, loneliness, frustration, and fear 3) After experiencing conflict Suzume becomes a person who interprets relationships with others, respects others, is responsible, assertive, self-accepting, open, and can continue life with a new spirit.

## مستخلص البحث

راحماون، فتي ٢٠٢٥ الدور الذي تؤديه الصراعات في دعم تطور شخصية سوزومي كما ورد في رواية سوزومي لماكوتو شينكاي. رسالة تخرج. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الحكومية الإسلامية مالنج. المشرفة: الدكتور سبتي ماسبيطة، ماجستير أنب.

كلمات مفتاحية: الصراع، تطور الشخصية، سوزومي

يُنظر إلى الصراع غالبًا على أنه سلبي ومنمّر، ومع ذلك يمكن أن يكون عنصرًا مساعدًا في التنمية والنمو. يهدف هذا البحث إلى وصف كيف يمكن أن يساهم الصراع في تطور شخصية سوزومي في رواية سوزومي لماكوتو شينكاي. يستخدم هذا البحث مفهوم الصراع والشخصية كما وضعه م. هـ. أبرامز، ويعتمد على المدخل الموضوعي في تحليل الأدب. تم تحديد ثلاث أسئلة البحث وهي: (١) ما صفات سوزومي قبل أن تتأثر بالصراع؟ (٢) ما أنواع الصراعات التي تواجهها سوزومي كما وردت في رواية ماكوتو شينكاي؟ (٣) كيف تساهم هذه الصراعات في تطور شخصية سوزومي كما هو موضح في الرواية؟ يُعد هذا البحث من النقد الأدبي لأنه يهدف إلى تحليل وتفسير وتقييم العمل الأدبي. تم جمع البيانات من خلال القراءة الدقيقة وتصنيف البيانات ذات الصلة بـ أسئلة البحث. وتم تحليل البيانات بتصنيفها ووصفها استنادًا إلى مفاهيمي الصراع والشخصية كما قُدمتا أبرامز. أظهرت النتائج أن: (١) كانت سوزومي قبل خوض الصراع أنانية، مهملّة، ضعيفة، عاطفية، عطوفة، ومثابرة؛ (٢) واجهت سوزومي خمسة أنواع من الصراعات الخارجية مع الشخصيات الأخرى، وخمسة أنواع من الصراعات الداخلية مع الماضي، والشعور بالذنب، والوحدة، والإحباط، والخوف؛ (٣) بعد خوض الصراعات، أصبحت سوزومي شخصية تقدر العلاقات، وتحترم الآخرين، وتحمل المسؤولية، وحازمة، ومتقبلة لذاتها، ومنفتحة، وقادرة على مواصلة الحياة بروح جديدة.

## ABSTRAK

**Rahmawan, Fanny (2025)** Peran Konflik dalam Mendukung Perkembangan Karakter Suzume yang Digambarkan dalam Novel *Suzume* Karya Makoto Shinkai. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.

Kata Kunci: Konflik, perkembangan karakter, *Suzume*.

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Konflik, seringkali dipandang sebagai hal yang negatif dan bersifat destruktif, dapat menjadi unsur yang membantu perkembangan dan pertumbuhan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana konflik dapat membantu perkembangan karakter Suzume dalam *Suzume* karya Makoto Shinkai. Penelitian ini menggunakan konsep konflik dan karakter yang dicetuskan oleh M. H. Abrams. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan objektif terhadap karya sastra. Penelitian merumuskan tiga pernyataan penelitian: 1) Apa saja karakter Suzume sebelum mengalami konflik? 2) Apa saja macam-macam konflik yang dialami oleh Suzume yang digambarkan dalam novel *Suzume* karya Makoto Shinkai? 3) Bagaimana konflik-konflik tersebut mendukung perkembangan karakter Suzume yang digambarkan dalam novel? Penelitian ini merupakan kritik sastra karena penelitian dilakukan untuk menganalisis, menginterpretasi, dan mengevaluasi karya sastra. Data dikumpulkan dengan melakukan close reading dan mengklasifikasikan data yang relevan dengan pertanyaan penelitian. Data dianalisis dengan mengklasifikasi dan mendeskripsikan berdasarkan konsep konflik dan karakter yang dicetuskan oleh M. H. Abrams. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 1) Suzume mempunyai enam karakter sebelum mengalami konflik, yaitu egois, ceroboh, rapuh, emosional, peduli, dan gigih 2) Suzume mengalami lima jenis konflik eksternal dengan karakter lain, dan lima jenis konflik eksternal dengan masa lalu, rasa bersalah, kesepian, frustrasi, dan ketakutan 3) Setelah mengalami konflik Suzume menjadi pribadi yang memaknai hubungan dengan orang lain, menghormati orang lain, bertanggung jawab, tegas, menerima diri sendiri, terbuka, dan dapat melanjutkan hidup dengan semangat baru.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter elaborates the background of the study, the problems of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and definitions of key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Conflict is one of the most common and familiar elements in human life. In the global context, conflict remains one of the issues that is continually discussed and periodically becomes a concern. According to the UCDP report on conflict published by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 2023 marked the year with the highest conflict trend since 1946. There were 59 state-based armed conflicts in 34 countries. Additionally, the UCDP noted that 75 non-state conflicts occurred in all parts of the world (Rustad, 2024). The facts presented in the data serve as evidence that conflict remains a significant issue that continues to be discussed and is a concern that cannot be separated from human life. As social creatures, humans will indeed never be separated from conflict. The interactions that occur in human life ultimately lead to friction, which is often referred to as conflict. As is well known, humans are a highly heterogeneous species. There are many differences in the ways and institutions of their lives. Conflicts can occur due to differences in the aspects of life between humans themselves (Dwiningtyas

& Supratno, 2023).

Furthermore, the phenomenon of conflict is not only reflected in real life but also often portrayed in literary works, which are reflections of human life. Literary works often explore various aspects of human life, including conflicts that are inextricably linked to social existence. In this case, the author of a literary work is also a part of society itself. Creators of literary works, such as novelists, are social beings who cannot avoid conflict. Therefore, it is not unusual for conflicts to be depicted in literary works such as novels. One example is the novel *Suzume*, written by Makoto Shinkai. This science fiction novel transports readers to a fictional world where they encounter the challenges of coping with natural disasters. Suzume must confront numerous conflicts, both with nature and within herself. These conflicts must be faced to save herself and even the world. This proves that literary works, such as novels, are often filled with elements of conflict.

In literature, conflict is an important element that influences the plot and character development (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Character development in novels can often be seen from the internal and external conflicts the character face (Bennet & Royle, 2004). Characters also undergo changes that affect the complexity of the personality caused by conflict (Noble, 1994). These two things have a complementary relationship where conflict can build character, and character development cannot be built without conflict exploration. Conflicts faced by characters in literature play a crucial role in building their personalities.

Based on the discussion above, the novel *Suzume* by Makoto Shinkai is an appropriate object for study using the theory of conflict, character, and character development from M. H. Abrams, as this novel is rich in conflict. The conflicts that Suzume experiences gradually shape and transform her into a strong and mature person. From this journey, conflict serves as a crucial tool and element in character development. This shows that *Suzume* is very suitable to be studied with conflict and character theory to find how the relationship between conflict and character helps character development.

In investigating how conflict can influence character development, the researcher has collected 10 previous studies that were deemed relevant. The first five journals focused on analyzing conflict in literature and film. The first study titled *Analysis of Conflict in the Novel Children of Their Parents* analyzed the conflict in the novel and the relation within the plot (Gebeyehu et al., 2020). *Analyzing conflict in the short story "Christmas Every Day" by William Dean Howells* (Angelica et al., 2024) is the second study that analyzes internal and external conflicts in the story. *Conflict analysis in mother-daughter relationship in Okky Madasari's The Years of the Voiceless* (Wulantama & Nafisah, 2022) also examines the existence of internal and external conflicts in the story. Furthermore, *Conflict and Morality of Characters in Novel* (Gusneti et al., 2023) is a study that discusses the existence of conflicts and morality in the novel, while *Totto Chan External Conflict in The Novel Tetsuko Kuroyanagi Totto Chan The Little Girl at The Window* (Helmita & Farma, 2023) also discussed about the external conflict

experienced by the main character.

Furthermore, the other five studies examine character development through conflicts in films and novels. *Bryce's Character Development in Wendelin van Draanen's Flipped: A Structural Approach* (Karina, 2024) explores the plot and how Bryce's character development. *The Character Development of Isabella Linton in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights Novel* (Asmiaty et al., 2022) discusses the character development of Isabella and the events that influence her character development. *Alina Starkov's Character Development in Leigh Bardugo's Novel Shadow And Bone* (Ragatama et al., 2023) analyze the personality development of the main character, Alina. *Character Development of Peter Pan in J.M Barrie Peter And Wendy Novel* (Munti & Valiantien, 2023) focuses on how the character development of Peter Pan and the influence of Wendy to his character development. Last, *Character Development of Estella/Cruella in Cruella (2021) Movie* (Zarawaki et al., 2022) shows how conflict triggers character growth, especially in Cruella's personality transformation. These studies provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding how conflict contributes to character development, particularly in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*.

While many previous studies have discussed the relationship between conflict and character development in various literary works, there is a lack of specific analysis of *Suzume*. Research on *Suzume* in the field of literature and other disciplines is also still scarce, so this research is important for developing knowledge. In addition, research that uses M. H. Abrams'

framework consistently without involving other frameworks is also scarce. This study fills the gap by providing an in-depth analysis of how the conflict in the novel catalyzes Suzume's development as a character with M. H. Abrams' framework consistently. In addition, this study also highlights the unique aspects of *Suzume* that distinguish her from other works in the same genre. Thus, this study not only contributes to the literary study of *Suzume* but also enriches the understanding of the role of conflict in character development in general.

## **B. The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background of the study that has been elaborated, the researcher formulates the research questions as follows:

1. What are Suzume's characters before being affected by the conflict?
2. What kinds of conflicts are experienced by Suzume described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*?
3. How do the conflicts support Suzume's character development described in the novel?

## **C. Significance of the Study**

The research is expected to produce theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it is expected to enable readers to understand literary criticism, especially how conflicts in narratives can affect character development. In addition, it is also conducted so that further research can be

conducted in the field of literary criticism.

Practically, this research aims to provide readers with an understanding that conflict, which is often seen as negative and destructive, can actually serve as a tool to change and develop one's character.

#### **D. Scope and Limitation**

The research focuses on Suzume in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume* and explores the types of conflicts and how these conflicts affect character development in the characters. It limits its exploration to conflict, character, and character development. This research also focuses on the main character, Suzume in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*.

#### **E. Definition and Keyterms**

1. Conflict: a fundamental element that drives the story through struggle and resistance between characters. Conflict is also defined as the events in the plot. Conflicts can be divided into external and internal conflicts (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).
2. Character: can be understood as “the person” or “the attitude or behaviour”. Character as “the person” is a person or individual in a narrative or dramatic work. In contrast, character as “the attitude or behavior” is the moral, intellectual, and emotional measure measured through the actions and dialogue performed by the character (the person) in the story (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).
3. Character Development: the depiction of how a character changes from the

beginning to the end of the story. Character development refers to round characters with dynamic, complex personalities (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

4. Selfish: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as the trait of only caring about oneself without considering others. It can also be said to be a behaviour that is concerned with its own interests without caring about the interests of others.
5. Reckless: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as a lack of attention to danger and a lack of consideration for an action. Reckless character can also be interpreted as a nature that is not careful in doing something.
6. Fragile: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as easily damaged. In the context of Suzume's character, fragile is defined and found by the researcher to be mentally fragile. So, fragile refers to mental fragility.
7. Emotional: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as a trait that relates to emotions. Emotions can be defined as strong feelings, feelings of joy, sadness, love, etc. In the context of Suzume's character, emotional can be interpreted as being easily carried away by emotions.
8. Caring: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as the trait of being kind and showing caring actions towards others.
9. Persistent: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as a strong determination to do something despite difficulties. Persistent can



also be defined as never giving up in trying.

10. Frustrated: according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries can be defined as a feeling of annoyance and impatience when one cannot do something.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the theory used in this research, which applies the concepts of conflict, character and characterization, and character development in the world of literature.

#### **A. The Objective Approach**

This research uses one of the approaches described by M. H. Abrams in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (1979). Abrams came up with four basic approaches to studying literature: the mimetic, expressive, objective, and pragmatic approach (Anggraini & Devi, 2023). The researcher uses an objective approach in conducting this research. The objective approach is defined as an approach that views a literary work as unconnected to external elements or elements that are outside. The literary work is then analyzed as an existence that can stand alone and is formed by its internal elements (Abrams, 1979). This is differs from the other three approaches that deal with external elements. The objective approach is very much against relating to external elements and focuses on analyzing the structure and relationships between internal elements (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

The objective approach also conducts an analysis that emphasizes the important elements in the text: writing style, cohesiveness, and wholeness. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Formal elements such as plot, theme, character,

setting, and others are certainly the objects analyzed in this approach. Since the analysis focuses on the internal elements and separates the external elements, the research with this method certainly uses the close reading method. Close reading is done by reading the text carefully to find internal relationships and ambiguities or double meanings in the text (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Close reading does not look at a work in general but seeks to reveal the interconnected internal elements in forming meaning.

## **B. Abrams' Theory of Conflict**

Conflict is one of the important elements in literary works. Conflict can be categorized as an intrinsic element in the narrative and is usually closely related to the plot. Abrams implicitly explains the existence of conflict in his book *Glossary of Literary Terms* (2015) in the chapter on plot. Plot is a narrative work triggered by the confluence of events and actions to create certain emotional and artistic effects. Furthermore, the plot also depends on the character. This is because the existence of characters triggers events and actions (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). According to this explanation, conflict refers to and can be understood as an event that exists within the plot. In addition to being related to the plot, conflict is often the underlying theme in the story. Readers can figure out the theme by understanding the conflict that appears in the story.

Conflict can also be defined as a fundamental element that drives the story through struggle and resistance between characters (Abrams &

Harpham, 2015). In a narrative, the main character will be the center of the reader's attention and is called the protagonist, while the character with the opposite trait is called the antagonist (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). These two types of characters will oppose each other and create a relationship with conflict in their interactions. On the other hand, conflict is not only created from the oppositional relationship between the protagonist and antagonist but can also arise within the characters themselves.

Furthermore, conflict development in the plot is also important to understand. Gustav Freytag (in Abrams & Harpham, 2015) came up with the Freytag Pyramid, which describes the plot as having five stages. These five stages include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Exposition is the initial stage that opens and emerges the seeds that cause conflict. Second, rising action is the stage where the seeds of conflict develop. Third, climax is the stage where the conflict reaches its peak, and the arrival of a crisis becomes a turning point for the protagonist. Fourth, falling action is the process of conflict subsiding, which leads to resolution. Finally, resolution can be recognized as *dénouement*, French for “untie the knot”. Resolution is the stage where the conflict is successfully resolved, and the plot gets its outcome.

Ultimately, conflict can be understood in detail by understanding the plot. This is because conflict is an element that exists in the plot and is closely related to the plot. Conflict is the core of the plot that connects characters and incidents; the development of conflict is described in the plot and can be

divided into five stages (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution). Conflict can also be understood as the result of causal relationships within the plot. Conflict is a sequence of events and how an event can cause or create a desired outcome (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Furthermore, Abrams also classifies conflict into two types, namely external and internal conflict.

### **1. External Conflict**

External conflicts are conflicts that arise as a result of differences between one character and another. The opposing nature of the protagonist and antagonist is an example of external conflict. In addition to conflicts with other individuals, there are conflicts with fate or circumstances that hinder the protagonist's goals (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). This can also be classified as external conflict. From this explanation, it can be concluded that external conflict requires external resistance to occur. Factors such as conflicts with other individuals, fate, or circumstances are factors from outside the character's self.

### **2. Internal Conflict**

In contrast to external conflicts, internal conflicts highlight how conflicts arise due to a character's resistance to himself. Suppose the character faces conflicts between individuals, fate, or circumstances outside the character in external conflict. In that case, some literary works also raise conflicts with values and desires opposite to the protagonist's self (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). In this case, the seeds of conflict arise within oneself

through doubts about values and opposing desires. The desires and values of an individual can be classified as internal factors or factors from within. Internal conflict does not require external factors such as other opposing individuals, circumstances, or fate to create conflict.

### **C. Abrams' Theory of Character**

After discussing about what happens as conflict, there will be the question of who is experiencing conflict. The character is the element that causes and experiences the conflict itself. As explained earlier, conflict can be triggered by events and actions. In this case, the characters are the perpetrators of these events and actions and strongly depend on the conflict in the plot (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Character is also one of the important elements that must be present in the story because they act as actors that readers will follow throughout the story. Researcher then differentiate character into three different explanations, namely character, characterization, and character development.

#### **1. Character**

A character is a person or individual in a narrative or dramatic work (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). In this case, character refers to the existence of people or individuals who exist or are represented in a narrative or story. The character can be defined more broadly. The character can be described as “the person” and “the attitude or behaviour”. However in this case, the character refers to “the person” who performs actions in the story. This can be in the

form of actions reflected by what they do and speech or the expression of emotions through the dialogue they say in the story. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). The actions and dialogue performed by these characters will then be used by the reader as parameters in determining certain moral, intellectual, and emotional traits of a character. In *Aspect of the Novel* (1927), E M. Forster (in Abrams & Harpham, 2015) introduced a new idea of character distinction. Characters are divided into round and flat characters.

#### **a. Main Character**

In the narrative, there is certainly one character who is the story's center or can be said to be a protagonist character. The protagonist is the main character to whom the reader pays attention. On the other hand, the character who is the opposite of the protagonist. This character is commonly called the antagonist (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). The main character, or the protagonist, is described as having a complex personality and can usually be explored more deeply. This is related to the round character, which is also explained by Abrams in his book and will be discussed in depth in the next discussion. On the other hand, the main characters have wide opportunities to develop and show their psychological complexity. This shows that the main character is not only the story's center but also plays a role in building the structure of the whole story (Woloch, 2003).

#### **b. Supporting Character**

Apart from the main character, other characters are called supporting characters. These characters are often associated with flat characters as

opposed to round characters. These characters serve a complementary function in the plot and are usually not portrayed as having complex characters (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). The supporting character can also be described as a character who can trigger conflict and become a foil for the main character. For example, Jane Bennet who is described as a gentle character in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* becomes a foil for Elizabeth, who is described as a strong-willed character.

### **c. Round Character**

On the other hand, round characters are built inversely to flat characters. These characters are built with complex personality aspects that cannot be defined by just one trait. These characters are built like humans in the real world with complex and dynamic personalities that are unpredictable. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). A round character cannot be described or illustrated with a single phrase or word. Given that the character is very complex, the depiction of this character can be seen from the behavior and words spoken in dialogue. Examples of round characters are the main character in Jane Austen's *Emma* and Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. The main character in *Emma* undergoes gradual change, while Pip's character changes due to a conflict or crisis.

### **d. Flat Character**

Flat characters are created with one idea or quality. These characters are usually referred to as two-dimensional characters. These characters are described with little detail and can be known by their nature with just one



phrase or even a sentence. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). In some literary works, flat characters are used as functionaries and left relatively flat. Nonetheless, flat characters have their place. Literary works such as detective stories, adventure novels, and comedies even have two-dimensional protagonists. The use of these characters is based on their function in the plot (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Examples of flat characters are Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Mr. Micawber in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, who have no depth of character that can be explored further because they are classified as flat characters.

## **2. Characterization**

Unlike character, which refers to “the person”, characterization refers to “the attitude or behavior”. Readers often interpret character as having distinctive moral, intellectual, and emotional traits. These moral, intellectual, and emotional, which are measured through the actions and dialogues performed by the characters in the story (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Therefore, characterization can be understood as the attitude or behavior displayed by the characters in the story.

Characterization can also be defined as the technique used by the author to build the distinctive character of the characters in the story. There are two kinds of characterization, namely through the showing method and the telling technique. In the showing method, the writer will show the actions and speech of the character and then leave the interpretation of the character to the reader through what can be seen from the actions and speech of the

character. This method is also known as the dramatic method. Often, the writer also shows the character's internal factors, such as how the character thinks and responds to a problem he or she is facing. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

On the other hand, the author used the telling method by inserting explicit explanations to describe the nature and assess the motives of what the characters do and talk about. The author will explicitly tell the reader about the traits and motives of the characters through direct descriptions that can be found in the narrative. This will prevent the reader from interpreting the traits and motives of the characters in the story as in the showing method.

### **3. Character Development**

From this distinction of characters into flat and round characters, it can be understood that character development is carried out in literary works by the author. Character development can be defined as how a character develops from the beginning to the end of the story. Character development refers to round characters that are built with complexity. Because of this complexity, the character will eventually become alive, difficult to guess monotonously, and can surprise the reader (Forster, 1985). This character development will also help to add to the story because of its dynamic nature.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter explains the research methods used by the researcher. It includes the research design, datum source, datum collection, and datum analysis.

#### **A. Research Design**

This research is classified into literary criticism because the researcher discusses the conflict that supports Suzume's character development described in literary works. Furthermore, literary criticism involves interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating literary works (Fard, 2016). This study focuses on Suzume, and the researcher seeks to examine the conflicts in the novel are and how conflicts can support Suzume's character development. The researcher employed the concepts of conflict, character, characterization, and character development, as outlined in M. H. Abrams' framework, to analyze the data collected. The literary approach used is M. H. Abrams' objective approach because the discussion focuses on the intrinsic or formal elements in the narrative, namely conflict and character development.

#### **B. Data Source**

The data in this research is taken from Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*, a fictional adventure-themed novel. *Suzume* tells the story of Suzume's adventure to save the world and Shota, a stranger whom she comes to admire. In this adventure, Suzume faces various conflicts, finally making her a strong

and sincere woman at the end of the story. This novel is a novelization of the movie *Suzume no Tojimari* and was translated into English by Winifred Bird. Yen Press published the novel on December 12, 2023, with 192 pages.

### **C. Data Collection**

The researcher takes several steps to carry out the data collection stage. The first process is to read carefully and thoroughly about the novel's contents and the data to be taken. After the researcher knows the content and quotations that will be used as datum, the researcher label and classify the data according to the research question, in this case, the character of Suzume before affected by conflict, the conflict that occurs in Suzume and how the conflict helps Suzume's character development.

### **D. Data Analysis**

The researcher carries out the datum analysis stage by analyzing the datum in accordance with existing research problems. The data classified using M. H. Abrams' conflict and character theory in literature. Furthermore, the researcher interprets the data in accordance with the theory in order to answer the research problem. Finally, the researcher concludes the results of his research in a short paragraph.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the researcher presents the data analysis to answer the research problem. This research is presented narratively using the concepts of conflict, character, and character development proposed by M. H. Abrams. This research explains how Suzume's character before being affected by the conflict, what conflicts Suzume experienced, and how conflict can support character development in Suzume through the objective approach in literary works.

#### **A. Suzume's Character Before Being Affected by Conflict**

Suzume is the main character and the focus of this study's research. In this sub-chapter, the researcher explains what Suzume's character is before experiencing the conflict described in *Suzume*. The character here refers to "the attitude or behavior" performed and displayed by the character as "the person," usually referred to as characterization. Characterization can also be defined as the technique of building a character.

In *Suzume*, the technique used is the showing method. In this case, the author presents the actions and dialogue of the characters, leaving the interpretation to the reader. The researcher found that there are six characters associated with Suzume before she experienced the conflicts. These characters are selfish, reckless, fragile, emotional, caring, and persistent.

## 1. Selfish

Suzume's first character, before she experienced conflict, as found by the researcher, is selfish. The researcher found nine data points that support and describe Suzume as having a selfish character.

The first selfish character in Suzume can be found and shown in the following quotations:

*“Sorry, I forgot something at home!” I say, turning my bike away from the crossing and straddling it. As I pedal off back the way I came, I hear Aya’s voice fading away: “Wait, wait, Suzume! You’ll be late!” My back sweats under the strong morning sun as I stand and pedal toward the hills. (p.7).*

The datum above illustrates Suzume's selfish nature. Suzume, who met Aya when she was about to leave for school, suddenly turned around and said she had forgotten something at home. Suzume lied and ignored Aya's warning that if she left, she would be late for school. Suzume prefers to prioritize her importance over catching up with the man she just met a few minutes ago, driven by curiosity, rather than focusing on her interests to get to school on time.

Furthermore, the second quotation that shows Suzume's selfish character before she experiences conflict is shown in the following quotations:

*I leave my bike in the weeds and climb over the DO NOT ENTER barricade, then jog up the narrow, dark path that’s hardly more than a wild animal trail.  
...Uh-oh, I won’t be making first period, I finally realize when I get to the top of the hill and stand there panting before the old hot- spring village. (p.7).*

The datum above shows Suzume's selfishness in breaking through an area with a "DO NOT ENTER" barricade. This behavior shows a selfish

attitude and disregards the rules made for her interests. Her selfishness is also evident in the evidence that Suzume realizes she will miss her first period and arrive late if she continues her journey.

Suzume's selfish character is also shown and found in the following third quotations:

*The lunch bell is ringing. I smile vaguely as people stop me in the hall on my way to class—"Iwato, you just got here?" "Suzume, you look sick!" "...So you finally decided to join us," Aya says, exasperated. She's in her seat by the window, picking at her lunch. "Fashionably late," says Mami with a half smile. She's sitting next to Aya, eating an egg roll. (p.11).*

The datum above shows Suzume's selfish character because, in the end, Suzume was late to arrive at school. Suzume only came when the lunch bell rang. This behavior indicates that Suzume disregards the rules to arrive and participate in the learning process at school on time. She deliberately misses her first period at school in order to satisfy her interest in finding the man she wants to meet.

Suzume's next selfish character can also be found in the following fourth quotations:

*Without answering, I run out of the classroom, stumble down the stairs, fly across the schoolyard to my bike, and put in the key. I pedal as hard as I can. I ride up the slope next to the ocean, into the hills. (p.14).*

The datum above shows Suzume running away from her school and ignoring her friend's questions immediately after the earthquake when she saw something like smoke coming out of the hill where she had found the ruins earlier. This incident can be categorized as selfish because Suzume consciously prefers to find out what happened in the strange place she had

previously visited rather than continue with her schoolwork, for which she had arrived late.

Furthermore, the fifth quotations also show the selfish character of Suzume. Here are the quotations:

*I run into Tamaki in the entryway.  
 "Sorry, I have to go!" I say, shooting past her.  
 "Go where?" she asks, grabbing my arm. "I came back because  
 I was worried about you!"  
 "You did?"  
 "The earthquake! You wouldn't answer your phone, so—"  
 "Oh, sorry. I didn't notice you called! I'm fine!" (p.23).*

The above datum shows that Suzume met her aunt Tamaki at the front door, shouting that she had to leave for no apparent reason, and then left her after saying she was fine. This quotation can be categorized as evidence that Suzume is a selfish person because she ignored her aunt, who was worried about her. Suzume chose to take the short answer and left her aunt to pursue her interest, which was to pursue Souta.

The sixth quotation also shows Suzume's selfish character. Here are the quotations:

*"I don't even want to think about this, but...", she says,  
 filling the silence as I scramble for an answer. "You aren't seeing some  
 strange man, are?"  
 "No, I'm fine. It's nothing like that!" I shout, then hang up. I let out a long  
 sigh. I know  
 I've only worried her more. (p.26).*

The above datum shows the conversation and dispute between Suzume and her aunt Tamaki. Tamaki expressed that she did not want her suspicions to be accurate and asked if Suzume was with a strange man. Suzume yelled and denied the question and then switched off the phone line between herself and Tamaki. Suzume is selfish for hiding what she is doing



and lying to Tamaki. She also unilaterally switched off the phone and ended the unfinished conversation. Suzume ignored Tamaki's interests, who asked for clarity on Suzume's current situation.

Next is the datum in the seventh quotation. This quotation also shows Suzume's selfishness. Here are the seventh quotations that show Suzume's selfishness:

*“The point is, I need you to tell me where you’re staying tonight. A hotel? An inn? You’re really alone, right? You’re not with someone I don’t know?”*  
*Click. I reflexively hang up. (p.46).*

The above datum shows a similar incident to the previous datum. Suzume, who was talking to Tamaki on the phone, suddenly ended the call or cut the phone connection between them. Tamaki was worried about where Suzume would spend the night, whether she would be alone, and whether she would be with someone Tamaki did not know. Suzume, who felt overwhelmed, finally disconnected the phone. This incident reveals Suzume's selfishness, as instead of being straightforward, she chose to protect her interests and cut off communication between her and Tamaki. Suzume ignored Tamaki's interest, who wanted to know where she spent the night.

Next is the eighth quotation. Here is a quotation that shows Suzume's reckless character:

*“PS, I’m not mad at you. I’m just confused and worried. Why did you go on a trip all of a sudden without telling me anything? Why Ehime? You’ve never mentioned Ehime, and as far as I know, you don’t necessarily—”*  
*Sigh. I turn my phone over and set it on the tatami mat as if that will keep it away from me. I’ll read the rest tomorrow.*  
*“I wish she would hurry up and get a boyfriend or something,” I mutter. (p.49).*

The datum above shows Suzume reading a message from Tamaki.

After reading the message containing Tamaki's confusion and concern about why Suzume went to Ehime, Suzume ignored the message and flipped her phone. This incident suggests that Suzume is a selfish person because Suzume ignores Tamaki's confusion and concern. She chose not to reply to Tamaki's message immediately and deliberately ignored it. Suzume again ignored Tamaki's interest in knowing the reason why he had traveled to Ehime.

Finally, the last quotation that shows the selfish character of Suzume, here is the quotations:

*Rumi's exhausted expression stabs me through the heart.  
 "Where on earth did you go?!"  
 "I'm sorry, I—"  
 "Do you know how worried I've been?! You disappeared in the middle of the night!" (p.76).*

The datum above shows the situation where Suzume returned to Rumi's karaoke bar after disappearing to chase after Daijin and close the worm exit gate in the middle of the night. Suzume left without explanation, leaving Rumi and Miki in the middle of their work. This incident reveals Suzume's selfish nature, as she left without explanation to pursue her interests. Suzume left suddenly without a clear explanation and ignored the person who helped and asked her to help at the karaoke bar.

## **2. Reckless**

The second character trait that was attributed to Suzume before she experienced conflict and was discovered by the researcher was recklessness. In this sub-chapter, the researcher found four pieces of data that support the statement that Suzume has a reckless character.

Here is a quotation that shows the recklessness of a Suzume:

*I proceed down the dim hallway, peering around. Despite the heat, chills are running down my spine. I might have underestimated these ruins. I shout even louder. (p.8).*

The datum above describes the situation of Suzume, who was exploring the ruins in search of Souta. In the datum, Suzume is described as feeling goosebumps in response to fear, and she feels that she has underestimated the ruins because she forced herself to enter despite it being unfamiliar to her. The careless attitude displayed is that Suzume entered the ruins recklessly without considering the risks and possibilities of what she would encounter in the long-abandoned areas. The ruins could be dangerous because they are fragile or inhabited by wild animals.

Other quotations illustrate Suzume's careless character. Here is the quotation:

*...Maybe I should leave. I suddenly feel stupid. And embarrassed. What was I planning to do if I did find him? If our roles were reversed, if someone I asked for directions followed me way out here, that would be a little scary. Very scary, in fact. Just like this place, which is really starting to freak me out. (p.9).*

The datum above still has a relationship with the previous datum. In this datum, Suzume just realized and felt stupid for following Souta. She imagined how, if their positions were reversed, it would be very strange if she asked a stranger for directions, and then the stranger followed her. The reckless character shown is how Suzume followed and explored the strange ruins in search of Souta. She was so reckless and careless that she did not consider the possibility of what might happen if she followed a stranger and entered the old ruins.

Next is the third quotation found by the researcher. This quotation also supports the discovery of a reckless character in Suzume. Here are the quotations:

*I stare at it, unable to resist. Then I hear a whisper of wind, like it's talking to me. I place both my hands on the statue and lift it up. There's resistance, like I'm uprooting something. A big bubble rises in the water. I look down at the statue in my hands. The bottom is pointed like a short staff. Was it stuck into the ground? (p.10).*

The datum above explains the situation in which Suzume is confronted by the appearance of a statue that turns out to be Keystone. Suzume heard the whisper of the wind and was curious to lift the statue before her. When the strange statue was lifted, a strange sensation of resistance was felt, and bubbles appeared in the water. The reckless character displayed is an attitude of doing something without considering the potential for dangerous results. In this case, Suzume saw the strange statue and heard the whisper of the wind. Out of curiosity, she tries to lift the alien statue without considering what will happen afterward.

Finally, the fourth quotation, as well as the last quotation, is the reckless character of Suzume. The following quotations:

*"A stone statue at the ruins...!" he nearly shouts when I'm done. "That's the Keystone! You pulled it up?!"*  
*"I guess? I just..."*  
*I just picked it up because I was curious. I try to explain, but he's rambling on, like he's talking to himself.*  
*"Interesting—so that cat must be the Keystone! If it's abandoned its responsibility and run away, then..." (p.28).*

The datum above still has a relationship with the previous datum. In the datum above, it is explained that Suzume is discussing Keystone with Souta. Suzume confessed to Souta that she had pulled out the Keystone out

of curiosity. The reckless character displayed here is how Suzume's attitude has led to the Keystone being pulled out solely because of her curiosity. Suzume did not consider the effects that would be caused when she pulled out the foreign statue, which turned out to be the worm-holding Keystone.

### 3. Fragile

The third character found by the researcher in Suzume before she experienced conflict is fragile. The researcher found three pieces of data in the form of quotations that show Suzume's fragile character.

The first quotation that shows Suzume's fragility is as follows:

*I'm a little girl, and I'm lost. So basically, I'm miserable and worried.*  
(p.1).

In the datum above, Suzume describes herself as a lost little girl. Suzume also describes herself as miserable and worried. Elements such as miserable and worried are markers of Suzume's mental fragility. This supports that Suzume still has unfinished mental issues and shows that she is a fragile character.

Next is the second quotation. This quotation also describes the fragile character of Suzume. Here is the quotation:

*Still, for child-me, the sadness seems to be winning out, and I'm desperately trying to hold back the sobs welling up from my chest. Dry tears turn into clear grains of sand that cling to the corners of my eyes.*  
(p.1).

The datum above describes Suzume dreaming about her childhood. In the datum, Suzume explained that her young self could not win against sadness. In addition, Suzume also explained that she held back sobs in despair. The datum reveals Suzume's mental fragility, as depicted by the

triumph of sadness and the shedding of dry tears after trying hard to hold back sobs.

Finally, here is the last quotation that shows Suzume's fragile character:

*Sadness, loneliness, and worry have become part of me, have accumulated in me so they slosh around in my little body as I walk. (p.30).*

The datum above explains how Suzume describes that sadness, loneliness, and worry have become an integral part of her. These elements, such as sadness, loneliness, and worry, are evidence of the fragility within Suzume. Suzume also explained that these elements seem to follow her wherever she walks. It can be concluded that the elements that represent these mental problems are still unresolved by Suzume, making her fragile.

#### **4. Emotional**

The fourth character found by the researcher in Suzume before she experienced conflict is emotional. The researcher found three pieces of data in the form of quotations that show Suzume's emotional character.

The first quotation that shows Suzume's emotional character is as follows:

*"This is so good...!" I say despite myself. It is really, truly delicious. As the light, sweet flavor of the fat spreads through my mouth, I can tell my whole body is rejoicing. Before I realize what's happening, something hot is spilling from my eyes.  
"Suzume, are you crying?!"  
"It's just so delicious..." (p.48).*

The above datum shows the situation where Chika gave Suzume a delicious dinner. Suzume said that it was such a good meal that her whole body seemed to rejoice. After that, she started shedding happy tears because

of the good food. Suzume's emotional character is evident in the happy tears that welled up from the delicious food. Emotions easily carry away Suzume. In this case, the strong feeling that makes Suzume emotional is the feeling of happiness.

Next, the second quotation also reveals the emotional character of Suzume. Here is the quotation:

*“But you know, for some reason, I get the feeling you’re doing something important,” she says in a kind voice.  
“...!”  
I almost start crying again. Unable to lie still, I sit up in my futon. “Thank you, Chika. You’re right—what I’m doing is important. I think so, too!” (p.51).*

The datum above shows the situation of Chika, who is praising Suzume. Chika said that what Suzume did was something important. Suzume, who heard this, ended up crying and became even more determined to help Souta save the world. She also felt that what she was doing was important after being validated by Chika. The emotional character here is evident when Suzume starts crying after Chika says that she believes what Suzume is doing is important. This situation is evidence that emotions easily carry away Suzume. The intense feelings Suzume experiences here are those of emotion and pleasure.

Finally, the third and final quotation, which proves that Suzume has an emotional character, is shown by the following quotation:

*“You stand out in your uniform carrying nothing but that chair. You can keep those clothes and the bag.”  
“Chika...” My nose tingles at her casual, natural generosity. “How can I ever repay you for this?”  
“Don’t worry about that! Just come visit again.” (p.54).*

The datum above illustrates the situation where Chika gave Suzume

new clothes, as wearing the school uniform would have made her look conspicuous. Suzume, who heard Chika's kindness, instantly felt like crying but held back. This incident is explained by the figure of speech "my nose tingles," which means that her nose trembles from holding back tears. The emotional character displayed here is Suzume, who is easily carried away by holding back tears because of Chika's kindness. The intense feelings felt by Suzume here are feelings of emotion and pleasure.

## 5. Caring

The fifth character found by the researcher in Suzume before she experienced conflict is caring. The researcher found four pieces of data in the form of quotations that show Suzume's caring character.

The first quotation that shows Suzume's caring character is as follows:

*"Please go upstairs. I'll get the first aid kit and be up in a minute," I say to the man, who's standing in the entryway. I head toward the living room. "I appreciate the sentiment, but I—" "If you hate hospitals that much, at least let me give you first aid," I say firmly. (p.19).*

The datum above explains that Suzume told Souta to go upstairs while she would take the first aid kit. Souta then tried to refuse, but Suzume insisted on treating his wound. Suzume's caring character is shown by her attitude that she cares about Souta because she insists on helping to treat Souta's wound even though Souta has refused.

Next is the second quotation that explains the caring nature of Suzume. Here is the quotation:

*I look up and see a small form on the windowsill. A kitten is perched on the railing of the bay window. "What? Who's this? You're so skinny!"*



*Its little body, small enough to fit in my palm, is bony and gaunt. Only its yellow eyes are big. It's all white, except for a ring of black fur around its left eye like someone punched it, leaving a bruise. Its ears are pressed back. It's hard not to pity a face like that. "Wait a second!" I say to Souta and the cat before running to the kitchen, dumping some dried sardines onto a dish, and bringing it up to my room with a bowl of water to set on the windowsill. (p.21).*

The datum above describes Suzume seeing a skinny, starving-looking cat on the windowsill of her room. Suzume also said that she found it hard not to feel sorry for such an apparition. Suzume immediately ran to the kitchen and got dried sardines and water for the cat. Suzume's caring character is evident in her compassionate attitude towards the cat, which appears thin and hungry. Suzume was kind and fed and watered the cat.

The following datum quotation is the third datum quotation. This quotation also supports that Suzume has a caring character in her. Here is the quotation:

*"I bought some bread!" I put the bag down next to Souta and sit beside him. There's a bun stuffed with yakisoba noodles, a milk-custard sandwich, and two cartons of milk—one coffee and one strawberry—all procured from the vending machines in the lobby. "Thanks," he says. His voice sounds like he's smiling a little. I'm relieved. "But I'm not hungry." (p.27).*

The datum above describes a situation where Suzume offers food to Souta. Suzume bought some food for herself and Souta. Her caring attitude is evident in her offering food to Souta and buying food not only for herself. Suzume acted kindly and cared for Souta.

Finally, the fourth and last quotation supports the existence of a caring character in Suzume; here is the quotation:

*I glance over and see the kiddie chair standing against the wall like an aloof, handsome older student lost in thought. I get up from the booth and lean close to him.*

*“Souta, come hang out with us!”  
 “Me?” he whispers. I pick him up before he can disagree. “Hey, what are you doing?” he protests. I ignore him and set him next to the table, then sit on him. (p.77).*

The datum above illustrates a scenario where Suzume, who sees Souta in the form of a chair leaning against the wall, like a handsome loner student, then picks him up and invites him to join her. This incident shows Suzume's caring attitude towards Souta. She does not leave Souta alone even though he is not in human form.

## **6. Persistent**

The sixth and last character found by a researcher in Suzume before she experienced conflict is persistent. The researcher found three pieces of data in the form of quotations that show Suzume's persistent character.

The first quotation that shows Suzume's persistent character is as follows:

*I keep running to where Souta is. My feet slip, and I fall sideways into the mud, but I stand up right away and arch my body over him, pushing the edge of the aluminum door with my free hand.  
 “Suzume!” He looks up angrily as he, too, pushes the edge of the door with the chair’s seat. “Aren’t you afraid of dying?!”  
 “No!” (p.42).*

The datum above describes Suzume trying to run to help Souta close the worm exit gate. Suzume continued to help Souta despite the problems she faced, such as slipping in the mud. Souta, who was shocked and angry, shouted at Suzume if she was not afraid of death. Suzume replied no, and she managed not to give up when facing problems. Regardless of the situation, she still ran to help Souta. This quotation certainly proves that Suzume has persistence in her character.

Furthermore, the second quotation will also prove that Suzume has a persistent character. Here is the quotation:

*Beneath the soles of my shoes, the earth is rumbling and roiling. But I can do this. We can do this. I fill my mind with that thought as I strain against the door with everything I have. (p.70)*

The datum above describes Suzume, who had to face the challenge of closing the gate where the worms come out in Kobe. Just before attempting to close the door, Suzume described how the earth was churning and shaking beneath the soles of her shoes. Suzume succeeded in the challenge because she tried to think that she could do this and started closing the door. This incident certainly describes the character of persistence, which is defined as a trait that does not give up easily in the face of challenges.

Finally, the third and final quotation that supports the persistent character in Suzume, here is the quotation:

*Desperately pulling myself up, I get my right foot onto the narrow step sticking out of the gondola, then my left foot. (p.71).*

The above datum illustrates a scenario where Suzume is attempting to save herself by hanging from a gondola that is spinning away from the ground. Although Suzume says she is desperate, she still tries to face her fears and tread her feet onto the narrow footholds that extend out of the gondola to save herself from instability. This incident is undoubtedly a testament to Suzume's persistent character, where she did not give up on saving herself despite being at a disadvantage.

## **B. Conflicts are Experienced by Suzume**

In this study, the researcher found that the character at the center of the research, Suzume, experienced various kinds of conflicts throughout her journey from the beginning to the end of the story. The conflicts experienced by Suzume can be categorized into two types according to M. H. Abrams' framework, namely external conflicts and internal conflicts.

### **1. External Conflicts**

The researcher found five types of conflicts in the external conflict experienced by Suzume. This conflict involves elements that are outside Suzume's control. The researcher only focuses on conflicts that crucially support Suzume's character development and summarizes them into five external conflicts, namely conflict with nature, Souta, Tamaki, Daijin, and Young Suzume.

#### **a. Conflict with Nature**

The first external conflict experienced by Suzume is a conflict with nature. Conflicts with nature here can be divided into conflicts with gates, worms, and earthquakes. The three elements are elements that are formed and exist in nature. The researcher found 11 pieces of data in the form of quotations that show Suzume's conflict with nature.

The first quotation that shows Suzume's conflict with nature can be shown in the following quotation:

*Suddenly, I notice a strange smell. It's weirdly sweet and a bit singed and a little salty like the sea, reminding me of something I smelled a long time ago. I'm approaching a window. I can see through it into the courtyard.  
"Aaah!"  
It's just as I feared—though I don't understand how I knew. It's the door.*

*It's coming from the door I opened. The muddy, reddish- black current is writhing violently from the door, like it's enraged at the inadequate size of the opening. (p.14).*

The datum above shows Suzume's conflict with nature, more specifically with gates and worms. The datum describes Suzume, who can smell a strange odor and sees something that resembles reddish mud emerging from a door. The thing that emerged was a worm trying to escape through the gate, which was attempting to create an earthquake. The worm trying to escape from the gate threatens the peace of Suzume's world, making this event a conflict. This event is the first occurrence of worms and is located in Kyushu, where Suzume lives.

Next is the second quotation. This second quotation also shows an event that indicates Suzume's conflict with nature. Here is the quotation:

*No sooner does the thought cross my mind than something resembling a golden thread rises silently from the water's surface and stretches toward the sky as if grasped by invisible fingers.*

*"This is...," the man mumbles.*

*Golden threads are rising from all over the water's surface into the sky. I look up. The river that erupted from the door has split into streams that are now winding across the sky. It's like a stem has grown from the door and blossomed into an enormous reddish-bronze flower. The golden threads look like rain falling upside down onto it. Slowly, the flower begins to collapse.*

*"...bad!" he finishes, wringing the word from his despair. (p.15).*

The datum above shows the appearance of a golden thread-pulling worm that has taken the shape of a red bronze flower about to bloom. If the flower manages to fall, then a big earthquake will occur. This event represents a form of conflict between Suzume and nature, as it involves worms and gates and is likely to produce an earthquake. The elements attempt to unite to escape from their world and disturb the peace of Suzume's world. The

incident in this datum is a continuation of the previous datum and remains set in Kyushu after Suzume meets Souta.

The following datum quotation also explains Suzume's conflict with nature as follows.:

*“Souta, can the worm erupt anywhere?!”*  
*“This land’s Gate must have opened! If I don’t close it fast—” Another earthquake will happen? I feel a chill rise from the soles of my feet. I run faster, trying to crush the awful feeling underfoot. The long, fat worm is still rising toward the sky. (p.39).*

In the datum above, Suzume asked Souta if worms could erupt anywhere shortly after they both saw the appearance of the red worm. Souta then replied that the gate on the ground must have been open. They panicked, and Souta said that he had to close the gate immediately before an earthquake occurred. Suzume tried to fight the goosebumps on her legs and ran fast to help Souta. The incident shows Suzume's conflict with nature. Suzume tried to close the gate that would become the exit for the worms, saving her world from the earthquake disaster. Unlike the previous incident, which was in Kyushu, the appearance of this worm was set in Ehime after Suzume met Chika.

Next is the fourth quotation that shows the conflict between Suzume and nature. Here is the quotation:

*The worm has become a reddish-bronze flower blossoming across the sky. I glance at the schoolyard. Countless golden threads are stretching up and up toward it. It’s sucking energy from the ground. The flower grows heavy and begins to drift slowly toward the earth. (p.43).*

The datum above shows the event of Suzume seeing a worm described as a blooming flower; besides that, the golden thread has also begun to pull the worm to the earth. Suzume faces a conflict with nature when she sees a

worm that begins to fall, threatening the security of her world. The events in this datum are a continuation of the previous datum, which is set in Ehime.

As for the following quotation, which is the fifth quotation that shows the conflict between Suzume and nature, here is the quotation:

*“Look!”*

*“At what?”*

*I look up. You already knew, my heart says. That sweet, festering smell. The disgusting sensation coming through the soles of my feet, like something has started to move underground all at once.*

*“The worm...!”*

*Beyond rows of low-eaved houses, on a mountainside that doesn’t look very far away, a glowing blackish-red worm is beginning to rise. Against the night sky, it shines even more ominously than last time. I hear the clatter of wood hitting asphalt. (p.68).*

The datum above describes the situation in which Suzume saw the appearance of worms. At first, Suzume smelled a foul odor typical of worms and felt a disgusting sensation under the soles of her feet, as if something was moving underground. After feeling that, Suzume saw a red glowing worm appear on the mountainside. The worm shone eerily in the night sky. Suzume was faced with a conflict with a worm that sought to disrupt the safety and stability of her world again. This time, the appearance of this third worm is set in Kobe. This incident occurred after the Ehime Gate tragedy.

Next, the researcher presents the sixth quotation, which illustrates the conflict between Suzume and nature, as follows:

*“The Ferris wheel!” I shout as I kneel in the shadow of the merry-go-round, gasping for breath.*

*Souta finishes my thought in a shocked voice. “It’s a Gate...!”*

*The Ferris wheel towers above us, as the muddy current of the worm spews up from its lowest gondola. In this abandoned amusement park in the dead of night, the little gondola is rocking back and forth furiously, like localized gusts of wind are battering it alone. (p.69).*

The datum above describes the event of Suzume discovering that the

bottom gondola on the abandoned Ferris wheel at the playground became a worm exit gate. This incident illustrates the conflict between Suzume and nature, as Suzume is compelled to close the worm exit gate again to save her world from the impending earthquake. This incident is a continuation of the previous datum. It is also set in Kobe after Suzume meets Rumi.

The seventh quotation also shows that Suzume has a conflict with nature, as follows:

*Suddenly, a train bursts through the foul current. Its silver frame emerges from the tunnel as if nothing is amiss, passes through the worm's body, and enters the tunnel on the opposite bank.*

*"How can we get to a place like that?" I whisper in despair.*

*The worm extends below the bridge we're standing on and stretches upriver. I look behind me, following its length.*

*The worm's head is raised like a snake ready to strike. (p.98).*

The datum above describes a tense situation where worms emerge from the tunnel and are followed by a train exiting the tunnel. Suzume, who saw this, finally whispered desperately how she and Souta could reach the gate while the worms came out of the tunnel under the bridge they were on. Suzume is conflicted by the appearance of worms in the tunnel under the bridge that will again cause a significant earthquake. In this instance, the setting has shifted from the location where the worm first appeared. This time, the setting is in the Kanto region of Tokyo.

Next is the eighth datum that shows the conflict between Suzume and nature. Here is the quotation:

*A gurgling sound is echoing from the tunnel. I whip my head in its direction. The base of the worm protruding from the tunnel is swelling—like the worm is a big hose and someone has stepped on the end of it. Its surface jiggles as the lump forms and grows.*

*"The whole thing is coming out!" (p.100).*



The above datum shows the event where the worm that threatens Suzume's world's safety echoes and emerges from the tunnel. Suzume describes the worm as a large hose, with, its surface swaying, and its shape expanding. In this event, Suzume is faced with the conflict of the worm's exit from her world,, which is drawing closer because the worm's body has emerged completely,, according to Souta's words. The event in this datum is related to the event in the previous datum,, which is set in the Kanto region of Tokyo.

Next is the ninth quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and nature. Here is the quotation:

*I run toward him. The hill appears both far away and close enough to touch; the concept of distance starts to blur. I keep going. I'm nearing the gate. I burst through the door, but just when I think I've reached the foot of the hill—  
“Huh?!”  
I'm back in the dark ruins, and I look over my shoulder. There's the castle gate and, inside it, Ever-After. It's exactly like the first door I encountered, the one in Kyushu where I pulled Daijin out of the ground.  
“I can't get in...!” (p.111).*

The datum above illustrates an incident in which Suzume attempts to enter the Ever-After. She is described as walking and trying to enter the gate to Ever-After. When Suzume thinks she has entered the gate, she returns to the dark ruins and fails to enter—Suzume conflicts with nature, encountering barriers or differences that prevent her progress. Suzume wants to enter the gate to the Ever-After, but nature does not allow it.

The following quotation is the tenth, which illustrates the conflict between Suzume and nature. Here is the quotation:

*The ground rumbles behind us, and we both turn around. The black hill that was solid a minute ago is slowly beginning to move. “The worm's tail*

*is free. The whole thing is going to escape through the Gate!” Souta shouts. I realize he’s right. There are no Keystones holding down the worm right now. I hug the stone statue in my hands tight against my chest. (p.166).*

The datum above explains Suzume and Souta's struggle in Ever-After. After Suzume managed to save Souta, there was a vacancy in the Keystone position so that the worms would easily exit Suzume's world through the gate. This incident illustrates the conflict between Suzume and the worms, which will be free to disrupt the security of Suzume's world.

The last quotation, as well as the eleventh quotation, also shows the conflict that occurs between Suzume and nature; here is the quotation:

*I raise the Keystone over my head, just like Souta, still hurtling downward. The tail seems to have countless entwined blood vessels laid bare on its body. Inside each one runs a glittering red stream. Veins of blue light begin to trail from the Keystone I’m holding. The lines of red and blue stretch out as if seeking one another. It’s beautiful, like I’m falling inside a fireworks display. I channel the energy of my fall and the weight of my body into my voice. “We return you!” I scream at the top of my lungs as I swing the Keystone down toward the worm’s body. Instantly, all the veins making up the worm boil, bubble, and burst. (p.169).*

The datum shows Suzume's struggle with the worm and having to return the Keystone to seal the worm again. Suzume, who is very close to the worm, can describe the worm's body in great detail. In the end, she managed to stab the Keystone and seal the worm, preventing the destruction of the world. The incident is the ultimate conflict against nature, in this case, the worm that seeks to destroy Suzume's world.

#### **b. Conflict with Souta**

The second external conflict in this study is a type of conflict that involves a conflict between two characters. In this second conflict, the researcher presents datum in the form of quotations that show the conflict

between Suzume and Souta. Souta is a Closer who is the reason for Suzume's adventure. In their journey, Suzume and Souta often experience conflicts, so the researcher identified five data points that illustrate the conflict between Suzume and Souta.

This first quotation shows the external conflict between Suzume and Souta as follows:

*He finally turns away from the door and looks me in the eye. "...Why did you come here? Why could you see the worm? Where did the Keystone go?"*  
*"Uh, um..." His tone is insistent, but my answer is confused.*  
*"Worm? Keystone...? You mean like a rock? What are you talking about?"*  
*He glares at me. Wait, is he blaming me for something? Why?*  
*"What is going on?!" I snap, suddenly angry. He blinks in surprise, then sighs, carelessly pushing a long strand of hair out of his eye. The small miracle of elegance in that gesture makes me even madder. He ignores me and looks back at the door. (p.18).*

The datum above explains the incident where Souta managed to close the door on the Kyushu tragedy and then grilled Suzume with various questions. Souta created a tense situation by asking why Suzume came back here, why she could see worms, and where Keystone was. This incident made Suzume feel cornered and blamed for the events they experienced at the Kyushu ruins. This incident is a form of conflict due to differences in understanding of an event where Souta keeps asking questions that Suzume does not understand, so Suzume responds with anger.

Next is the second quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and Souta as follows:

*I gather my courage and say, "Um, there's something I've been wondering about—" and tell him about the stone statue at the hotel.*  
*"A stone statue at the ruins...!" he nearly shouts when I'm done. "That's the Keystone! You pulled it up?!"*  
*"I guess? I just..."*  
*I just picked it up because I was curious. I try to explain, but he's rambling*

*on, like he's talking to himself.*

*"Interesting—so that cat must be the Keystone! If it's abandoned its responsibility and run away, then..."*

*"Wait, what do you mean?"*

*"You freed the Keystone, and it cursed me!"*

*"That can't be!" I say, confused. But strangely, it makes sense.*

*The face carved in the stone wasn't a fox's; it was a cat's. I remember how it felt when it transformed into an animal in my hands.*

*"I'm sorry. I didn't know... But what should we do...?" (p.28).*

The datum above explains Suzume's confession to Souta that she was the one who unplugged the Keystone in Kyushu. Souta reacted in shock and seemed angry, then blamed Suzume for her carelessness. This tension eventually made Suzume feel guilty for her carelessness. This incident highlights the conflict between Souta and Suzume, as they hold differing opinions or viewpoints. Suzume, who had pulled out the Keystone, did not consider the result and was only curious. In contrast, Souta considered it a mistake because the Keystone was an important element in preventing disasters caused by worms.

Next is the third quotation. This quotation also explains the conflict between Suzume and Souta as follows:

*"Suzume, you don't have to come any farther!" Souta suddenly says, pushing off my body into the air. Like a dog freed from its leash, he bolts ahead at full speed.*

*"Souta, wait!"*

*"It's too dangerous! Go back to the girl with the scooter!" "Souta!" Looking like some three-legged beast, he disappears into the dim rubble. Don't do this, Souta! I call his name again, but he doesn't answer. (p.40).*

The datum above explains the incident of Souta forbidding Suzume to participate in closing the gate in Ehime. Souta quickly left Suzume and told her to go back to Chika. Suzume, who saw Souta slowly disappear from her sight, shouted to Souta not to tell her to go back because she also wanted to help. The disagreement between Suzume and Souta evidences the conflict.

Souta told Suzume to go back because the job of closing the gate was hazardous, but Suzume wanted to help him close the gate.

Next is the fourth quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and Souta. Here is the quotation:

*“Suzume!” He looks up angrily as he, too, pushes the edge of the door with the chair’s seat. “Aren’t you afraid of dying?!”*  
*“No!”*  
*He gasps. But I’m really not. I haven’t been afraid of death for a long time.*  
*(p.42).*

The above datum shows the tension when Suzume caught up with Souta to close the gate in Ehime. Souta looked at her with an angry face and shouted if Suzume was not afraid to die facing the worms that wanted to get out of the gate. Suzume replied that she was not afraid. She had not been afraid of death for a long time. The existence of conflict is indicated by the difference of opinion between Suzume and Souta, namely the difference of opinion about the fear of death.

Finally, the last quotation that explains the conflict between Suzume and Souta, here is the quotation:

*“Suzume, you lock it!” Souta screams from below my chest. “Me?!”*  
*“We’re out of time! Close your eyes and think of the people who lived here!” “What?!”*  
*“That will make the lock appear!”*  
*“Easy for you to say—”*  
*I look at him. Still staring at the door, he says earnestly, “I’m begging you! I can’t do anything—I couldn’t do anything in this body...! Please close your eyes!” The desperation in his words is like a punch to the gut. I shut my eyes. Now what? Think about the people who lived here? How? (p.43)*

The datum above explains Souta telling Suzume to lock the gate that will be closed because they will run out of time before the worms come out. Suzume, who heard this order, felt confused and denied it. She thought that she could not do it. Then Souta gave a grid of how to lock the gate, but

Suzume remained confused and asked how to do it. The conflict was characterized by a difference of opinion between Suzume and Souta, where Souta told and believed Suzume could lock the worm exit gate. However, Suzume felt confused and rejected Souta's opinion. Suzume argued that it was easy for Souta to tell her, but she could not do it.

### c. Conflict with Tamaki

The third external conflict in this study is a similar type of conflict to the previous external conflict. This third external conflict also shows conflict between one character and another. The researcher presents data in the form of quotations that show the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki. Tamaki is Suzume's aunt and guardian who has taken care of her since Suzume lost her mother. Suzume and Tamaki experience many conflicts, so we found seven data that show the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki.

This first quotation shows the external conflict between Suzume and Tamaki as follows:

*I run into Tamaki in the entryway.  
 "Sorry, I have to go!" I say, shooting past her.  
 "Go where?" she asks, grabbing my arm. "I came back because I was worried about you!"  
 "You did?"  
 "The earthquake! You wouldn't answer your phone, so—"  
 "Oh, sorry. I didn't notice you called! I'm fine!"  
 At this rate, I'll lose them. Brushing off Tamaki's hand, I fly into the road.  
 Her shouts fade behind me. (p.23).*

The datum above describes the event in which Suzume, who wanted to chase Souta and Daijin, met Tamaki at the entrance to the house. Suzume wanted to go out immediately, but Tamaki held her back and asked where Suzume wanted to go; Tamaki also said that she was worried about Suzume.

Suzume asked if her aunt was worried about her, and Tamaki replied that, of course, she was worried because there had been an earthquake; even Suzume had not answered her phone. Suzume apologized, saying she had not noticed her aunt's call, so she let go of Tamaki's hand. The difference of opinion between Suzume and Tamaki characterizes the conflict. Tamaki said he was very worried about Suzume, but Suzume replied that it was true that her aunt was worried about her. Additionally, conflict arises when Suzume releases Tamaki's grip and runs away before Tamaki has finished talking to her.

Next is the second quotation; in this second quotation, the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki is also shown. Here is the quotation:

*"I don't even want to think about this, but...", she says, filling the silence as I scramble for an answer. "You aren't seeing some strange man, are—?"*  
*"No, I'm fine. It's nothing like that!" I shout, then hang up. I let out a long sigh. I know I've only worried her more. At this rate, I'm just feeding her overprotectiveness. But I tell myself I'll straighten it out tomorrow and leave the powder room. (p.26).*

The above datum explains the situation in which a worried Tamaki finally called Suzume to ask about her situation. Suzume said she was staying at her friend Aya's house. Her aunt was too suspicious and did not want to think about it, but finally, Tamaki asked if Suzume was with a strange man. Suzume vehemently denied it and then turned off Tamaki's phone, as she thought she was making Tamaki more worried and fueling his overprotectiveness. The conflict between Suzume and Tamaki is characterized by a difference of opinion where Tamaki thinks Suzume is with the strange man. It creates tension, which then prompts Suzume to yell out against the idea and hang up with Tamaki.

The following third quotation will also show the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki. Here is the quotation:

“—You’re in Ehime?”  
*I can hear Tamaki’s shock over the phone.*  
 “Wait just a second now, Suzume!”  
*Behind her disbelieving voice, I can faintly hear other phones ringing and low voices talking. It’s almost nine at night, but Tamaki is still at the fishing cooperative office.*  
 “But you told me you were staying at Aya’s house last night!”  
 “Um, well, I suddenly had the idea to go on a little trip...,” I say as cheerfully as I can, adding a laugh at the end.  
 “How can you laugh about this?!” she snaps. *I can see her in my mind’s eye. She’s in that retro cooperative building I visited once on a school trip, sitting at her gray desk, holding the phone and frowning anxiously.*  
 “You’ll come back tomorrow, won’t you? Where are you staying tonight?”  
 “Don’t worry—I have enough savings to pay for a room!”  
 “That’s not what I’m asking!”  
*In the background, I hear someone say, “Minoru, we’re going drinking.”*  
 “You go ahead. I’m going to invite Tamaki.” I imagine Minoru, too. *The men from the fishing cooperative are watching Tamaki get mad and making stupid jokes about how I’m in my rebellious phase.*  
 “The point is, I need you to tell me where you’re staying tonight. A hotel? An inn? You’re really alone, right? You’re not with someone I don’t know?” (p.45-46).

The above datum explains the situation where Tamaki was upset that Suzume was in Ehime. Previously, Suzume said that she was staying at Aya's house, but now she was in Ehime. Suzume also said that the reason she was in Ehime was that she wanted to take a little trip, and then she chuckled. Tamaki replied, "How could Suzume laugh after all this happened?" The conversation continued as Tamaki asked if Suzume was going home the next day and where she would be staying that night. Suzume told him not to worry and replied that she had the savings to rent a room at an inn. The situation became tense again when Tamaki said that it was not what he meant, but whether Suzume would go to a hotel or an inn, and he also wondered if Suzume was alone. The events in this datum are certainly very thick with conflict. The conflict is evident in the differing opinions between the two



parties regarding their responses to the situation unfolding. Suzume's arbitrary decision to start the trip without explanation contradicts Tamaki's sense of responsibility and concern as she is Suzume's guardian.

Next is the fourth quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki, as follows:

*Ah!" I blurt out as I check the sender.  
 "Who's it from?"  
 "My aunt. Sorry, I need to read this."  
 I open the message. Ugh. It's so long it fills the whole screen. "Suzume, I don't want you to think I'm nagging, but I thought about it for a long time and decided I wanted to tell you some things. I hope you read till the end. First, I want you to understand that you're still a child. You're underage. I think you're a responsible person, but a seventeen-year-old is still a child in the eyes of the world, and in an economic and physical sense. You're a minor, and while I'm sure there are many ways to look at it, I'm still your guardian—"  
 Ding!  
 "Whoa!"  
 "PS, I'm not mad at you. I'm just confused and worried. Why did you go on a trip all of a sudden without telling me anything? Why Ehime? You've never mentioned Ehime, and as far as I know, you don't necessarily—"  
 Sigh. I turn my phone over and set it on the tatami mat as if that will keep it away from me. I'll read the rest tomorrow.  
 "I wish she would hurry up and get a boyfriend or something," I mutter.  
 (p.48-49).*

The above datum explains the situation where Suzume received a lengthy message from Tamaki while she was in Ehime. Tamaki made it clear to Suzume that she was still a minor and could not travel so far and that he was also responsible for her because he was her guardian. Tamaki also added that he was not angry but somewhat confused because Suzume had traveled suddenly and without explanation. Suzume, who had not finished reading the long message, then set her cell phone on the tatami and decided to read the rest the next day. Suzume also said she wished Tamaki had a girlfriend instead. The conflict is evident in the difference between Tamaki's opinion that Suzume should still be cautious in her actions, as Tamaki will be

responsible if anything happens, and Suzume's growing tired of long-winded advice. Ultimately, Suzume ignores her aunt's advice and adds a sarcastic comment, hoping that her aunt will soon find a boyfriend.

The following fifth quotation also explains the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki as follows:

*“Suzume, get out of there this instant!”  
 Tamaki swings up her leg and perches one foot on the door of the convertible. Her wide-leg pants balloon with the motion.  
 “What the hell?!” Serizawa says, gaping.  
 “I’m not letting you go alone!” She hoists herself over the door and drops into the passenger seat. “Tamaki, you have to get out!” “Suzume, just what do you think you’re doing?! Running away from home?!”  
 “But I texted you and everything!”  
 “You didn’t even answer my messages!” (p.126).*

The datum above describes the events when Tamaki managed to find Suzume in Tokyo, precisely when Suzume was with Serizawa. Tamaki told Suzume to get out of Serizawa's car then he said that he would not let Suzume go alone while barging in. Suzume told Tamaki to get out, and Tamaki asked what exactly Suzume was doing. Suzume then replied to Tamaki that she had sent a message, but Tamaki again denied that Suzume had even read the message from her. The conflict is evident in the difference of opinion between Tamaki, who came to take Suzume home, and Suzume, who told Tamaki to leave. The tension also increased when Tamaki accused Suzume of running away from home; Suzume then denied that she had sent Tamaki a message.

Next is the sixth quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki, here is the quotation:

*“We’re going home. There’s a bus over there.”  
 “What?”  
 “You say you can’t explain, you’re pale as a sheet, and you’re deliberately not eating!”*

*"Let me go!" I say, shaking off her hand. "Go home yourself! I didn't ask you to come with me!"*

*"You don't get it! I was worried to death about you!"*

*Her voice is shaking with fury. I snap back reflexively.*

*"Your worry is getting in the way!" (p.140).*

The above datum explains the incident in the rest parking lot, where Tamaki invited Suzume to go home because Suzume did not want to eat and looked depressed. Suzume also did not provide an apparent reason for wanting to return to her hometown. Suzume then argued and told Tamaki to go home alone. Tamaki said that he was very worried about Suzume's safety, but Suzume said that Tamaki's worries were getting in the way. The conflict is characterized by a difference of opinion between Suzume and Tamaki, as Tamaki invites Suzume to go home because the reason for Suzume's trip is unclear, and he is also very worried. However, Suzume does not want to go home and says that Tamaki's worries are getting in the way.

Finally, the seventh and last quotation that explains the conflict between Suzume and Tamaki, here is the quotation:

*Her shoulders heave. She's breathing deeply, like the air around her has suddenly become thin.*

*"I'm so sick and tired of this..." she says in a hoarse, slow voice.*

*I glare at her. She's standing straight and tall in the half-light of the covered parking area.*

*"I took you in and spent a decade of my life raising you... What an idiot I've been."*

*This catches me off guard. Raindrops blow in on the wind and spatter my cheeks.*

*"It's only natural to worry about a child who's lost her mother," she says with an abrupt, cynical smile. The sea far behind her continues to suck in the rain. "I was only twenty-eight when you came to live with me. I was so young. I'd never felt so free in my life. But after you showed up, life got so busy. I didn't have time for myself anymore. I couldn't invite anyone over, and finding someone to marry isn't exactly easy when you've got a kid. The money I inherited from your mother could never make up for what I went through."*

*Her figure blurs and wavers. I realize belatedly that tears are pooled in my eyes.*

*"That was how you felt...?" I choke out.*

*I look down and notice Daijin sitting on the edge of the door. The cat is staring at Tamaki with round yellow eyes.*

*"You know, I—" I start to say.*

*I don't want to say it.*

*"I didn't want to live with you, either."*

*I don't want to say it, but I start to shout anyway.*

*"I never asked you to take me to Kyushu! You're the one who said, 'You're my daughter'!"*

*"You're my daughter, okay?" I still remember the warmth of her embrace on the snowy night when she said those words.*

*"I never said that!" she snaps back. Then she crosses her arms and shouts,*

*"I want you out of my house!"*

*Her mouth is turned up in a smile.*

*"Give me my life back!" (p.140-141).*

The datum above explains the continuation of the feud between Tamaki and Suzume, as mentioned in the previous datum. Tamaki, who felt that Suzume was becoming increasingly unclear and considered her worries disturbing, finally said what he had been holding back. Tamaki said that he was fed up with this situation. Tamaki spent a decade raising Suzume, and he said that his life had become hectic since Suzume came. He found it hard to find someone who would marry a woman with children. Tamaki also said that the inheritance Suzume's mother gave her would not be able to make up for what she had been through. Suzume, who was shocked, reacted emotionally as well. Suzume said that she did not want to live with Tamaki either; it was Tamaki who brought her to Kyushu and said that Suzume was his daughter. Tamaki then rejected that opinion and shouted for Suzume to return her life. An ongoing difference of opinion characterizes the conflict. Tamaki says he has become busy and challenging to find a partner because of Suzume, but Suzume rejects that opinion, saying she would not have wanted to live with Tamaki if he had not asked her. Another disagreement ensued, with Tamaki denying that he had ever told Suzume that Suzume was his daughter.

#### d. Conflict with Daijin

The fourth external conflict in this study is a type of conflict that is also similar to the previous external conflict. This fourth external conflict also illustrates the conflict between two characters. The researcher presents data in the form of quotations that show the conflict between Suzume and Daijin. Daijin is the Keystone that Suzume revoked in Kyushu and finally cursed Souta into a chair. The researcher found five data that showed the conflict between Suzume and Daijin.

This first quotation shows the external conflict between Suzume and Daijin. Here is the quotation:

*Finally, it stops moving and takes in the cat on the windowsill.  
“Did you do this?!” the chair—I mean Souta—shouts, growing angry. The kitten leaps nimbly out the window.  
“No!” I shout as the chair runs to the window. It scrambles up, using a bookshelf for a ladder, and leaps out after the cat. (p.22).*

The datum above explains the beginning of Suzume's conflict with Daijin. Souta, who was suddenly cursed into a chair, then shouted accusingly at Daijin, who had previously spoken that he liked Suzume and considered Souta an obstacle. Souta then chased after Daijin, who jumped out. In this case, the conflict between Suzume and Daijin is not a direct conflict due to differences of opinion but rather because something Daijin did became Suzume's responsibility, prompting her to try to restore Souta and the balance of the world that was disturbed by his actions. If understood more broadly, Suzume previously pulled the Keystone that transformed into Daijin, causing Souta to be cursed with the Keystone, and Suzume must help Souta return to his original form and close the gate from which the worm emerged.

Next is the second quotation. In this second quotation, the conflict between Suzume and Daijin is also shown. Here is the quotation:

*“Suzume amazing!” a childish voice says nearby.  
 “Huh?”  
 I glance reflexively toward it. A short distance away in the dim schoolyard,  
 I make out a small white form. Its round yellow eyes are looking at me.  
 Slowly swishing its long tail, the white kitten opens its mouth.  
 “More Gates will open,” it says. (p.45).*

The datum above explains the incident where, just as Suzume successfully closed the gate in Ehime, she met Daijin. Daijin praised her as great and then said that many other gates would also open. The conflict is characterized by a difference of interest, in which Suzume seeks to close the gate used by the worm to escape into her world, while Daijin does not want to return to being the Keystone to seal the worm that caused the disaster.

The third quotation is the quotation that is discussed next. This quotation explains the conflict between Suzume and Daijin. Here is the quotation:

*Still holding Souta, I run to the base of the branch.  
 “Why are you doing this?! Go back to being a Keystone already!” I shout as I run.  
 “I can’t,” the cat says in a tone that implies I’m stupid for not knowing that already. “Daijin isn’t a Keystone anymore.”  
 “What?”  
 The cat jumps off its branch and lands silently on the seat of the chair. It brings its face right up to Souta’s and whispers something brief. I can’t hear what it says.  
 “You!” I say, lunging to grab Daijin by the scruff of the neck. But the cat lithely jumps off the chair. I squat and try to pin it down, but it slips from my hands. It scampers around me teasingly, just out of reach. It’s no good—I can’t catch it. (p.104).*

The datum above explains the incident where Suzume instructed Daijin to return to being Keystone so that the major worm incident in Kanto could be resolved and there would be no victims. Daijin replied that he could not, as he was no longer a Keystone, and then whispered something to Souta.

After that, Suzume yelled at Daijin and tried to catch him, but he failed. The conflict between Suzume and Daijin is characterized by a difference of opinion regarding Daijin's return to Keystone. Suzume forced Daijin to become a Keystone again, but Daijin did not agree to Suzume's order because he was no longer a Keystone.

Next is the fourth quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and Daijin. Here is the quotation:

*"I told you." Daijin sighs with exasperation, tapping my thigh with its front paw. "That isn't Souta anymore."  
I can't take it. I throw out my hand to hit the cat. It dodges nimbly. We're falling faster now. The floating sensation grows stronger. The wind lifts my hair. The ground is getting closer. (p.105).*

The datum above contains events that are a continuation of the previous datum. In this scenario, Souta has fully become the Keystone, and Suzume must insert it into the worm to prevent a major earthquake. Suzume was still in denial and kept calling Souta's name to wake him up, but Daijin said that it was no longer Souta. In response, Suzume ignored Daijin and tried to hit Daijin. The difference of opinion between Suzume and Daijin about Souta characterizes the conflict. Daijin tells her that it is no longer Souta but a Keystone that must be immediately attached to the worm to prevent disaster. However, Suzume does not want to accept this fact and continues to try to wake Souta.

Finally, the fifth and final quotation illustrates the conflict between Suzume and Daijin:

*"Daijin!"  
I leap to my feet to get away from the white fur. "It's your fault!" I shout angrily. "Give Souta back!" "I can't."  
"Why not?!"*

*"He's not a person anymore," the cat says innocently, its eyes empty.  
 "—!"*

*I bend over and grab Daijin with both hands.*

*"Ooh!" Daijin purrs.*

*"Give Souta back!" I yell.*

*"That hurts, Suzume." (p.112).*

The datum above explains the incident where Suzume, who had failed to enter the Tokyo gate to save Souta, who had become a Keystone, was upset with Daijin. Suzume kept asking Daijin to return Souta. Daijin replied that he could not because Souta was no longer a human. Then Suzume grabbed Daijin and kept asking for Souta to be returned. The difference of opinion between Suzume and Daijin characterizes the conflict. Suzume wanted Souta to come back, but Daijin disagreed and said that Souta was no longer human.

#### **e. Conflict with Young Suzume**

The last external conflict in this study is similar to the previous external conflict, namely the conflict between two characters. The researcher presents data in the form of quotations that show the conflict between Suzume and Young Suzume. Young Suzume was met by Suzume when she managed to save Souta and return the two Keystones in Ever-After. The researcher found one datum that shows the conflict between Suzume and Young Suzume.

The following quotation shows the external conflict between Suzume and Young Suzume.:

*"...Mom?" she asks. I hesitate. I am painfully aware of the word she wants to hear. But—*

*"No," I say, shaking my head. I watch helplessly as her eyes fill with tears. But she doesn't cry.*

*"Do you know her?" she asks insistently, her frozen little hands folded in front of her stomach and her posture as straight as it can be. "My mom is looking for me, and I think she's really worried, so I have to find her soon!"*



“Suzume—”  
*“She works at the hospital. She’s good at cooking and building things, and she always makes me whatever I like—”*  
 “Suzume, I—”  
 “My house...!”  
*It’s no good. Tears are already falling from her eyes. She sniffles and frantically goes on talking.*  
*“My house is gone... So my mom doesn’t know where I am, and—”*  
 “Enough!”  
*I can’t listen any longer. I drop to my knees in the grass and grab her arms.*  
*“I already know...!” I say to both my selves.*  
*“What do you mean?! My mom is here somewhere! I told you— she’s looking for me!”*  
 “Suzume!”  
*The girl twists out of my hands and runs away. As she runs, she screams at the sky, “Mom, where are you? Mom!” (p.172).*

The datum above shows the incident where Suzume met Young Suzume, who was lost in Ever-After. Young Suzume, who saw Suzume, thought that she was her mother, but Suzume shook her head. Young Suzume asked her mother if she knew where she was. Suzume, who knew her mother was gone, was unable to tell the truth; on the other hand, young Suzume had high hopes, believing that her mother was still out there looking for her, having been told about her mother's work and home. Suzume then cried and said, "Enough, young Suzume." She also said that she already knew. Young Suzume then ran and screamed, looking for her mother. A difference of opinion between Suzume and young Suzume characterizes the conflict. Young Suzume had high hopes that her mother was still there and was looking for her, but Suzume, who knew the truth, could not say it until finally young Suzume left her and screamed for her mother again.

## 2. Internal Conflicts

The researcher also found five types of conflict in the internal conflict experienced by Suzume. These conflicts involve elements within Suzume.

These conflicts stem from past experiences, including guilt, loneliness, frustration, and fear. These conflicts become elements that crucially support Suzume's character development.

#### **a. Conflict with Past**

The first internal conflict experienced by Suzume is a conflict with the past. Conflict with the past can occur when Suzume is faced with memories, memories, or past events that she has experienced and has not been able to resolve or cause trauma or fear. Suzume experiences conflict with her past five times, as evidenced by data in the form of quotations.

The first quotation shows Suzume's conflict with her past as follows:

*Still, for child-me, the sadness seems to be winning out, and I'm desperately trying to hold back the sobs welling up from my chest. Dry tears turn into clear grains of sand that cling to the corners of my eyes. (p.1).*

The datum above describes a situation in which Suzume dreams of herself as a child searching for her mother in the middle of nowhere, alone. Suzume describes that her little self could not win against the sadness and cried desperately without shedding a tear. In this instance, the conflict with the past is illustrated by Suzume's dreams, which draw on her childhood experience of searching for her mother. This incident also means that the events of her childhood still haunt Suzume, as she experiences this dream repeatedly throughout the narrative.

Next, the second quotation also illustrates the conflict between Suzume and her past, as follows:

*“That chair—is a keepsake from my mom. But now...”  
What should I say? What can I say? I don’t want to lie, but... “...I’m sorry.*

*I can't really explain."* (p.50).

The datum above explains the situation where Chika asked what Suzume was doing, who she was, and what she was doing with the three-legged chair. Suzume, who was confused, finally answered that the three-legged chair was a memento from her mother. Then she apologized for not being able to explain what had happened because the chair, which was her mother's last legacy, had become Souta, presenting a new problem for her. The existence of conflict is evident in the description of the chair as a memento, a memory of the past that has been damaged in its function. Nevertheless, he still keeps it to remember his mother, who has passed away.

The following quotation is the third quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and her past. Here is the quotation:

*It's a view I know so well, the one over the meadow in my dream. The same emotion I feel in the dream ripples into my chest. Sad but comfortable. Unknown but familiar. A place I shouldn't be but one I want to stay in forever.  
Someone is standing on the far side of the meadow. Her white dress blows in the wind. Her hair is long and soft-looking. Beyond this figure, a child crouches. Me. My child self is looking up at my mother. That's right—we found each other in the meadow under a starry sky. Understanding hits me. This is a continuation of my dream. It's a scene buried deep in my memory, too deep to uproot no matter how much I want to. (p.71-72).*

The datum above shows a situation where Suzume can see the starry night sky behind the gates of Kobe. This visualization is reminiscent of a recurring dream she had. When she saw it, Suzume felt a mix of sadness and comfort, as well as a sense of familiarity with the unfamiliar, and she wanted to stay there, even though it was not supposed to be. She also remembered something from her dream: someone like her mother stood up and came to her, crouching down to her level. The sight of the night sky and the emotions

she felt finally stirred up an old memory that she had been suppressing. It was a buried memory that could not be retrieved, no matter how hard she tried. The dream she had experienced all this time turned out to be real, and it was the same as what she had experienced in the past. The existence of conflict is revealed through Suzume, who finally recalls a buried memory from her past when she was searching for her mother, as she saw a familiar scene behind the gates of Kobe. The sight she saw behind the Kobe gate and the emotions she felt while collaborating triggered an important memory that had been buried all this time.

The fourth quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and her past. Here is the quotation:

*"I'm back, Mom!" I used to shout as I ran up the short hill to my house after a day of playing outside. Twelve years later, standing in the same place, the memory comes back to me. When I got back, my mom would often give me something sweet to eat. Sweet potato cake, or fried bread with cinnamon sugar, or tofu mochi with kinako powder. For a long time, I'd forgotten the way the rooms connected in the house, the soft sweetness of those snacks, and the sound of my mother's voice when she called me. But they rise now from the depths of my memory with a freshness that shocks me. I can almost see our two-story house as it was back then. And in that house—*  
*"I'm back, Mom," I say quietly, pushing the memories aside. I open the little door in the rusted gate with both hands and step onto the lot where our house once stood. (p.150).*

The datum above describes a situation in which Suzume returns home after a long time. When she arrived, she immediately recalled many warm memories, such as the sweet food her mother often gave her, the layout of the rooms in her house, and her mother's voice. Nevertheless, in the end, she had to get rid of those memories and step into the yard of her former home. The existence of conflict is characterized by warm memories that Suzume must

first remove to focus on her current goals. The memory was indeed warm, but now it is no longer there.

Finally, the last quotation shows the conflict between Suzume and her past. Here is the quotation:

*I'd never been sad about not having a dad (my mom was the only parent I'd ever known), but there at the shelter, I envied the children with two parents from the bottom of my heart. I faintly remember being so lonely and afraid at the shelter that it became like a physical pain in my whole body. (p.151).*

The datum above explains the situation in Suzume's past, where during the big earthquake that hit her hometown, Suzume was evacuated by her school to the shelter. She did not feel sad about not having a father because her mother was a single parent, but deep down, she envied her friends who had full parents. This fact makes her feel afraid and lonely, causing her body to ache. Conflict with a sense of the past is characterized by the emergence of Suzume's memories that explain her loneliness and fear when she sees her friends have complete parents, while she does not.

#### **b. Conflict with Guilt**

The second internal conflict experienced by Suzume is the conflict with guilt. Conflict with guilt can occur when Suzume is faced with feelings of sadness, regret, or distress that arise from an action. Suzume experiences conflict with guilt once, which is evidenced by datum in the form of quotations. Here are the quotations:

*"It's just the two of us living together. She's my guardian," I say before putting the taro root and rice in my mouth.  
 "That sounds complicated."  
 "Not at all!" I swallow the savory taro. "But lately I've started to wonder if I'm taking up all her free time."*

*“No way!” Chika says, giggling. “That’s the line her ex should say!”  
“You know, you’re right!”*

*Now that I think about it, Chika’s got a point. I feel somehow lighter. “I wish she would be more hands off!” I say, laughing.  
“I feel you!” (p.49).*

The above datum illustrates the situation when Suzume received numerous messages and questions from Tamaki while she was at Chika's house. Chika then asked who the messages were from, and Suzume began to tell her that she lived alone with her aunt. Her aunt was her guardian. Chika said it must be complicated, but Suzume rejected the idea, saying that lately, she felt like she was taking up all of her aunt's time. Chika replied that Suzume said what an ex should say, and then Suzume wished Tamaki would be more hands-off with her. The guilt in Suzume shows conflict. She feels that lately, she has been questioning the extent to which she is a burden and is taking up and limiting Tamaki's life because she has to take care of her.

### **c. Conflict with Loneliness**

The third internal conflict experienced by Suzume is the conflict with loneliness. Conflict with the past can arise when Suzume faces loneliness. Suzume experiences conflict with loneliness four times, as evidenced by data in the form of quotations.

The first quotation shows Suzume's internal conflict with loneliness as follows:

*I’m alone in this place. For some reason, I’m standing here alone. Again. Unbearable anxiety and fear well up in me, like someone has made a mistake and I can’t wake up from a nightmare—and I need to wake up. I feel like an abandoned child. (p.41).*

The datum above shows the situation where Souta told Suzume to return to Chika and left her alone to close the Ehime gate. After Souta left

her, Suzume felt doubtful and alone again. She stood alone, feeling anxious and afraid, like someone who had made a mistake and could not wake up from a nightmare. The existence of conflict is evidenced by the presence of a sense of being alone due to abandonment, which attracts other pent-up emotions within her.

Next is the second quotation. This quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and loneliness. Here is the quotation:

*I'm so tiny, and life is so short; I'll never be able to go to most of the places flying past outside the window. Most of the people in the world are living their lives out there, beyond my experience. The realization hits me with a mixture of surprise and loneliness. (p.85).*

The above datum explains Suzume's situation while on the Shinkansen. She saw the vast world that she had finally seen. She felt that she was only a small part of a short life. She also thought that she would not be able to go to most of the places outside the window. This fact then made her both surprised and lonely. Suzume's conflict with loneliness is shown by the presence of loneliness that arises because Suzume thinks that the world is vast and life is very short. Other people's lives out there are also beyond her reach and experience. She can only observe it and feels unable to engage with the human life around her.

The following quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and loneliness. Here is the quotation:

*What I'm hearing is his heart's voice as he turned into a Keystone. Shut away in the darkness, within his fading consciousness, he's screaming desperately. Screaming with a voice that can no longer reach our realm. I don't want to disappear. I want more time. To keep living. I'm afraid to die. I want to live. I want to live. I want to live. More...*

*“So do I!” I shout at the chair in my hands. “I want more time, too! I want to hear your voice. I’m scared to be alone. Death is a scary thing... Souta...!” (p.163).*

The datum above describes the events in the Ever-After, where Suzume tried to bring Souta back. Suzume was able to hear Souta's inner voice, who wanted to live and did not want to disappear. Suzume then replied that she also wanted to spend much time with Souta. She wanted to hear Souta's voice; she was afraid of being alone, and death was a scary thing. The conflict with solitude is signaled here by Suzume's words, in which she expresses her fear of being alone without Souta.

The last quotation, as well as the fourth quotation, also shows the conflict between Suzume and loneliness; here is the quotation:

*“Mom...,” I say, and now I can’t stop crying. The pain of the little girl sobbing before me is my own pain. The two are identical. Her despair and loneliness, her suffocating sorrow and burning fury— all of it is still inside me, as powerful as ever. I cry like I’m going to throw up. We sit in the grass and sob. (p.173).*

This datum tells the story of the moment when Suzume met Young Suzume in Ever-After. Suzume felt what Young Suzume felt at that time when she lost her mother. She felt despair, loneliness, and anger that made her want to vomit. The conflict with loneliness is characterized by the emotions Suzume felt. During the incident, she felt many emotions, and one of them was loneliness because the mother she was looking for was not found.

#### **d. Conflict with Frustration**

The fourth internal conflict experienced by Suzume is the conflict with frustration. Conflict with frustration occurs when someone feels frustrated. Suzume experiences conflict with frustration five times, as



evidenced by the datum in the form of quotations.

The first datum shows the conflict between Suzume and frustration.

Here is the datum:

*"Now I am a Keystone."*

*"What...?"*

*The frost is growing thicker, turning to ice. Souta's voice sounds flatter to me, like it's lost its warmth.*

*"When I was turned into a chair, the mantle of the Keystone shifted to me." My mind grasps his meaning before my emotions kick in. But once they do a moment later, I'm a mess. I'm lost. (p.104).*

The datum above explains the incident where Souta realized that he had become the Keystone that sealed the worm, while Suzume was very confused about the situation. Souta then gave another understanding that the title of Keystone had been given to him; Suzume, who had heard that, finally felt frustrated. Suzume's confusion and helplessness show the conflict between Suzume and frustration. This is also evidenced when Suzume feels chaotic and lost.

Next is the second quotation that proves the conflict between Suzume and frustration. Here is the quotation:

*"Souta!" I scream at what used to be the chair, gathering strength in my hands. "Souta, please! Wake up, Souta!"*

*"I told you." Daijin sighs with exasperation, tapping my thigh with its front paw. "That isn't Souta anymore."*

*I can't take it. I throw out my hand to hit the cat. It dodges nimbly. We're falling faster now. The floating sensation grows stronger. The wind lifts my hair. The ground is getting closer.*

*"Souta!" I shout as loud as I can. "What do I do?! Tell me! Souta! Souta!"*

*"Lots of people will die, you know." Daijin lolls onto its back, yellow eyes wide-open. "It won't be long!" (p.105).*

The datum above is a continuation of the datum above where Souta has now frozen and become a complete Keystone. Suzume continued to call Souta because she was confused by the situation. On the other hand, Daijin

told Suzume that Souta was no longer human. Suzume countered Daijin's warning with an attempted beating but failed. Suzume continued to call Souta again because she was confused about what to do now. Daijin then reminded her that many people would die if Suzume did not immediately stick Souta, who had become a Keystone to the worms. The conflict between Suzume and frustration begins with confusion about what Suzume should do now; she is also uncertain about whether to choose Souta or prioritize the safety of humanity.

The following quotation also shows the conflict between Suzume and frustration. Here is the quotation:

*I'm angry, but I'm also worried, sad, upset, and lonely. I don't know what to do next. I don't even have a clue. What should I be thinking or doing one minute from now, or five? I can't come up with anything. Tears are still streaming down my cheeks. I stand there, waiting for the tears to stop. My feet are turning numb in the cold water. (p.113).*

The datum above describes the situation of Suzume, whose emotions have not stabilized after she successfully sealed the worm using the new Keystone, which is none other than Souta, to overcome the Kanto gate incident in Tokyo. Suzume is completely confused and cries, unsure of what she will do in the next five minutes. The conflict with frustration is evidenced by Suzume being confused and not knowing what to do in the future.

The following quotation is the fourth quotation, which shows the conflict between Suzume and frustration. Here is the quotation:

*I feel like I've lost the weight that kept me grounded in this world. It's like I look the same but weigh half as much—like my body has been replaced with air, leaving me unstable. I'm still angry. Something was given to me without my asking—pushed on me—and then stolen away for no reason. Again? I want to yell at the gods, or whoever's in charge of running this world: Stop making me feel so stupid! I glare at my gaunt face in the mirror*

*and say out loud, "Stop making me feel stupid!" But my voice is shaking and tearful, and I look pathetic even to myself. (p.123).*

The datum above explains the incident where Suzume decided to catch up and save Souta at any cost. She returned to Souta's apartment, cleaned herself up, and looked in the mirror. She felt like she had lost the weight that kept her grounded on earth. She was furious that what was given to her without her asking was now always stolen for no reason. She wanted to scream at the gods or whoever ran this world not to make her feel stupid all the time. She found herself to be a pathetic person. The existence of conflict with frustration is characterized by the description that Suzume is always upset because whatever is given to her without her asking is often taken away for no reason. The situation made her helpless, so she wanted to scream at whoever was running this world.

Next is the last quotation that shows the conflict between Suzume and frustration. Here is the quotation:

*I grip the key under my shirt as I murmur his name. "Souta, Souta." Will it go on like this, for years, for decades? Every time there's an earthquake, will I think of Souta, all alone on that black hill? Even if he can stand it—I know I can't. (p.139)*

The datum above recounts the incident in which Suzume muttered Souta's name when an earthquake occurred during her journey to find the first door she had entered into the Ever-After. Suzume worries whether she will always be like this for years or decades. Will she always remember Souta when an earthquake strikes, unsure of what to do? The conflict with frustration is shown by Suzume's confusion and anxiety about remembering Souta every time an earthquake occurs without knowing what to do.

### e. Conflict with Fear

The last internal conflict experienced by Suzume in this study is the conflict with fear. Conflict with fear can occur when Suzume is faced with discomfort or bad feelings caused by danger or scary things. Suzume experiences conflict with fear three times, as evidenced by data in the form of quotations.

The first quotation shows the conflict experienced by Suzume against fear, as the following quotation:

*With each stride, the fear and anxiety dissipate. Yes, this is the way. If I run toward Souta, the anxiety will disappear. If I run the opposite direction, it will build and build. That's why I need to go this way. (p.42).*

The datum above illustrates a scenario where Suzume, who was angry and scared when Souta left her, ultimately ran toward Souta. When running toward Souta, Suzume felt that her fear and anxiety subsided, but if she ran the other way, her anxiety would be even greater. The conflict with fear is illustrated by Suzume's feelings of fear when she is left by Souta, which she successfully resolves by following Souta. Suzume's fear and anxiety subsided as she ran in the direction Souta had gone.

The second quotation also illustrates the conflict Suzume faces with fear. The following quotation:

*"...Not at all," I say, glaring at him. "Ever since I was little, I've thought that life and death were just up to fate. But—" But now. "I'm more afraid of a world without Souta!" (p.121).*

The datum above shows the situation where Suzume asks Souta's grandfather how to enter the Ever-After. Souta's grandfather forbade her and

asked if she was not afraid of death. Suzume firmly replied that she was not afraid of death at all. Suzume had thought that life and death were just a matter of fate for a long time, but now she was terrified of the world without Souta. The conflict with fear is evident in Suzume's feelings of discomfort when Souta is not present in this world, or, in other words, she is afraid of the world without Souta in it.

The third and final quotation that shows the conflict experienced by Suzume against fear is the following quotation:

*I remember all of it. My cold hands, gripping the black crayon. The unpleasant, bumpy feeling of the cardboard under the white paper as I colored it black. The feeling in my fingers and my emotions, ready to explode. It all comes back so vividly. Long-frozen memories melt and overflow. I can't hold them back any longer. (p.153).*

The datum above shows the situation where, after Suzume returned to her hometown, she opened the box containing her belongings. She opened her notebook and found some pages she had colored completely black. She then remembered that when she colored the page black, she felt an unpleasant feeling. Memories that had long been frozen momentarily thawed, and she could remember clearly. She could no longer hold back her emotions. The conflict with fear is shown by the unpleasant feeling when Suzume opens the black page. After that, everything became clear, and she was able to recall the old memories of the disaster with clarity.

### **C. The Support of Conflicts to Suzume's Character Development Described in Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume***

Conflict is one of the most important elements in a story because it is

closely tied to the plot and often underlies the story's theme. Additionally, conflict is a struggle faced by the characters in the story. Conflict, as a struggle, can help characters develop and change. In this case, the existence of conflict can aid character development, especially in round characters who are described as having complexities similar to those found in real-life humans.

In Suzume, researcher found that conflict does help Suzume's character development because several character changes occur in the story after the character experiences conflict. Researcher presents this in five data in the form of quotations.

### **1. Selfish to Relationship Understanding**

The first datum quotation shows a change in Suzume's character, who is often selfish and only concerned with herself, realizing that she also needs to understand and interpret relationships with others. Here is the quotation:

*I'm starting to understand the loose rules of this grown-up social world. They get drunk; they sing; they shout and blow off steam; they pretend to be thoughtless. But in truth, they're looking out for one another. I think I like this place. (p.66).*

The datum above shows the scene where, after she was asked to help out at Rumi's karaoke bar, she witnessed many events. Drunk customers, customers singing oldies, and Miki helped her out of a difficult situation when a couple of parents asked her for a drink and a duet. The incident at Rumi's karaoke bar finally made Suzume realize that the adult social world of people getting drunk, singing, shouting, expressing frustration, and being indifferent actually look out for each other and still care about one another. They have

their way of expressing their emotions. Suzume, who was initially very selfish and often ignored people without explanation, was finally able to see and appreciate the importance of relationships with others, even in spontaneous interactions.

Suzume's character development is not only a result of the events at Rumi's karaoke bar but also aided by the conflicts she has been experiencing. Her external conflicts with nature (refer to datum 1-6, Section B.1.a) and Daijin (refer to datum 1-2, Section B.1.d) that led her to adventure greatly helped Suzume to experience traveling and meeting many people, even until she met Rumi and helped her at the karaoke bar. In addition, her external conflict with Souta (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.b) also helped her character development in relating to others. The external conflict with Souta taught her to build relationships with people, where she had to learn to misunderstand, cooperate, and help each other solve problems and support one another.

## **2. Selfish to Understanding and Interpreting Relationships**

Next is the second quotation. This datum quotation shows the change in Suzume's character, who managed to solve her problem with Tamaki and get rid of her selfishness. Here is the quotation:

*“Hey,” Tamaki says suddenly, still facing forward. “Those things I said in the parking lot...” I look at her. The wind is ruffling her short hair, which is damp with sweat. For the first time, I notice a few white hairs mixed in with the black.*

*“I’ve had those thoughts...but that’s not the whole story.” “I know.”*

*“Those aren’t my only feelings, not at all.”*

*I laugh a little, just air escaping my lips.*

*“...Me too. Sorry, Tamaki.” (p.150).*

The datum above illustrates the peace and conflict resolution between Suzume and Tamaki. After the incident in the rest area parking lot, Tamaki felt guilty and apologized to Suzume. Tamaki said that the feeling was there but not dominant. Suzume, who had begun to understand why Tamaki had been worried, finally apologized as well due to the many troublesome things she had caused.

The change in Suzume's character from selfish to openness and understanding to Tamaki is supported by several conflicts that Suzume experiences. First, the external conflict with nature (refer to datum 1-11, Section B.1.a) certainly contributed to her reaching this point. If not for her carelessness towards nature, she would not have started the adventure and conflict with nature that brought her together with many people and critical events. The second is the external conflict with Daijin (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.d). Daijin, who cursed Souta, became one of the reasons he went on an adventure. Besides that, the conflict with Daijin indirectly led her to the gates that she had to close until she reached the gate of Tokyo. Both conflicts lead her to adventure, rebellion, and finally understanding Tamaki. The third is her external conflict with Tamaki (refer to datum 1-7, Section B.1.c). Her relationship with Tamaki, which deteriorated when she began her adventure, became one of the elements that helped Suzume experience character development. The conflict with Tamaki makes Suzume reflect indirectly. During this time, Tamaki was deeply worried about her and became



overprotective due to his sense of responsibility; he wanted to protect what he had chosen, namely, making Suzume her child.

On the other hand, the fragile Suzume was deeply troubled by these worries. The climax of the conflict is when they both express their grievances and finally understand each other's feelings. These conflicts between Suzume and Tamaki, which reveal a difference of opinion about these worries, accumulate and help develop Suzume's character into an understanding and open one, shedding her selfishness.

On the other hand, internal conflicts also help character development in Suzume. The first internal conflict is the conflict with guilt. Suzume feels guilty for taking up so much of Tamaki's time (refer to datum 1, Section B.2.b). This reveals Suzume's reflection on her relationship with Tamaki, indirectly prompting Suzume to recognize her position within it. Furthermore, the second internal conflict that helps Suzume's character development is the conflict with frustration. Her internal conflict, primarily frustration caused by losing direction after Souta became Keystone (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.2.d), leads to Suzume's character developing into one who highly values and maintains relationships. This is evidenced by her determination to save Souta, even if it means taking drastic measures and triggering a new adventure. The third internal conflict is the conflict with fear. Suzume says that she is more afraid of the world without Souta in it; therefore, she will go to the Ever-After, no matter what (refer to datum 2, Section B.2.e). This indicates that Suzume has developed and interpreted the relationship, and she

wants to maintain it; therefore, she wants to save Souta. The three internal conflicts make Suzume more meaningful in a relationship with another person, as well as being careful in guarding it.

### 3. Fragile to Resilience and Self-Acceptance

The third datum quotation shows a change from Suzume's fragile character to a character who accepts all the wounds and memories of her past and rises firmly. Here is the quotation:

*As I listen to the sobs that threaten to break her apart, something occurs to me. This isn't working. I can't go on like this. I have to stop crying. She and I are different. I'm still weak, but at the very least, I've lived twelve years since that day. I've lived. Suzume is all alone, but I'm not alone anymore. If I don't do something, she truly will be all alone in the world. She won't be able to go on living.*

*[.....]*

*"...How do I explain this?" I say, smiling as I search for the right words. The sun is below the clouds now, and the world is tinted a translucent ultramarine.*

*"Listen, Suzume, no matter how sad you are right now—" I can only tell her the truth. The plain and simple truth.*

*"You're going to grow up."*

*A strong wind blows the tears off our cheeks. The sky is getting darker, and the stars are shining brighter.*

*"So don't worry. The future isn't scary!"*

*Her eyes reflect the stars. Praying that my words reach as deep as those points of light, I make my voice more forceful and turn my mouth up in a smile.*

*"Suzume, you will love people again, and you will meet lots of people who love you, too. You might think everything is pitch-black right now, but morning will come, I promise."*

*The stars are spinning overhead as I watch, like time has sped up.*

*"Morning will come, and night will come again, over and over. You will grow into an adult in the light. No matter what happens in the future, no one can stop you."*

*Shooting stars streak across the sky, and finally, the other side of the meadow begins to turn pink. It's morning. I watch as the dawning sun lights her up, and I say again, "You will grow into an adult in the light." (p.173-174)*

The datum above shows the situation where Suzume, who met Young Suzume and could not tell that her mother was gone, ended up crying together. Nevertheless, Suzume felt that she should not cry and do something instead.

Suzume did feel weak, but at least she had managed to live for twelve years, and now she was not alone. This is in contrast to Young Suzume's current state of being sad and alone as she searches for her mother. If she did not do something for Young Suzume, then Young Suzume would feel alone and unable to continue her life. Finally, Suzume gives Young Suzume the chair her mother left behind to calm her down. Suzume also gives Young Suzume advice, reminding her that no matter how sad she is, she will still grow up and that the future is not that scary. She will be able to love people again and meet people who love her, too. In addition, the night will give way to day, then tonight again, and so on. Young Suzume will also grow up in the light.

The transformation in Suzume's character from a fragile person to one who is firm and can accept herself, including her past wounds, is strongly supported by the conflicts she experiences. First, external conflicts with nature (refer to datum 1-11, Section B.1.a). The conflicts with nature are the series of adventures she faces, from closing the gate of Kyushu to sealing the worm in Ever-After. In this adventure, Suzume is faced with numerous events that contribute to her character development, including both external and internal conflicts, as the conflict with nature forms the basis of Suzume's adventure. From her adventures, Suzume also manages to meet many new people and encounter dangerous events that ultimately change her perspective on loneliness, the meaning of human connection, and the acceptance of wounds. The second is the external conflict with Daijin (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.d). Daijin cursing Souta is one of the reasons why she went on

the adventure and also led her to this incident. Both conflicts lead her to adventure and self-acceptance. The next external conflict is her external conflict with Young Suzume. Suzume's meeting with Young Suzume (refer to datum 1, Section B.1.e) and her inability to tell the truth about her mother helped trigger the development of this character. Because of this conflict, Suzume finally decides to retreat in order to advise Young Suzume so that Young Suzume can continue living even without her mother. As a result, Suzume was born into a person who could accept her wounds and resolve her past.

On the other hand, internal conflicts also contribute to Suzume's character development. The first internal conflict that helps Suzume's character development is the conflict with the past. Her conflict with the past (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.2.a), which was mainly painful because it brought memories of the past when she lost her mother, allowed Suzume to finally reconcile with her past by accepting all the wounds and doing the best things for the future. During this time, Suzume seemed to run away from the memories of the past, but the accumulation of memories led Suzume to engage in self-reflection, ultimately allowing her to accept herself. This is evidenced by her determination to advise Young Suzume that, no matter how sad she is, she will still grow up and meet many people who love her. The second internal conflict that helps her character development is the conflict with loneliness. The conflict with loneliness, where she felt alone after Souta left, and her understanding of the loneliness Young Suzume felt (refer to

datum 1 & 4, Section B.2.c) helped Suzume heal her wounds by validating her feelings. Suzume learns to accept her wound and strengthen herself; she also understands that what she feels has changed because she has met many people who love her.

Additionally, the conflict with frustration also contributed to Suzume's development. Suzume, who felt frustrated and questioned why what was given to her without being asked should also be stolen suddenly (refer to Datum 4, Section B.2.d), was finally able to strengthen herself and try to reclaim what was given to her. This conflict is also the reason for her new journey. Through this new journey, Suzume also grew into a strong person with strong determination and managed to accept the painful memories of the past. Suzume's internal conflict with fear also reinforces Suzume's internal conflict against loneliness and frustration. Suzume, who was afraid of being left behind by Souta, finally caught up with Souta (refer to datum 1, Section B.2.e). Suzume manages to strengthen herself and grow into a person who is steadfast in the midst of danger. Furthermore, Suzume finally recalls the painful memories of the past and feels a sense of dread when she sees the notebook she had blocked in black (refer to datum 3, Section B.2.e). Through this conflict, Suzume can validate her feelings of fear until she can finally find a clue where the gate she first entered to get to the Ever-After and deliver it to Souta and Young Suzume.

#### **4. Fragile to Resilience and Self-Newness in Continuing Life**

The fourth datum quotation shows the change from Suzume's fragile

character to a tough character, finished with her past and ready to move on.

Here is the quotation:

*This is the end of my story. I think I've talked about all the emotions I don't want to forget and all the events I want to remember. The only thing left is a handful of recollections. I don't think you could call this an epilogue, though. My life is still going on, busy as ever, without the sort of clear dividing line you'd need to call it an epilogue. (p.176).*

The datum above indicates that Suzume's adventure has come to an end. Suzume had talked about all the emotions she did not want to forget and all the events she wanted to remember. What remained of her adventure was a handful of memories. Nevertheless, for Suzume, this is not the end; her life is still going on and busy as ever.

The development of Suzume's character from fragile to resilient, enabling her to continue her life with renewed vigor, is aided by the conflicts she has experienced. In this case, all conflicts, both external and internal, contribute to the development of character in Suzume. Her external conflict with nature (refer to datum 1-11, Section B.1.a) is the conflict that most underlie the interaction with other conflicts. Suzume, who embarks on an adventure from Kyushu to Tokyo to close the gate, faces many challenges and encounters many people along the way. These interactions make Suzume learn many things. Her encounters with new people gave her a new perspective on the meaning of each person. This adventure has brought her this far, helping her character develop well. Without this adventure, Suzume's character would not have experienced the process of becoming a strong human being. Her conflict with Souta (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.b) helps Suzume to establish relationships with people and make meaning of

those relationships. Suzume learns to cooperate, face fears, take responsibility, and not give up easily.

Furthermore, her conflict with Tamaki (refer to datum 1-7, Section B.1.c) helps Suzume develop into a person who better understands the feelings of others and acts more selflessly through self-reflection. It is evident that after a big fight, Suzume came to understand what Tamaki felt, and vice versa, until finally, they apologized and understood each other. Her conflict with Daijin (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.d) provides Suzume with a reason to embark on an adventure and travel. The conflict with Daijin was started by Suzume's recklessness in pulling out the Keystone while in Kyushu. Daijin, who was no longer a Keystone, cursed Souta and became Suzume's reason for adventure. In the adventure, she faces many dangers and encounters many people as well. Through these conflicts, Suzume learns to be more responsible and less careless. Her conflict with Young Suzume also helped Suzume to be wiser and more resilient (refer to datum 1, Section B.1.e). Suzume, who was confused about telling the truth about her mother to Young Suzume, then thought that if she was not the one who advised and gave words of encouragement to Suzume, then who else? She was able to reflect on her memories and the pain she had experienced, finally offering Young Suzume advice so that she could move on with her life. This is proof that Suzume has moved on from her past and can accept and overcome the wounds caused by it, emerging as a stronger, more resilient person.

In addition to external conflicts, internal conflicts also help character

development in Suzume. Conflict with the Past (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.2.a) is a conflict in which Suzume must confront painful memories from her past, which remind her of her mother's loss. Suzume, who previously rejected these things and lived a selfish life, inevitably had to face all the wounds and memories of her adventure. Nevertheless, after successfully dealing with these past conflicts, Suzume gradually reflects and shapes her into a person who is honest with herself and validates past wounds and memories. Suzume also grows into a stronger person in the end. This is evidenced in Suzume's words in the datum, where Suzume recounts all the emotions and events she wants to remember. Conflict with loneliness, where Suzume always feels alone in this world after she loses her mother (refer to datum 1-4, Section B.2.c). Conflict with frustration, where Suzume is always lost when people who matter to her leave her (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.2.d), and conflict with fear, where Suzume is afraid to face memories that have long been frozen (refer to datum 3, Section B.2.e) also strengthen the help of conflict with the past to develop Suzume's character. Suzume addressed the above conflicts by acknowledging and validating her feelings, and then gradually taking action through reflection to awaken. The three conflicts also help Suzume to face what she feels as part of the wound healing to be reborn into a person who is done with the past and ready to move on.

## **5. Fragile and Reckless to Responsibility, Openness, and a New Spirit for Life**

The last datum quotation shows a change from Suzume's careless and



fragile character to a character who is responsible, open, and has a new enthusiasm for life. Here is the quotation:

*A few months have passed since then. I've been going to school every day and studying more than I used to for the university entrance exams coming up next year. Tamaki and I have been arguing more than before, but rather than fighting, it feels like a comfortable exchange of ideas. Her lunch boxes are still as over-the-top as always. The sea I pass on my way to school is growing more brilliant by the day. It seems to me that as winter advances, the sea gets bluer, the clouds get grayer, the asphalt gets blacker, and everything shines more brightly. It's like the world beneath the light is constantly changing as it moves toward a point on the horizon. (p.179).*

The datum above shows Suzume's life after saving Souta and meeting Young Suzume. Since that event, Suzume came to school every day and studied harder than usual to prepare for the University entrance exam. Suzume and Tamaki argued more like they had before, but now their arguments felt like comfortable discussions.

The development of Suzume's character from selfish and fragile to responsible, open, and has a new spirit in life is helped by the conflicts that have been experienced before. The first conflict is her external conflict with nature (refer to datum 1-11, Section B.1.a). Her external conflict with nature certainly helped her stand firmly here because if she had not conflicted with nature, she would not have experienced this. In addition to her conflicts with nature, Suzume's conflicts with Tamaki (refer to datum 1-7, Section B.1.c) also help Suzume's character development. Tamaki has always been overly worried and overprotective of Suzume. This made Suzume feel uncomfortable and constrained. In the end, Suzume and Tamaki fought and said what they had been suppressing. Because of this, Suzume understood what Tamaki had been thinking and realized it in the form of worry. Suzume

finally reflects and becomes a person who values her relationships with others more, opening up to each other to solve problems. This is evidenced by Suzume's words in the datum, where, after the incident, she argued more with Tamaki, but instead of arguing, it felt more like a discussion. Next are the conflicts she experienced with Daijin. The conflict between Suzume and Daijin (refer to datum 1-5, Section B.1.d) begins when Suzume pulls out the Keystone, prompting Daijin to curse Souta into a chair. For this reason, Suzume must embark on an adventure that brings her into contact with many new people who love her. Her interactions with these new people eventually made Suzume realize that the loneliness she had always felt no longer existed. She eventually learns to value relationships with people and becomes a responsible person.

In addition to external conflicts, internal conflicts also help Suzume's character development. The first internal conflict is a conflict with the past. Conflict with the past (refer to datum B.2.a) is a set of Suzume's conflicts related to painful memories and always rejected by Suzume. There is always a strong emotional reaction when Suzume is faced with conflicts that invoke frightening memories of the past. Nevertheless, after being confronted with those conflicts, Suzume finally learned to face the wounds that she had rejected and reflect. She gradually accepted it until, at its peak, she transformed into a tough person with a new spirit for living life. In the datum above, it is depicted that the current Suzume is Suzume, who can enjoy and continue her life.

Furthermore, the second internal conflict is her internal conflict with guilt. Her internal conflict with guilt (refer to datum 1, Section B.2.b) is when Suzume feels that she has been wasting Tamaki's time because she has to take care of Suzume. This is because, after losing her mother, Suzume has been living with Tamaki for twelve years. Furthermore, during those 12 years, Tamaki was so busy taking care of her that there was no time for dating. When faced with this conflict, Suzume experienced conflict with herself until she finally reflected. From that reflection, Suzume learns to be a person who respects the feelings of others and takes responsibility.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher presents conclusions based on the research results and offers suggestions for further analysis. The conclusions are presented based on the discussion and results regarding Suzume's character before experiencing conflict, the types of conflict experienced by Suzume, and how the conflict contributes to Suzume's character development. On the other hand, the suggestions provide information on what needs to be researched further on the same issue.

#### A. Conclusion

Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume* is a novel that tells the story of Suzume's adventure to save the world from natural disasters. The novel also explores Suzume's journey of self-discovery and her resolution of various conflicts related to her past. Suzume experiences many conflicts. These conflicts play a crucial role in Suzume's journey of self-discovery. The conflicts experienced by Suzume can help develop her character into a strong person who can resolve her past.

The first research question shows that Suzume had six characters before experiencing conflict. These characters are selfish, reckless, fragile, emotional, and caring. The existence of these six characters demonstrates that Suzume is a well-rounded character, defined as one that possesses complexities like real-life humans, and her character cannot be described in a single sentence.

In the second research question regarding the conflicts experienced by Suzume, the researcher identified ten types of conflicts, which were categorized into two main types: external conflicts and internal conflicts. In external conflicts, we identified five types of conflicts: conflicts with nature, Souta, Tamaki, Daijin, and Young Suzume. On the other hand, Suzume experiences five types of internal conflicts. These internal conflicts are conflict with the past, guilt, loneliness, frustration, and fear.

Finally, the conflicts Suzume has experienced are crucial to her character development. Out of the six kinds of characters Suzume had before the conflict, three characters developed and went in a positive direction. These characters are selfish, reckless, and fragile. At the end of the story, Suzume is portrayed as reborn and has a character that interprets relationships with others respects others, is responsible, resolute, self-accepting, open, and can continue life with a new spirit.

## **B. Suggestion**

Suggestions for future research on the existence of conflict in literary works. The researcher suggests analyzing conflict from a psychological approach to gain a sharper understanding of how it can facilitate character development, as this research employs an objective approach. Future research can examine how the psychological approach describes character development through conflict, especially in the context of trauma and mental fragility. The psychological approach can be used to understand how internal

conflicts, such as guilt, loneliness, frustration, and fear, contribute to character development, which includes both character change and formation. In addition, a suggestion for future research is to compare the film and novel *Suzume* by Makoto Shinkai since *Suzume* is a product of the novelization of the film *Suzume no Tojimari*.

This research has limitations and only focuses on one character, Suzume. This study also limits its research space to the discussion of conflict, character, and character development. Nevertheless, the researcher hopes that this research will pave the way for other studies, especially on the topic of conflict and development in literary works.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



Fanny Rahmawan was born in Pasuruan on April 18, 2003. He graduated from SMAN 1 Purwosari, Pasuruan in 2021. He then continued his education at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, where he majored in English Literature. During his studies, he actively participated in one of the student activity units, namely the Gema Gita Bahana Student Choir. Through the Gema Gita Bahana Student Choir, he has achieved several notable successes and gained valuable experiences in national and international competitions. With Gema Gita Bahana Choir, he won the 1st and 2nd Place Grand Champion, Gold Medal National Song Category, and Gold Medal Folklore Category at the 1<sup>st</sup> SATU VOICE National Choir Festival in Tulungagung. In addition, in the same year, the Gema Gita Bahana Student Choir also won the international level competition at the Malaysian Choral Eisteddfod International Choir Festival 2023, specifically the Winner Category Pop Vocal Ensemble, a Gold Medal in the Folklore Category, and was a Grand Prix Finalist. In addition to his achievements, he also has direct experience in the media world by participating in regular internship activities carried out at the Biro Pemberitaan Parlemen, more specifically at TVR Parlemen Setjen DPR RI in 2024 as staff of the Research and Analysis and Production Division.