

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Every human being has conflicts which should be faced and resolved in his daily life. Whether one is young or old, male or female, as long as one lives in the world, one cannot run away from one's problem and conflicts until one dies. However, in my opinion women are the ones who face greater conflicts because women are considered to be the weakest sex and get a lot of demands from their surrounding. There are many examples of demand and condition in which women are put into by society. For one, women cannot have the freedom to work and study. Sooner or later they will be housewives. Also, some women are used to be victims of men physically or mentally. As wives, they should obey their husbands, follow his rules and should be responsible for their children and husbands. Therefore, from time to time women are considered not to be equal to men. Those problems began in about the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are still continuing until now

Union Street by Pat Barker is a story that focuses on seven women who have different problems and how they try to cope with the problems. Kelly Brown, 11 years old, is raped; Joanne, 18 years old, is pregnant and is afraid of marriage because after getting married, her husband forbids her to work but she does not want to be a housewife and only takes care of the baby; Lisa, 22 years old, is married to an alcoholic and rejects the third child; Muriel, is married to a man who has an illness and dies; Iris, has a problem with her youngest daughter who is pregnant before getting married; Dinah, 60 years old, is lonely; and Alice, 76 years old, who is waiting for her death. After reading the novel, I find that the novel has a unique content and it becomes the reason why I choose to analyze this novel for my thesis. However, I would only focus on three characters, namely Kelly, Lisa and Alice because they represent women in real life who might have to deal with similar problems and they also represent the beginning, the middle and the end of life.

Pat Barker is an author who was born in Thornaby-on Tees in Yorkshire, England, on 8 May 1943. Her early novels deal with the harsh lives of working-class women living in the North England. Her first novel, Union Street (1982) won the Fawcett Society Book Prize; The Eye in the Door (1993) won the Guardian Fiction Prize; The Ghost Road (1995) won the Booker Prize for Fiction. (<http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/>)

Through her first novel, Union Street, Pat Barker wants to show the reader how difficult it is to be a woman and how often she gets pressure in her life, as seen in the conflicts that each character must face. As conflicts are the most

dominant element in this novel, I would like to analyze conflicts using formalist approach.

According to Harry Shaw, there are three kinds of conflicts: Social conflict – a struggle between man and man; inner conflict – a struggle between man and himself; physical conflict – a struggle between man and nature (1905:91-92). However, in this thesis, I would only focus on social and inner conflicts faced by Kelly, Lisa and Alice.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

After reading Union Street, the present writer states the problems as follow:

1. What are the conflicts experienced by Kelly, Lisa and Alice?
2. What are the causes and the effects of the conflicts?
3. How are the conflicts resolved?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Based on the statement above, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the conflicts experienced by Kelly, Lisa and Alice
2. To show the causes and the effects of the conflicts
3. To show the solution for the conflicts

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The method of research used in library research. First of all, I read the novel as the primary text. I apply Formalist approach to have better understanding of the conflicts found in the novel. I then gather and search information needed for the thesis from some references and materials from the Internet to support the analysis of the primary text. Finally, I draw the conclusion.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I divide this thesis into three chapters, which are preceded by the Preface and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two deals with the analysis of social and inner conflicts which are faced by three of the women in Pat Barker's Union Street. Chapter Three is the Conclusion, in which I conclude my analysis of the conflicts in Union Street. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices.