

SOCIAL REALITY REPRESENTATION IN KAREN MCMANUS "ONE OF US IS LYING"

Dava Adi Karismawan

English Literature Department, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Corresponding author: davaadikarismaa@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research is titled "Social Reality Representation in Karen McManus's One Of Us Is Lying" The study aims to understand the forms of social reality present in the novel One Of Us Is Lying by Karen McManus using George Lukacs' social realism theory. Therefore, the research focuses on three main questions: (1) Forms of defense and resistance employed by the characters in the novel "One of Us Is Lying," (2) Forms of oppression in the novel "One of Us Is Lying" by Karen McManus, and (3) Strategies, cheating, and traps found in the novel "One of Us Is Lying" by Karen McManus. The objective of this research is to determine the efforts of the four main characters, namely Bronwyn, Addy, Nate, and Cooper, to prove that they are indeed innocent of the murder accusation against the character Simon.

This research employs a qualitative method. The novel One Of Us Is Lying by Karen McManus serves as the primary data source. The data is then analyzed using a sociological approach with George Lukacs' social realism theory to address the research questions.

The results of this study show the forms of defense carried out by the characters Bronwyn, Addy, and Nate and the resistance carried out by the characters

such as self-defense, cooperation, facing personal secrets, seeking the truth then forms of oppression experienced by characters such as cyberbullying, blackmail, social violence blackmail and the strategies, cheating, and traps committed by Simon who makes gossip applications, Nate's cheating on drugs, cheating committed by Brownwyn on exams and false evidence.

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel contains plots that describe characters, events, and conflicts that reflect real life. The researcher chose this novel to review because the novel is very mysterious and curious with the ending of the story, where the character Simon in "One of Us Is Lying" is a boy who is the self-proclaimed "omniscient narrator" of Bayview High's rumor mill, Simon Kelleher runs a ubiquitous but reviled gossip app called About That which aggregates the juiciest gossip on campus. Though Simon's reports are daily, they are rarely inaccurate. He uses his fellow students' initials to avoid being accused outright of libel or harassment. Still, because the school community is so tight-knit, it's always obvious who the gossip is about.

Karen M. McManus is a young American fiction writer. She is best known for her first novel, *One of Us Lying*, which remained on the New York Times bestseller list for over 130 weeks. It received a star rating from Publishers Weekly. NBC picked up *One of Us Lying* as a pilot, and the TV adaptation will premiere in October 2021 on Peacock. Its sequel, *One of Us Is Next*, received a star rating from Publishers Weekly. Kirkus Review gave it a confidential two-star review and named it one of the best books in 2019 (Heimbach A, 2018).

One afternoon at Bayview High School, five students are summoned to detention by a teacher due to a violation of school rules involving the use of their phones. The group consists of Bronwyn, an exemplary student who always adheres to the rules and maintains impeccable grades; Addy, a popular and attractive girl who has won beauty contests; Nate, a delinquent who is currently on probation for drug-related offenses; Cooper, an athlete and the star pitcher of the school's baseball team who is known as the prince of the school; and Simon, a social outcast who has created a gossip app about life at Bayview High (McManus, 2017).

Toward the end of detention, Simon suddenly collapses and dies after drinking water from a chemistry beaker that was available in the room. The police confirm that Simon's death was not an accident, but was instead deliberately planned by someone. Furthermore, a draft of Simon's upcoming gossip article, which contains scandalous rumors about the four other students who were in detention with him, is discovered. As each of the four students has a hidden secret and one must lie, they all become suspects. This research reveals the social reality

in Karen McManus's "One of Us is Lying" using Georg Lukács' theory of social realism, which has three aspects: objective reality, dialectical motion, artistic reflection, and critical expression of emancipation.

The dialectical motion in the novel "One of Us Is Lying" occurs in the conflicts between different characters, particularly between the main character and the police investigating Simon's death. In the novel, each character suspected of being Simon's murderer presents their defense to prove their innocence. The novel also portrays various forms of resistance employed by the characters in facing pressure and difficult situations.

The objective reality in "One of Us Is Lying" can be seen from the facts revealed in the story, such as Simon's death being proven as intentional murder, not an accident. The social issues faced by the characters are also reflected in the objective reality, such as the pressure experienced by students in maintaining their image in school and the negative impact of gossip or fake news spreading. In the novel "One of Us Is Lying", there are several strategies, cheating, and traps employed by some characters to achieve their goals, analyzed using the artistic reflection theory. The novel "One of Us Is Lying" also contains critical expressions of emancipation in various aspects, including the portrayal of social issues in teenagers' lives. The novel depicts how teenagers can be trapped in fierce competition and how their problems can affect peer relationships.

2. Methodology

The sociological theory of social realism by George Lukacs was chosen as the method of analysis because the researcher wanted to pay attention to the problems related to the intent of this novel. Sociological theory, veiled in social realism, is a conceptual framework sociologists use to explain and analyze social activities, processes, and structures. In this analysis, the researcher will explain the concept of artistic reflection related to strategic aspects that are understood implicitly, namely crimes committed to suppress the characters discussed in this novel, as well as aspects of the dialectical movement which includes two aspects, namely aspects of defense and opposition carried out by the characters in this novel.

The core of the sociology of literature is the approach used to study and analyze literary works by considering the relevant social aspects. The sociology of literature focuses on understanding how the influence of society and social life affects literary works, and how literature can serve as a mirror of social reality. This approach involves the study of the relationship between literature and society, the social structures depicted in literary works, the cultural influences on literature, and the social implications inherent in literary works themselves. By employing the concepts and methods of sociology, the sociology of literature enables

us to gain a deeper understanding of literary works as part of a broader social context.

Social Realism by Georg Lukacs is a literary movement that originated in Russia in the 19th century, emphasizing social, political, and economic reality in literary works (Lucaks Georg, 1923). However, Georg Lukacs, a Hungarian writer who wrote in the German language, fully embraced Plekhanov's view that literature is tied to class and that great literature cannot emerge under bourgeois domination. The consequence of this perspective is that in his writings on modern literature, Lukacs only observed a decline in dignity and despair. The main theme of Lukacs' writings is the collapse of bourgeois realism in the second half of the nineteenth century, replaced by technically proficient literature that appears good but lacks any value at all (Damono, 1978). Georg Lukacs introduced the concept of "critical realism" in literature in 1937, emphasizing the importance of a critical understanding of social reality and human conditions through literary works. Lukacs believed that literature should play a crucial role in shaping social consciousness and exploring human conditions in modern capitalist society (Morson, 1979). According to Lukacs, the superiority of realism lies in its ability to create characters based on the writer's awareness of progressive social change. Two key ideas in Lukacs' perspective are the belief in the emergence of a fresh socialist realism that will overcome the outdated bourgeois humanism. This socialist realism will portray individuals who are in motion, striving to achieve a socialist society (Damono, 1978). The concept of "critical realism" by Lukacs greatly influenced the social realism movement in literature and art for several decades thereafter. According to Georg Lucaks (1938), there are three concepts in Georg Lukács' theory of social realism :

- **Objective Reality**

According to Georg Lukács' theory of social realism, objective reality is the reality that exists outside of ourselves, which can be observed and explained independently of individual subjective interpretations (Audriana, 2018). In the context of literature, objective reality refers to the social reality that exists within society, which can be observed and explained through literary works. Lukács believed that literature should reflect objective reality, i.e., the social reality that exists within society accurately and truthfully.

In Lukács' theory of social realism, literature is not just a product of individual creativity but also a reflection of the social and political reality that exists within society. Therefore, literature must be able to reflect the social and political conditions of society accurately and truthfully. In this regard, Lukács viewed literature as an important instrument for revealing objective reality and for raising social awareness among society.

By using the concept of objective reality in the theory of social realism, Lukács attempted to criticize forms of literature that are individualistic and subjective. He argued that literary works must go beyond the personal

interests of the writer and must speak about the objective reality that exists within society (Audriana, 2018). Literature can become an important tool for advocating for society's interests and promoting positive social change.

- **Dialectical Movement**

Dialectical movement is an important concept in Georg Lukács' theory of social realism. According to Lukács, dialectical movement is a process of social change that occurs through conflict between different social groups (Audriana, 2018). Dialectical movement can be seen in the social contradictions that exist within a society, where society is always in a state of change and conflict.

In Lukács' theory of social realism, literature must reflect dialectical movement and the social contradictions that occur within society. Literature must be able to reveal the conflicts between different social classes and their struggles for power and interests. Therefore, literature must depict social reality dynamically, as an ongoing process of change (Damono, 1978).

In this regard, literature can be a tool for raising social and political awareness among the public. Lukács believed that literature should address social and political issues that exist within society and fight for the interests of the proletariat. In this way, literature can be a means of advocating for social change that is fair and equitable

- **Artistic Reflection**

Artistic reflection in Georg Lukács' social realism theory refers to the ability of art to reflect the social reality that exists in society. Lukács believed that art should be a reflection of social reality, and should be able to accurately and honestly reveal social conflicts and living conditions in society (Audriana, 2018). According to Lukács, artists must have a high social and political consciousness and understand the objective reality around them.

Artists must be able to understand the social contradictions that exist in society and must be able to reflect the struggles of different social classes in their artwork. In this regard, artistic reflection can be a tool to raise social and political awareness among the public. Art can fight for the interests of the proletariat and can be a tool to fight for a more just and equitable social change. Lukács believed that art should be able to liberate people from capitalist pressures and help create a more humane society. In Lukács' social realism theory, art is not just a product of individual creativity, but also a cultural product that fights for the interests of society. Therefore, artists must have a high level of social consciousness and must use their artwork to fight for positive social change.

3. Result and Discussion

1. *Result for the first question. (Forms of defense and resistance employed by the character in "One of Us is Lying")*

Self-Defense	The main characters, wrongly accused of murder, keep fighting to prove they're innocent. They take defensive steps, like self-defense. In the story, Addy faces pressure from Detective Budapest because they think she went to the nurse's office when Simon died. Addy defends herself, saying she often goes there and needs Tylenol that day.
Cooperation	The four main characters work together to defend themselves against the murder accusations. In my analysis, they eventually cooperate to uncover the mastermind behind the murder case and discover what truly happened.
Facing Personal Secrets	"Four people use an app called 'About that' to share their secrets. Bronwyn struggles to admit cheating on a test, Addy fears her unhealthy relationship secret being exposed, Nate tries to change after dealing drugs, and Cooper hides being gay until he decides to be true to himself.

Seeking the Truth	<p>In "One of Us Is Lying," the characters work hard to solve a murder. Bronwyn investigates a car linked to Simon's death to find the real planner. Addy proves their innocence and discovers Jake, her boyfriend, as the true culprit, using Janae to frame them. Despite challenges, they bravely pursue the truth, learning about friendship and trust along the way. Their journey of strength and growth is a central theme in this compelling novel.</p>
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2. The results of the second question (Forms of Oppression in Karen McManus' One of Us is Lying.)

Cyberbullying	<p>In this section, we explore how cyberbullying impacts each character. The "About That" gossip app run by Simon becomes a platform for revealing students' secrets and rumors. This exposure subjects some students to cyberbullying, as they're unfairly judged and labeled negatively by app users. The four main characters fall victim to this cyberbullying when their secrets are exposed on the app, causing them to be labeled and mistreated, damaging their reputations.</p>
Blackmail	<p>The analysis uncovers situations of blackmail, notably impacting Cooper due to his father's insistence on his baseball success despite Cooper's diverse interests. Cooper feels emotional pressure fearing his secret might surface on Simon's "About That" app,</p>

	<p>endangering his baseball aspirations. Addy fears her relationship with TJ might be exposed on the app, prompting her to confess to Jake. Additionally, Bronwyn experiences fear when a TV program discusses the murder case involving her and her friends. She also worries about her relationship with Nate being exposed on the same app.</p>
<p>Psychal and verbal abuse</p>	<p>The researcher found that the character Nate, although not explicitly depicted in the novel, carries the impact of physical and verbal violence. Nate is mentioned to have experienced the destruction of his family when he was young, which significantly impacted him as he grew into adolescence. His childhood experiences have shaped his teenage experiences and behaviors, highlighting how family struggles can leave long-lasting effects on a personal life.</p>

3. Results for the third question. (The strategies, cheating, and traps in Karen McManus' One of Us is Lying.)

Simon who created the gossip app. The first point the researcher discovered is the character Simon, who is the main character and created a gossip app to satisfy his desires and increase his popularity. The app is also used to spread the dark secrets of the characters in the novel.

Nate's cheating on drugs The second point, the researcher found an artistic reflection carried out by the character Nate. He engages in tricks and deceit in his drug-selling business to avoid police surveillance, hiding illicit goods in the shed of his senile neighbor.

Cheating was committed by Brownwyn during the exam. In the third point, the researcher identified an artistic reflection by the character Bronwyn. She engages in cheating during an exam by using an answer key obtained from a laboratory computer to achieve a perfect score.

False Evidence. Finally, the artistic reflection discovered by the researcher is the presence of false evidence. The first instance is Nate's arrest by the police for allegedly killing the character Simon, which is revealed to be a trap designed by the real killer, Jake.

4. Conclusion

This study discusses the social reality present in the novel *"One of Us is Lying"* by Karen McManus from the perspective of George Lukacs' social realism. The concept of social realism includes objective reality, dialectical movement, and artistic reflection. Researchers discover that the four main characters in the novel *"One of Us Is Lying"* attempt to uncover the truth behind the murder case that affected them. They defended themselves, declaring their innocence. The researcher uses George Lukacs' theory of social realism and applies his three sub-theories as research methods to analyze the problems experienced by these four characters.

In the first investigation, researchers found a connection between the issues in the novel and the sub-theory of dialectical movement, which focuses on resistance and defense. The novel depicts two forms: the first is defense found in characters Bronwyn, Addy, and Nate. The second is resistance, such as self-defense, cooperation, confronting personal secrets, and seeking the truth, and each character asserts their innocence in Simon's murder case. In the end, they collectively searched for the real culprit. The data shows that all four characters are innocent, except for Jake, who is the real killer. Moving to the second question of objective reality, various forms of oppression are depicted across economic, educational, political, religious, physical, and other domains. The analysis uncovers aspects of oppression like cyberbullying through Simon's gossip-spreading app, leading to verbal bullying at school. Cooper faces coercion from his father regarding baseball and concealing his homosexuality. Lastly, Nate undergoes physical and verbal violence, impacting his life. This data highlights oppression in education due to how resistance affects their schooling within the school environment.

Artistic reflection in the third inquiry discusses strategies evident in the novel: manipulation, cheating, and traps. For instance, Simon creates a gossip app to fulfill his desires, Nate engages in drug dealing, Bronwyn cheats during exams, and the police use false evidence to trap Nate for a murder he didn't commit, set up by the real murderer, Jake. This data substantiates Jake's deliberate use of tactics and traps, as well as Bronwyn's cheating.

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