AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER’S CONFLICT IN THE ALCHEMIST, A NOVEL BY PAULO COELHO: A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “An Analysis of The Main Characters’ Conflicts in The Alchemist, A Novel by Paulo Coelho : A Psychological Study” was aimed to identify and explain the psychological conflict of the main character in “The Alchemist” viewed from Sigmund Freud theory of psychology The Id, the Ego, and the Superego, and how the conflict have significant in character development. There were five steps to conduct this research: 1. The writer read the novel to analyze and identify the main character in the novel The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho. 2. Distinguish the Id, Ego, and the super ego in which affect the main character in the story. 3. Identify the significance of the conflict in the development of the main character in the novel. 4. Quoting the pages of novel which described the conflicts of the main character faced in the story. 5. Conclude the study discussion.

Key word: Analysis, Main character, Psychological Conflict, the Id, the Ego, and the Superego.
ANALISIS KONFLIK KARAKTER UTAMA DI THE ALCHEMIST, SEBUAH NOVEL OLEH PAULO COELHO: STUDI PSIKOLOGI

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ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: Analisis, karakter utama, Konflik Psikologis, Id, Ego, dan Superego.
1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a works of creative imagination by human. It is used for many centuries to entertain people in many eras and many civilizations. Meyer (2011:39) stated “literature does not lend itself to a single tidy definition because the making of it over the centuries has been as complex, unwieldy, and natural as itself”.in the other hand Esten (1978: 9) stated that “Literature is disclosure of the facts of artistic and imaginative as the manifestation of human life and society through language as a medium and has a positive effect on human life (Humanity)”

As one of fiction work, The Alchemist is one of the most famous novels in the world it has been translated into 80 languages, according to The New York Times, as of 2015. The Alchemist is one of the best seller books in the world it sold more than 65 million copies in 56 languages becoming one of the best-selling books in history and setting the Guinness World Record for most translated book by a living author.

The writer is interested in analyzing this novel because the story is about finding one destiny as it shown in a dialog written in the novel “An old king tells Santiago, "when you really want something to happen, the whole universe will conspire so that your wish comes true." The story itself can move the heart of the reader.

From the statement above the writer aimed in this thesis to analyze the psychological conflict of Santiago as the main character in The Alchemist a novel written by Paulo Coelho. The writer used Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis theory of id, ego and super-ego to analyze the conflict which the main character faced in the story.

2. QUESTION

From reading the novel, these question raised. The question are as the following:

1. What types of psychological conflict occur in the novel?
2. What is the significance of the psychological conflict for the character development?

3. FINDINGS.

The writer of this study found two answers of the questions above. Those are the psychological conflicts that are faced by the main character and the significance of the psychological conflict for the main character development.

The Types of Psychological Conflict in *the Alchemist*

a. Psychological Conflict Due to Id Drives

Based on Freud, id located in human unconscious, and do not have contact with reality. *Id* works with happiness principle, always seek pleasure and avoid uneasiness (Minderop, 2013:21)

The conflict taken from the novel. The type of conflict that the main character faced in the novel is internal conflict. The conflict occurred when Santiago needed to fulfill his basic needs. He is feeling hungry so in order to fulfill his needs he works in glass merchant.

(1) "I can clean up those glasses in the window, if you want," said the boy. "The way they look now, nobody is going to want to buy them." The man looked at him without responding. "In exchange, you could give me something to eat." (Coelho, 1993:36)

The id of human works to avoid uneasiness and only seeks pleasure. From the citation above the writer found the Santiago need to fulfill his needs to eat. His unconscious drives him for work to get food, by working in the glass merchant Santiago can fulfill his needs to eat. When he work, he can expect payment from the merchant. This will avoid Santiago id to felt displeasure of having something without working for it. The narration below will explain the act of the main character to avoid uneasiness and how he can fulfill his need to eat.
b. Psychological Conflict Due to Ego Drives

Ego is operated based on the reality principle and concerned with the demands of the environment. It regulated the flow of libido and it acting as a control center of the personality. The ego act to balance the human needs and the reality (Minderop, 2013:22)

The type of conflict that the main character faced in the story is internal conflict caused by external factor. The conflict occurred when Santiago asked his father permission to travel the world, but his father rejected in because family reason. The conflict that the main character faced is the conflict between him and his father that showed below.

(4) His purpose in life was to travel, and, after two years of walking the Andalusia terrain, he knew all the cities of the region. He was planning, on this visit, to explain to the girl how it was that a simple shepherd knew how to read. That he had attended a seminary until he was sixteen. His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for a simple farm family. They worked hard just to have food and water, like the sheep. He had studied Latin, Spanish, and theology. But ever since he had been a child, he had wanted to know the world, and this was much more important to him than knowing God and learning about man's sins. One afternoon, on a visit to his family, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn't want to become a priest. That he wanted to travel. (Coelho, 1993:6)

When Santiago was a kid, he wanted to travel the world. His desires to travel the world exist because he wanted to know the world, but he was just a student whom attended the seminary so he had trouble to fulfill his dream. From the citation above the writer analyze the ego of the Santiago drives the courage from him to ask his father permission to travel the world instead of becoming priest. From the citation the
writers conclude that the need to travel the world is in Santiago’s unconsciousness that drives him to accomplish his needs and get the pleasure from it.

c. Psychological Conflict Due to Super-ego Drive

“Super-ego” appears, formed out as the perfect ego, Superego aims for perfection and it is made up of the organized part of the personality structure, which is includes the individual’s Ego ideals, spiritual goals, and ones conscience. It is a psychic agency that criticizes and prohibits ones drives fantasies, feelings, and action (Minderop, 2013:22)

The conflict of the main character viewed from the super-ego point of view begin from the main character dialogue with an old man, He wanted to avoid talking with the old man because he thought about the merchant daughter whom he wanted to meet after two years. The conflict of the main character is arise when the old man wants to have a conversation and insist on having a conversation with the main character and made the main character feel unease.

(17) When he was finally able to concentrate on what he was reading, he liked the book better; the burial was on a snowy day, and he welcomed the feeling of being cold. As he read on, an old man sat down at his side and tried to strike up a conversation. "What are they doing?" the old man asked, pointing at the people in the plaza. "Working," the boy answered dryly, making it look as if he wanted to concentrate on his reading. Actually, he was thinking about shearing his sheep in front of the merchant's daughter, so that she could see that he was someone who was capable of doing difficult things. He had already imagined the scene many times; every time, the girl became fascinated when he explained that the sheep had to be sheared from back to front. He also tried to remember some good stories to relate as he sheared the sheep. Most of them he had read in books, but he would tell them as if they were from his personal experience. She would never know the difference, because she didn't know how to read. (Coelho, 1993:12)
The main character wanted to avoid the conversation with the old man. He wanted to move to another bench, but before doing that he remembered what his father word about respecting the elder. It can be seen in the citation from the novel. 

(18) Meanwhile, the old man persisted in his attempt to strike up a conversation. He said that he was tired and thirsty, and asked if he might have a sip of the boy's wine. The boy offered his bottle, hoping that the old man would leave him alone. But the old man wanted to talk, and he asked the boy what book he was reading. The boy was tempted to be rude, and move to another bench, but his father had taught him to be respectful of the elderly. So he held out the book to the man—for two reasons: first, that he, himself, wasn't sure how to pronounce the title; and second, that if the old man didn't know how to read, he would probably feel ashamed and decide of his own accord to change bench. (Coelho, 1993:12)

How Id Affect the Main Character’s Development in the Story.

The main character chooses to be independent to chase his dream. Independence means that we never go along with various moral outlooks. Independence is the inner strength to understand self morality and act according to it (Suseno, 1993: 147)

Santiago desire to travel is really strong, the desire to know the world and finding new things drive him from being a student at seminary to become a shepherd. Santiago is a determined, headstrong, curious, and adventurous boy he wants to learn all about the world. 

(24) That he had attended a seminary until he was sixteen. His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for a simple farm family. They worked hard just to have food and water, like the sheep. He had studied Latin, Spanish, and theology. But ever since he had been a child, he had wanted to know the world, and this was much more important to him than knowing God and learning about man's sins. One afternoon, on a visit to his family, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn't want to become a priest. That he wanted to travel. (Coelho, 1993:6)
Santiago dream to travel the world drive him to ask his father blessing to travel despite his father words about exploring the world. He resisted his parent decision for him to be a priest even after hearing his father explanation about traveling the world.

"People from all over the world have passed through this village, son," said his father. "They come in search of new things, but when they leave they are basically the same people they were when they arrived. They climb the mountain to see the castle, and they wind up thinking that the past was better than what we have now. They have blond hair, or dark skin, but basically they're the same as the people who live right here."

(Coelho, 1993:6-7)

After hearing his father words, Santiago still insisted to travel the world. His nature of being headstrong and determined made him said the things what he want to his father.

"But I'd like to see the castles in the towns where they live," the boy explained. "Those people, when they see our land, say that they would like to live here forever," his father continued. "Well, I'd like to see their land, and see how they live," said his son. (Coelho, 1988:7)

Seeing Santiago will to travel the world, Santiago Father remembered his old dreams to travel the world but he buried it because the struggle to make a living for his family. He told Santiago about the way to travel for people like them is becoming a shepherd, and then Santiago decided to become a shepherd to fulfill his dream.

How Ego Affect the Main Character’s Development in the Story.

From the novel, the writer found that Santiago wanted to be close with Fatima because he loves her but Fatima said she is a desert woman. She wants his man to be free to chase his dream. The main character want to responsible to what he said to Fatima about chasing his dream, Santiago understand that he needed to fulfill his responsibilities.
"That's why I want you to continue toward your goal. If you have to wait until the war is over, then wait. But if you have to go before then, go on in pursuit of your dream. The dunes are changed by the wind, but the desert never changes. That's the way it will be with our love for each other. "Maktub," she said. "If I am really a part of your dream, you'll come back one day." (Coelho, 1993:67)

Hearing the words from Fatima, Santiago finally understands that he needs to fulfill his dream. For most shepherds, convincing their woman to let their man to go into distance field is hard but Fatima just willing him to chase his dream which made Santiago realized that he need to follow his dream and listened to Fatima. From the citation the writer found the main character choose to follow Fatima word even the main character willingness to stay with her. This show that even the main character is headstrong he still follows Fatima words.

How Super-ego Affect the Main Character Development in the Story.

Santiago Super-ego acted when he was in the side of plaza reading a book while sit on the bench when and old man sit beside him and ask him about the people in the center of the plaza. Santiago knew that the old man want to have a conversation with him, Santiago wanted to move to another bench because he does not feel comfortable but he remembered what his Father said about respecting elder. In the end Santiago answered the old man question and he knew that the old man was a king named Melchizedek. The main character learnt humility from facing Melchizedek in the story. Humility is an inner strength to see people inner self. A humble person not only saw weakness but also its strength. So a person aware about their goodwill, including the ability to give moral judgment (Suseno, 1993: 148)

"What do I do in Salem?" The old man laughed. "Well, I'm the king of Salem!" People say strange things, the boy thought. Sometimes it's better to be with the sheep, who don't say anything. And better still to be alone with one's books. They tell their incredible stories at the time when you want to hear them. But when you're talking to people, they say some things
that are so strange that you don't know how to continue the conversation.
"My name is Melchizedek," said the old man. (Coelho, 1993:14)

The next thing which Melchizedek did was take a stick and start to write the name of Santiago parents, the seminary which Santiago attend and other things that Santiago even did not tell to anyone, understanding this Santiago feel awed and embarrassment from the way he acted towards the old man.

(30) But before the boy could say anything, the old man leaned over, picked up a stick, and began to write in the sand of the plaza. Something bright reflected from his chest with such intensity that the boy was momentarily blinded. With a movement that was too quick for someone his age, the man covered whatever it was with his cape. When his vision returned to normal, the boy was able to read what the old man had written in the sand.
There, in the sand of the plaza of that small city, the boy read the names of his father and his mother and the name of the seminary he had attended. He read the name of the merchant's daughter, which he hadn't even known, and he read things he had never told anyone.
*I'm the king of Salem,*" the old man had said.
"Why would a king be talking with a shepherd?" the boy asked, awed and embarrassed. (Coelho, 1993:15)

Santiago knew that his act towards the old man is impolite, but after he learnt that the old man is a king. He knew that he can judged person from their appearance. Then he became more respectful toward older people and changed his view towards other people.

4. CONCLUSION

From analyzing the psychological conflict of the main character in “The Alchemist” using Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis theory, as a result of the study some conclusion was concluded by the writer. The Analysis of The Main Character’s Conflict in The Alchemist, a novel written by Paulo Coelho, The psychological conflict in the novel was analyzed by applying Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis theory of The Id, The Ego, and the Superego.
The main character named Santiago. The psychological conflict in the novel which the main character faced had a significant impact for the character development in the story. The conflicts from the id drive changed Santiago as a student from a seminary to be a shepherd who travel the world, this changed made him to fulfill his dream. The conflicts drive from the ego when he met with Fatima in the desert oasis. The main character felt in love and decided to abandon his dream. Fatima words changed the main character decision to stay in the oasis. Because he understood that he needed to fulfill his dream to be together with his love. The conflict from the super ego drive changed the main character perspective to see people. When he met old man in the plaza, Santiago wanted to avoid him but the old man started to write things that only Santiago knew. The old man said that he was a king named Melchizedek. After learning that the old man was a king, Santiago learnt that he cannot judge people from their appearance.
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