

**AN ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICTS IN KHALLED  
HUSSAINI'S NOVEL *THE KITE RUNNER***



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**By:**

**TONI IBNUL FATHI**

**NIM. E1D 011 073**

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MATARAM UNIVERSITY**



KEMENTERIAN RISET, TEKNOLOGI DAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI  
UNIVERSITAS MATARAM

FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN  
JURUSAN PENDIDIKAN BAHASA DAN SENI

Jl. Majapahit No. 62 Telp. (0370) 623873 Fax. 634918 Mataram 83125

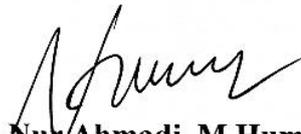
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**ABSTRACT**  
**THE ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICTS IN KHALLED  
HUSSAINI'S NOVEL *THE KITE RUNNER***

**By:**

**Toni Ibnul Fathi**

**E1D011073**

This research is aimed at getting the description of psychological conflicts analysis of the main character in Khaled Hussaini's Novel *The Kite Runner*. The problem statement of this research is formulated as follows; 1) The psychological conflicts experienced by main character in *The Kite Runner* novel, 2) how psychoanalysis is applied and 3) the motives of the main character in *The Kite Runner* novel. In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative and applies psychology theory and psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud and Abraham Maslow to find out the problem dealing with the psychological conflicts happened. The sources of the data in this study are divided into two categories; the primary source and the secondary source. The primary source is the novel of *The Kite Runner* and the secondary source is the supporting data from textbook, journal, articles, and internet. The data are taken from the novel were the quotations showing psychological conflicts faced by the main character in the novel. Then, the secondary data were the interpreting, analyzing, commentary discussion of the primary source. The data were collected by means of reading and identifying data.

From the data analysis the writer found that 1) Amir as the main character experienced psychological conflicts caused by his ambition to get his father recognition and his betrayal to Hassan (his half brother). 2) The main character's psyche can be explained by using psychological model by Sigmund Freud which consists of Id, Ego and Superego. 3) In addition, Amir's motives are safety, security need, belongingness, love, and self esteem needs.

**Key words:** *psychology, conflicts, character, psychoanalysis, motives, The Kite Runner.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

People have their right to be free from fear, free to decide what they want. Sometimes people cannot be free because somebody else pushes the other one in the way he or she will not be comfortable. That is why people will fight that to get free no matter what they try. In their effort, they often face problems that come from the inabilities from themselves. These make them inferior. Every human life is full of problems. Sometimes it becomes complex and creates the personality of human life. The problems are very various. There are internal factor and external factor. The problem from internal factor is as frustration or depression and external factor is from environment. For instance, we see conflict on the news, sitcoms, movies and reality TV. We experience our own conflict on the road, school or in the workplace. The complexities of the problems can give inspiration for an author to produce a literary work. Literary work has the same significance in meaning as understanding human existence with this mental and inner-self problem. Since literature is the exposition of human mental life, it can be said that literary works have relationship to psychology.

Literary works and psychology have the same object of the research that is human being. Every person has ever felt to get better in his/her life even one. This situation happens as people interact with other people. The pressure results un-good feeling or uncomfortable condition into the weaker one. That is why people will try to get free no matter what he or she tries to effort as long as he or she can try to overcome. People value in their lives can be seen among others from his or her personality. This suggests that every person can be distinguished, in term of human values, from others through the characteristics and qualities she or he expresses in social interaction within society. According to Freud “Psychoanalysis reflected changing valve in the society and plays a role in the changing of valves”. Freud develops a comprehensive theory in which he said personality consisted of three separate but interacting parts, the id, the ego, and the superego.

In addition, Endraswara (2008) explains that Freud also conveyed personality theory that is divided into three; Id, Ego, and Superego. Id is a basic

nerve system of human producing encouragement to fill the human's need. It is innate personality system. Id will emerge Ego, and Superego. Ego has the function to balance Id and Superego. Ego operates on reality principle in which it delays privilege and prevents new suspense. For the last, Superego is a power of morality which operates by using idealistic principle as the vice versa of Id and Ego.

In this case, the researcher chooses the novel entitled *The Kite Runner* because the main character created by the author is a good model as a teenager. Teenager phase is a transition point between children phase to adult phase. It is about 12 years old up to 21 years old. In this phase, a teenager faces unstable mental development. Therefore, it often makes a teenager feels depressed as indication of psychological conflict.

In the novel entitled *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hussaini, the writer wants to find the way how the characters show their role to give the reader the meaning of the novel, how the story goes. This novel shows us that a man as the major character in this novel faces many conflicts in his life that affected his characterization. A man, called Amir, succeeds in healing the characters in this novel by closely learn about their characterization. Through the psychological way he helped them. He learns about their life problem so that he could help to solve it.

This novel illustrates a good motivation of life to its readers. It teaches that people have to struggle in their lives and to be brave to face the real life that people have. That is the main reason why the writer wants to analyze this novel. The writer wants to know how the psychological analysis of the characters in the novel gives effects to the story of this novel, so that the writer chooses the title *An Analysis of Psychological Conflicts in Khaled Hussaini's novel The Kite Runner* become the title of this thesis. The writer hopes this thesis can be useful and give the reader more information about life and *The Kite Runner* novel especially.

## B. QUESTIONS

From reading the novel, these questions raised. The questions are as follows:

1. What are psychological conflicts experienced by Amir as the main character in *The Kite Runner* novel?
2. How is the psychoanalysis theory applied by Amir as the main character in *The Kite Runner* novel?
3. What are Amir's motives through the psychological conflicts experienced in the novel?

## C. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The writer of this study found three answers of the questions above. Those are the psychological conflicts that are faced by the main character, the main character personality based on Psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud and the motives of the main character.

### **The Types of Psychological Conflict in *the Kite Runner***

#### ***a. Amir against his father (Baba)***

The psychological conflict experienced by Amir is started by his willing to get Baba's recognition and respect. Amir wondered when he and his Baba would have a good conversation like what just they did, since Amir always assumed the reason of his Baba was seldom talking with Amir was Amir Mother's dead while she gave birth Amir. Amir thought himself as his father beloved wife murderer.

Another reason of Amir's opinion about Baba's lack of recognition toward Amir is Baba's shame about Amir's hobby as a bookworm of poetry books. Amir always prefers to bury himself in some poetry books than play soccer like another boy, and real men do. The explanation above is based on the data number 8 below:

Of course, marrying a poet was one thing, but fathering a son who preferred burying his face in poetry books to hunting...well, that wasn't Baba had envisioned it, I suppose. Real man didn't read poetry ... Real men – real boys – played soccer just as Baba had when he had been young. (Hosseini: 17)

Based on Maslow's Theory, people in the society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or self-esteem, and the esteem for other. Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to the feeling of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. Human being who fulfilled their self-esteem needs, it does not depend on other people and they always ready to continue to develop further to reach the higher needs. But, when it is obstructed, the fulfillment can cause feeling inferiority, weakness and helplessness.

The human being, the main character wants to be appreciated by his father (Baba). This was reflected when the winter came and the kite-fighting tournament would be held, Amir thought that it was the time to get Baba's recognition. Amir realized that he was good kite fighter, so he wanted to win this tournament to get Baba's recognition and respect by showing Baba that Amir was worthy.

By winning this kite-fighting tournament, Amir wished Baba would be nice with him, accounted his existence in their home, and respect him by calling him Amir jan. The explanation above is based on the data number 9 & 10 below:

I was going to win, and I was going to run the last kite. Then I'd bring it to home and show it to Baba. Show him once and for all that his son was worthy. (Hosseini: 49)

Then maybe my life as a ghost in this house would finally be over. ... Maybe he'd call me Amir jan like Rahim Khan did. (Hosseini: 49)

***b. Amir against Hassan***

Amir's betrayal is caused by his jealousy. He ignores his Ego because tries to fulfill his ambition to get his father's love and attention. However, he sacrifices Hassan based on his Id. Here shows that his id plays dominant role to fulfill his ambition. To further extent of human vanity is being portrayed through his denial of guilty. The explanation above is based on the data number 11 below:

Blocking Hassan way out of the alley...

Wali...Kamal..Assef..

I felt my body clench up, and something cold rippled up my spine.(Hosseini: 62)

Amir found Hassan in an alley, but there were three boys blocked Hassan's way out. Those boys were Wali, Kamal and Assef. Seeing this situation, Amir felt his body clench up and later something cold rippled up his spine. The explanation above is based on the data number 12 below:

I realized I still hadn't breathed out. I exhaled, slowly, quietly. (Hosseini: 63)

Seeing Hassan trapped by Assef and his gang made Amir afraid. He just could see. He realized that he still hadn't breathed. When he tried to exhale, he exhaled his breathing slowly and quietly. He felt paralyzed because of his fear toward unpleasant situation he faced.

Dealing with the explanation above, it can be summed up that the psychological conflicts experienced by Amir is started by his willing to get Baba's recognition and respect by joining and winning the kite-fighting tournament. Later, the conflict experienced by Amir become dominant after he betrayed Hassan by letting Hassan got raped by Assef to save Amir's winning kite. Therefore, most of Amir's psychological conflicts, dealing with his guilt for betraying Hassan as his closest person and his illegitimate brother.

### **Amir's Id, Ego and Superego**

A person's id is essentially the primitive instincts that cause an individual to act immediately upon pleasurable experiences. The id is not affected by reality and operates unconsciously. A person's id is impulsive, illogical, and selfish. When Amir is very young, he tends to run away from situations that he cannot handle and makes decision that only benefit himself. He is governed by what is called the "pleasure principle" (which governs the id); In Freud's (1991) psychoanalytic theory of personality, the pleasure principle is the driving force of the id that seeks immediate gratification of all needs, wants, and urges. This "pleasure principle" is obvious during the rape scene when he hides and does not stand up for Hassan simply because he is afraid. It can be seen by this following quotation:

“I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt” (Hosseini: 77)

Furthermore, after the rape incident, Amir decides he is unable to handle the pain of dealing with Hassan every day. Rather than admitting what he did not stand up for Hassan, he hides his money under Hassan’s mattress in attempt to get him and Ali dismissed. This shows Amir has a weak superego and a strong id. Amir knows that hiding his money with Hassan will get Hassan in trouble, but he does it anyways for his own good. It can be seen by this following quotation:

“I (Amir) was a liar, a cheat, and a thief. And I would have told, except that a part of me was glad. Glad that this would all be over with soon” (Hosseini: 105).

Later in the novel, while living in America, Amir’s ego is more at work than his id or superego. Amir still thinks about what will benefit himself, but he keeps the lives of others in mind when making decisions. This change is obvious when Amir suggests that he and Baba go back to Peshawar. Amir knows Baba was happier there and did not have to work as hard, but Amir also recognizes that he must stay in America for his future. Although Amir is thinking about what is good for Baba, he knows he has to stay in America for his education. Even after high school, Amir told Baba:

“I (Amir) wanted to get a job, help out, save some money, maybe go to college the following year,” but he ends up going to college because that is what is best for him (Hosseini: 131).

By the end of the novel, Amir has maturity and his superego has gained strength. Amir even agrees to get Sohrab from Kabul puts his life in more danger. Amir chooses to do this for Hassan and Sohrab. When he fights Assef to get back Sohrab, it shows his superego strength. Amir puts himself in harm’s way for Sohrabs safety although it provides him no direct benefit; he is doing it for the wellbeing of Sohrab.

### **Motives Experienced by Amir**

Amir's motives are safety, security need, belongingness, love, and self esteem. Amir's safety and security need appears dealing with the betrayal he did toward Hassan as a Hazara, and the fact that actually Hassan is Amir's illegitimate half brother. In addition, Amir's belongingness and love need appears twice, first dealing with Amir's caring toward Sohrab as a person who already saved him from Assef and as the only family Amir has, second, dealing with a broken promise Amir made which later made him lost Sohrab's trust. Later, Amir's self esteem need appears as his motivation to follow and win the kite fighting tournament to get Baba's recognition and respect. So that, the most dominant motive experienced by Amir is safety and security need.

### **D. CONCLUSION**

After analyzing *The Kite Runner* through a deep investigation, I can conclude that there are some conclusions related with this research. First, the psychological conflicts happened to Amir are connected to Amir's id or Amir's ambition. In other word, he has ambition to fulfill which is not easy to achieve due to the consideration in his life. As a result, what he gets can be called as a final result named superego.

The result of the study shows that Amir's ego would be considered the strongest part of his psyche because he attempts to make rational decisions which are selfish in nature throughout the majority of the novel. He knows his decisions are immoral, but they offer him a way to avoid physical pain and keep up with society's expectations. For most of Amir's life, he ignores his superego and refuses to make sacrifices to atone for his sins. It is only when he finds out Hassan is his half-brother that he acts upon his superego.

And the last research finding is about Amir's motives. People always have a background to do everything in their life and so does Amir. Amir's motives are safety and security need, belongingness and love need, and self esteem. In this story, Amir's motive appears in some big conditions and purpose. Some conditions that shows Amir's big motive to solve his problem and reach

his goal are, first, when Amir reveals his willing to get Baba's recognition and respect by showing Baba that Amir is worthy as a son and boy by winning the kite-fighting tournament. Second, when Amir decided to send Hassan out from his home and life since Amir could not bear his stress after letting Hassan got raped by Assef. Third, when Amir knew that Hassan was his half brother so he accepted Rahim Khan request to take Sohrab, Hassan's son, out from Kabul to redeem his betrayal toward Hassan. Fourth, when Amir chasing the kite for Sohrab as he wants to get Sohrab's trust after he broke his promise and made Sohrab commit suicide.

Ultimately, *The Kite Runner* is a novel about relationship speciepecially the relationship between Amir and Hassan, Baba, Rahim Khan, Soraya, and Sohrab and how the complex relationship in our lives overlap and connect to make us the people we are.

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