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Inner Conflict of the Main Character in Putu Wijaya's Short Story "Suap" and the Relevance As Teaching Material for Literature Learning in Senior High School

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the inner conflict in the main character of the short story "Suap" by Putu Wijaya published in 2009 and describe its relevance as a teaching material for literature learning in high school. The research method chosen is a qualitative descriptive method with the approach of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Data in the form of words and sentences containing inner conflict. The data source in this study is Putu Wijaya's short story entitled "Suap". The data analysis technique uses close reading which emphasizes in-depth and careful analysis of literary texts to understand the meaning, ideology, and structure contained therein (Eagleton, 1993). The stages carried out by researchers in data analysis use the interactive analysis method of Miles, et al. (2014) which consists of data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Based on data analysis, the results of this study found that the turmoil between the main character's desire to avoid the pressure of poverty instantly by accepting bribes (id), moral and religious control that rejects corruption (superego), and the choice of action (ego) taken by the main character in balancing the two leads to confusion and indecisiveness in making decisions. The relevance of this short story as a teaching material for literature learning in senior high school is to teach intrinsic elements in short stories, instill moral messages in students, and a critical attitude towards real social problems.

Keywords: short stories, inner conflict, literature, teaching materials, learning

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan konflik batin yang terdapat pada tokoh utama cerpen “Suap” karya Putu Wijaya yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2009 dan mendeskripsikan relevansinya sebagai bahan ajar pembelajaran sastra di SMA. Metode penelitian yang dipilih adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan teori psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud. Data berupa kata dan kalimat yang mengandung konflik batin. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah cerpen Putu Wijaya yang berjudul “Suap”. Teknik analisis data menggunakan close reading yang menekankan analisis mendalam dan cermat terhadap teks sastra untuk memahami makna, ideologi, dan struktur yang terkandung di dalamnya (Eagleton, 1993) Tahapan yang dilakukan peneliti dalam analisis data menggunakan metode analisis interaktif Miles, dkk. (2014) yang terdiri atas pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan. Berdasarkan analisis data, hasil dari penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pergolakan antara keinginan tokoh utama untuk menghindari tekanan kemiskinan secara instan dengan menerima suap (id), kontrol moral dan agama yang menolak perbuatan korupsi (superego), dan pilihan tindakan (ego) yang diambil oleh tokoh utama dalam menyeimbangkan keduanya berujung pada kebingungan dan sikap tidak tegas dalam mengambil keputusan. Relevansi cerpen ini sebagai bahan ajar pembelajaran sastra di SMA adalah untuk mengajarkan unsur intrinsik dalam cerpen, menanamkan pesan moral kepada siswa, dan sikap kritis terhadap masalah sosial yang nyata.

Kata kunci: *cerpen, konflik batin, sastra, bahan ajar, pembelajaran*

Introduction

Literature originates from the dynamic and diverse conflicts of societal life, offering a compelling portrayal of the human struggle for existence. An author’s skill in selecting and developing **conflict** within a story’s events is what captures and holds a reader’s interest (Juidah et al., 2021). In short stories, conflict can be defined as a struggle that occurs between individuals (Abdul Razzaq et al., 2022). Characters in short stories often depict various traits and behaviors related to their psychological states and experiences with conflict, mirroring what people encounter in their daily lives (Fajriyah et al., 2017). The most common type of conflict faced by characters in short stories is inner conflict.

Putu Wijaya’s short story, “Suap” (Bribe), vividly portrays the internal conflict faced by its protagonist when offered a bribe during a painting competition. Initially, the main character rejects the bribe, firmly upholding their moral values and honesty. However, their resolve wavers due to economic pressure and various life hardships. This inner conflict reflects the struggle between material temptation and a conscience that rejects corruption, a theme highly relevant to the social realities within Indonesian society. The story employs clear and concise language, making it easily understandable while simultaneously offering a profound reflection on the human condition and society. The protagonist’s inner turmoil, stemming from the tension between their unwavering principles and urgent life necessities, creates a complex dilemma. This makes the inner conflict experienced by the main character in this short story highly pertinent for in-depth analysis.

In the context of teaching literature at the senior high school level, specifically short story texts, the selection of teaching materials must be done carefully. This is because teaching materials are a crucial aspect supporting the success of any teaching and learning activity. The materials used must meet specific criteria. The selection of teaching materials should align with the curriculum and educational objectives, be verifiable based on Indonesian linguistic and literary scholarship, be relevant to advancements in science and technology, and be appropriate for the cognitive development level of the students (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

Teaching materials encompass the core learning objectives in line with goals and

curriculum, offering rich and comprehensive discussions (covering attitudes, knowledge, and skills). They encourage students to apply what they learn to real-life situations, guide them toward mastering specific competencies through clear and systematic learning methods, and provide exercises and evaluation tools to measure student learning mastery related to particular competencies (Kosasih, 2021). Given this, the current research will examine the relevance of the short story “Suap” as teaching material for literature learning in senior high schools. The phenomenon of bribery, which is the theme of this short story, remains a serious issue across various levels of society and can be introduced to students as a valuable learning resource.

Inner conflict is a conflict that occurs within a character. This type of conflict is often called psychological conflict because a character struggles with themselves to decide and resolve something they are facing (Nurgiyantoro, 2018). Inner conflict arises within an individual, especially when a person faces alternatives or must choose between two or more possibilities that contain motives or reasons driving their actions or underlying their thoughts (Diana, 2016). The inner conflict experienced by the character in this short story can be analyzed through a psychological literary approach.

Literary psychology studies specific psychological phenomena experienced by the main character in a literary work as they respond to themselves and their environment (Siswanto & Roekhan, 2022). This means that psychological symptoms can be revealed through a character’s behavior within a literary piece. Literary psychology is an approach that considers the human psyche (Astuti et al., 2016). Through psychology, the function and role of literature in realistically portraying human life become evident. When studying a psychological work, it’s important to understand the extent to which the author’s own psychology influences the creation of fictional characters dealing with psychological issues (Minderop, 2016).

One theory applicable to analyzing literary psychology in novels is Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, a discipline initiated around the 1900s by Sigmund Freud, deals with the development and function of the human mind (Fajriyah et al., 2017). This field of psychology has made significant contributions to our understanding of the human psyche. Psychoanalytic theory aims to explain the nature and development of human personality (Wijaya & Darmawan, 2019). Freud proposed three structural models of personality, the id, ego, and superego. The ego represents the real-world actions resulting from the id, often heavily influenced by the superego (Freud, 1923). If the superego is dominant, the ego may then incorporate thoughts stemming from the superego. Conversely, if the id is dominant, the ego can then incorporate thoughts originating from the id (Mutyarani et al., 2024).

Freud posited that every human individual possesses an id, which is a primal urge containing desires and innate characteristics present from birth (Giordano, 2020). The **id** is considered the true psychic reality because it reflects the inner world based on subjective experience and disregard objective reality. It resides in the subconscious, containing concrete and powerful impulses to act. However, the id does not comprehend moral values shaped or influenced by culture, thus requiring the ego to control it.

The ego acts as a controller, ensuring individuals behave and interact appropriately given real-world conditions, preventing the id’s impulses from becoming too overt. The ego operates using secondary processes, which involve deliberation, common sense, and the ability to delay spontaneous responses to external stimuli and internal instinctual urges (Budiantoro & Mardianto, 2016). The ego resides in the conscious mind and is rational. It manages and transforms irrational thoughts and behaviors into rational ones.

The superego represents the moral values prevalent in society, generally manifesting as

commands and prohibitions (Nurgiyantoro, 2018). It opposes the id's demands for gratification, influencing an individual's behavioral and action choices, determining whether they are good and appropriate or not. It is idealistic, aiming to control attitudes and behaviors to align with moral values. The superego forms through education (enculturation), which primarily involves instructions and prohibitions regarding actions. This is most effective when established during childhood, specifically through education from parents, family, and the environment, allowing the process of enculturation to be well internalized within the individual.

Previous research relevant to this study's topic includes a study by Tara, which found that inner conflicts in Rawi Meita's novel *Kaliluna: Luka di Salamanca* manifested as approach-avoidance and avoidance-avoidance conflicts. This research also identified the ego defense mechanisms used by the main character to resolve their inner conflicts (Tara et al., 2019). That study also uncovered character education values and their relevance to Indonesian literature teaching materials in senior high schools. The difference with the current research lies in the object of study and the theory used for analysis. Furthermore, Dewi and Hidajati analyzed inner conflict using the same theory, namely Sigmund Freud's concepts of the id, ego, and superego. They found that the main character's inner conflicts included unfulfilled expectations, indecisiveness when facing problems, internal and external factors causing inner conflict, and conflict resolution methods such as projection and displacement (Dewi & Hidajati, 2019). The difference with the current research is that their study's object of analysis and discussion were not linked to school-based learning. Hayati's research differs in both the theory (Minderop) and the object of study (film) used (Hayati, 2021). Hayati's study focused on aspects of inner conflict in the main character, specifically concepts of guilt, suppressed guilt, self-punishment, shame, sadness, hatred, and love in Jose Poernomo's film *Moga Bunda Disayang Allah*.

Based on the discussion above, this research will describe the inner conflict found in the main character of Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap" published in 2009. It will also describe its relevance as teaching material for literature learning in senior high schools. The findings of this research are expected to enrich literary studies, particularly in the analysis of inner conflict through the lens of literary psychology in "Suap" by Putu Wijaya, as well as inform the selection of teaching materials for senior high school literature students.

Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative method is characterized by problem-solving steps that seek clarification by depicting the state of the research object based on observable realities. This method is used to describe and uncover the inner conflict contained within the short story "Suap" and its relevance as teaching material for literature learning in senior high schools. The data consists of words and sentences that convey inner conflict within the short story "Suap". The data source for this research is Putu Wijaya's short story titled "Suap". The data analysis technique utilizes close reading, which emphasizes an in-depth and careful analysis of the literary text to understand its inherent meaning, ideology, and structure (Eagleton, 1993). The stages of data analysis performed by the researcher follow an interactive analysis method, comprising data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. (Miles et al., 2014).

Result and Discussion

This research analyzes the inner conflict of the main character in Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap"

and its relevance as a teaching material for senior high school literature classes, as detailed below.

1. Inner Conflict of the Main Character in Putu Wijaya's Short Story "Suap"

The inner conflict of the main character in this short story is examined through the lens of literary psychology, specifically Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. Freud categorized human personality into three aspects, the id, ego, and superego. An imbalance in the main character's management of these three aspects triggers the emergence of inner conflict, causing the character to feel pressured and confused. The following presents the research findings regarding the main character's inner conflict in the short story.

a. Id

The id aspect in Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap" is evident in the subtle and deep-seated desire of the main character, "I," to accept the bribe offered by their guest. This id acts as an instinctive urge for the protagonist to transform their economic circumstances. This is captured in the following data excerpt.

(1) "Satu milyar? Dua milyar? Lima milyar?" Saya terkejut. Dia seperti sudah menebak pikiran saya.

(2) Saya tak berani bergerak, walau pun perasaan ingin tahu saya menggebu-gebu, berapa kira-kira uang di dalam amplop itu.

From the excerpt above, the guest arriving with an envelope creates an instinctive urge (id aspect) in the character "Saya (I)" to accept the money, thereby escaping poverty. This emerging impulse disregards potential moral compromise, focusing purely on the economic pressure the character faces.

(3) Meski sudah saya sembunyikan dengan begitu rapih, tapi kalau lagi sepi, kadang-kadang amplop itu saya bawa ke tempat sunyi di depan rumah dan timang-timang.

(4) Kenapa saya mesti menolak nasib baik yang sudah di tangan. Istri saya sudah tidak mau lagi tidur dengan saya. Anak saya kontet karena gizinya kurang. Utang di warung sudah tak terbayar sehingga lewat saja sudah rasa dihimpit oleh hina dan malu.

(5) Kenapa orang lain boleh bahagia dan saya hanya kelelap kemiskinan karena membela kesucian.

The excerpt also illustrates that the instinctive urge (id) is tempted to use the money because the main character feels immense pressure and desires material gain without considering the risks or the value of honesty. The protagonist views the bribe as an instant way to meet their living needs. This id aspect instinctively pushes "I" to be selfish and disregard morality, ethics, and religion. This aligns with research by Ekayani, who found that a main character's id rebels due to disappointment with decisions made by other characters (Ekayani et al., 2017). This id drives the main character to have a strong desire to vent their anger because they feel pressured.

b. Ego

This ego aspect represents the actions chosen by the main character in confronting their problems. This is evident in the following data excerpt.

(6) Saya memberi isyarat untuk menolak. Tapi orang itu terlalu sibuk, mungkin sengaja tidak mau memberi saya kesempatan.

This excerpt demonstrates the ego aspect, where the main character's action is to defend themselves by rejecting the offered bribe because it conflicts with existing moral values.

(7) Saya termenung. Apa pun yang saya lakukan sekarang, saya sudah basah. Tak menolak dengan tegas, berarti saya sudah menerima. Ketidakmampuan saya untuk tidak segera menolak, karena kurang pengalaman, tak akan dipercaya.

(8) Dan kenapa saya terlalu lama bego. Melongo adalah pertanda bahwa saya diam-diam punya keinginan menerima. Aduh malunya.

The ego aspect evident in both excerpts above reveals that the actions taken by “Saya (I)” are indecisive and confused when facing the offer. The main character attempts to restrain themselves and deliberate before deciding whether to accept or reject the bribe offer.

(9) Keputusan sudah diambil, saya tidak akan menerimanya. Saya akan mengembalikan, kalau orang itu datang lagi. Dia pasti sengaja pergi untuk menjebloskan saya terpaksa menerima.

The ego aspect in this excerpt stands out in the actions taken by “Saya (I)”, leading them to uphold their honesty. If they were to accept the bribe, they would feel shame, fear losing their self-respect, and anticipate negative consequences for their family.

(10) Satu bulan berlalu. Lomba itu sudah menjadi lampau. Saya pun memperoleh jarak yang cukup untuk menyiapkan perasaan menghadapi kedua amplop itu.

(11) Meski sudah saya sembunyikan dengan begitu rapih, tapi kalau lagi sepi, kadang-kadang amplop itu saya bawa ke tempat sunyi di depan rumah dan timang-timbang.

The ego aspect in this excerpt shows that the action of character “Saya (I)” is still firm in refusing the money. However, their actions at another time contradict what they had affirmed, as they contemplate the envelope and wish for it.

(12) Saya tidak melakukan itu. Orang juga tidak memprotes keputusan yang diambil juri. Apa perlu saya cek, adakah semua juri juga sudah disodori amplop seperti saya? Saya kira itu berlebihan. Keputusan kami yang diterima baik, adalah bukti bahwa kemenangan itu tepat.

In this excerpt, the character “Saya (I)” has been waiting for the guest’s arrival for two months, but they still haven’t appeared. “Saya (I)” remains firm in their refusal, although doubt begins to creep into their heart, prompting a desire to validate with other judges. However, they don’t act on this, believing the judges’ decision was already correct.

(13) Pada bulan ketiga, saya capek menunggu. Lelah juga dipermainkan oleh ketegangan.

(14) Akhirnya setelah berdoa berkali-kali dan meminta ampun kepada Tuhan, saya memutuskan nekat. Apa boleh buat biarlah saya masuk penjara kalau saya memang terbukti nanti makan suap.

This excerpt illustrates that “Saya (I)” exhibits a wavering attitude, becoming tempted to use the bribe money since the guest who offered it hasn’t returned to retrieve it. This action is triggered main character’s challenging economic circumstances.

(15) Saya terimakan kedua amplop itu ke tangan istri saya. Istri saya diam saja. Anak saya nampak menahan diri. Dia tidak berani menyambar lagi seperti dulu.

In this excerpt, the ego aspect indicates that “Saya (I)” has failed to uphold their adopted morals. The main character decides to accept the envelope containing the bribe money and hands it over to his wife for use, due to the economic pressure they are facing.

With the id acting as the protagonist’s instinctual drive and the superego opposing it, the ego functions as a balancing force between the two. The main character’s ego

demonstrates confusion and indecisiveness when faced with the bribe offer. The ego attempts to restrain the id's impulses by making the best decision to avoid reckless actions and to withstand the superego's pressure to adhere to moral values. This aligns with research by Ristiana, who states that a character in a short story desires to satisfy internal urges (id), thus requiring decisions or actions (ego) to alleviate their mental turmoil (Ristiana & Adeani, 2017). However, what transpires with the main character in "Suap" is an intense inner struggle concerning the ego's actions, evident in their hesitation to accept or reject the bribe. This inner conflict causes the character to feel pressured and confused, especially when their child unintentionally throws away the envelope containing the bribe money, further increasing the character's psychological tension.

c. Superego

The superego aspect in Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap" is evident in the character's moral stance and internal rejection of taking the bribe. This is reflected in the following excerpt.

(16) Saya langsung merasa tertantang dan terhina. Tetapi entah kenapa saya diam saja. Kilatan cek itu membuat darah saya beku.

Kutipan ini menunjukkan bahwa tokoh "saya" merasa terhina ketika tamu menunjukkan cek kosong sebagai simbol suap yang ditawarkan kepadanya. Perasaan ini menunjukkan bahwa ia menolak perbuatan korupsi karena bertentangan dengan nilai moral yang ada di masyarakat dan itu adalah perbuatan salah dan etika yang tercela.

(17) Suap adalah dorongan yang membuat kita terpaksa melakukan sesuatu yang bertentangan dengan hati nurani dan merugikan orang banyak.

Pada kutipan ini, tokoh utama mengingat dan bahwa suap merupakan hal yang bertentangan dengan hati nuraninya dan dapat merugikan banyak orang. Hal ini mendorong tindakannya untuk tetap berada di jalan yang benar dengan tidak menerima suap tersebut.

(18) Memang anak dan istri saya tidak usah ikut bertanggung jawab. Biar saya sendiri nanti yang masuk neraka, asal mereka tidak.

This excerpt shows that the character "I" feels insulted when the guest presents a blank check as a symbol of the bribe. This feeling indicates a rejection of corrupt acts because they contradict societal moral values and are considered wrong and ethically reprehensible.

With the impulses arising in the main character, the superego acts as the conscience, rejecting the act of bribery because it contradicts norms of honesty and ethics. The superego instills a sense of guilt and rejection towards such an act. Additionally, the main character feels insulted upon seeing the blank check symbolizing the bribe. This feeling indicates that the main character values the moral principles present in society. This aligns with research by Parhana, who found that a character's superego plays a role in judging whether something is good or bad, manifested through actions and expressions used to evaluate a problem (Parhana & Hidayatullah, 2023).

2. Relevance of Inner Conflict in Putu Wijaya's Short Story "Suap" as Teaching Material for Senior High School Literature Learning

Good literary works are beneficial, and one significant benefit is for education. Many literary works are used as teaching materials in Indonesian language lessons, particularly for short story texts in Grade 11. One of the learning objectives for this material is for students to be able to analyze the intrinsic elements of a short story accurately and thoroughly. Teachers

can select Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap" for analyzing intrinsic elements, aligning with the established learning objectives. Characters are a key intrinsic element, and their traits can be understood through the inner conflicts they experience. The analysis of characterization is relevant to this research, especially concerning the inner conflict found in "Suap" by Putu Wijaya. The conflicts and problems faced by the main character can be analyzed from a psychological perspective, specifically through the id, ego, and superego, making it suitable as teaching material for analyzing characterization in senior high school short story texts. This aligns with Lestari's research, which suggests that teachers should prepare materials related to the structural elements of a novel (Lestari & Sunanda, 2020). Through such approaches, students are expected to comprehend the intrinsic elements found in novels like Tere Liye's *Pulang*.

Beyond its utility for teaching intrinsic elements in short stories, the moral message and educational values embedded in this short story can be instilled in students, fostering the development of good character in the younger generation. Students can be taught to avoid corrupt practices and understand their consequences. Furthermore, by analyzing the inner conflict of the main character, students can grasp the psychological dynamics of a character while simultaneously developing critical thinking and empathy towards real social issues. This aligns with Juwariyah's research, which explains that utilizing stories as teaching materials to instill life values can guide students toward becoming virtuous individuals with good character (Juwariyah & Sumartini, 2019). Therefore, this short story is highly relevant as teaching material, serving as a means for character building and fostering an understanding of humanitarian values within the school environment.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings above, the internal conflict within Putu Wijaya's short story "Suap" involves the id, ego, and superego aspects. This conflict manifests as a struggle between the protagonist's desire to instantly escape the pressures of poverty by accepting a bribe (id), the moral and religious control rejecting corrupt acts (superego), and the choices (ego) the protagonist makes to balance these two, ultimately leading to confusion and indecisiveness. In the end, the ego's chosen action is driven by a strong id, rather than upholding the superego that was initially established. In terms of its relevance to Indonesian language education, this short story can also be analyzed for its intrinsic elements, particularly characterization. It conveys a strong moral message for shaping student character, teaching them to avoid corrupt actions and understand their consequences. Therefore, this short story is highly relevant and suitable as teaching material for literature learning in senior high school.

The results of this study can provide benefits to readers in terms of insight and knowledge in understanding literary works. In addition, this study can be a reference for selecting teaching materials for literary learning in the classroom through literary appreciation learning materials, especially in terms of understanding the psychology of characters. Then, suggestions can be formulated for several parties. For educators, it is hoped that they can choose teaching materials in literary learning that are relevant to life and as an instillation of moral values in students. For other researchers, it is hoped that they can conduct different and innovative studies on this short story and make comparisons with other works so that they can enrich literary studies in Indonesia. For literature lovers, this research is expected to be used as a means of connecting literary works with readers to deepen and interpret literary works.

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