

Jennie's Personality Portrayed in the Novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah

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Abstract:

This study aims to portray Jennie's personality in Sophie Hannah's *The Monogram Murders*. In this study, the researcher focused on Jennie's character to identify more about the character's personality in the story. This study uses a qualitative method, and the data from this study is based on quotations from the novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah. This study uses Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis Theory of Id, Ego, and Superego, to analyze Jennie's personality. This research shows that Jennie has a jealous, envious, and cowardly personality that causes her loved one to die. Jennie tries to escape from the past, but the guilt continues to haunt her, causing her to take the wrong action by planning a murder. The analysis of Jennie's personality using Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis theory reveals that inner conflict caused Jennie's actions. The researcher hopes this study can provide clear information about human personality from a psychoanalytic perspective in a literary work.

Keywords: Personality, mystery, psychological conflict, guilt.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memotret kepribadian Jennie dalam novel *The Monogram Murders* karya Sophie Hannah. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti berfokus pada karakter Jennie untuk mengidentifikasi lebih dalam mengenai kepribadian karakter dalam cerita tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan data-data dari penelitian ini diambil dari kutipan-kutipan yang ada dalam novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud, yaitu Id, Ego, dan Superego untuk menganalisa kepribadian Jennie. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Jennie memiliki kepribadian yang pencemburu, iri hati, dan pengecut yang menyebabkan orang yang dicintainya berujung pada kematian. Jennie yang mencoba untuk keluar dari masalahnya namun rasa bersalah terus menghantuinya hingga menyebabkan dirinya melakukan tindakan yang salah yaitu dengan merencanakan pembunuhan. Analisis kepribadian Jennie melalui teori Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud menggambarkan bahwa konflik batin memicu tindakan Jennie. Peneliti berharap penelitian ini dapat memberikan informasi yang jelas mengenai kepribadian manusia dari perspektif psikoanalisis dalam sebuah karya sastra.

Kata kunci: Kepribadian, misteri, konflik psikologis, rasa bersalah.



INTRODUCTION

Personality is an important psychological concept that can help readers understand characters in a literary work. It refers to distinctive patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that distinguish individuals. Personality can shape the way a person interacts with their surroundings and can also influence the way a person responds to situations and faces challenges. According to John et al. (2008), Personality can be understood as the persistent characteristics within individuals that influence how they respond to the internal and external environment. It can be interpreted that Personality is a general trait used by a person to adjust and respond to existing internal and external situations, thus making this behavior a characteristic of a person. The five main dimensions of personality, known as the Big Five Personality Traits according to McCrae and Costa (1997), including Openness (to experience), Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (emotional instability). Every human has these traits, which can shape personality and influence behavior in everyday life.

Personality is one of the important things in the world of literature to understand characters in psychological terms and how this affects the plot of the story. As explained in the book *Theory of Literature* by Wellek and Warren (1949) stated that “By psychology of literature, we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers” (p. 75). Psychology in this context means providing a theoretical framework to analyze, understand, and explain the creative process in a literary work and the psychological aspects of a literary work. Mystery novels tend to feature psychologically complex characters because the genre requires high emotion to create suspense. The mystery genre often features characters with multi-layered personalities whose actions and decisions will be the key to solve the plot.

The mystery novel entitled *The Monogram Murders* written by Sophie Hannah, features the famous detective Hercule Poirot, created by Agatha Christie. The book, published in 2014, the story begins with Poirot meeting a depressed young woman named Jennie, who warns him not to pursue the killer as the crimes must go unsolved. Soon after, Poirot learns of three murders at the Bloxham Hotel in London, a setting that plays a



significant role in the story. The victims were poisoned and left with patterned cufflinks in their mouths. A note with cryptic numbers is also found left on the reception desk, "MAY THEY NEVER REST IN PEACE. 121. 238. 317." The case is brought by Detective Edward Catchpool of Scotland Yard, who lives in the same boarding house as Hercule Poirot. The investigation becomes very tiring for Catchpool, especially considering that the fourth murder seems possible because of the pair of cufflinks. In analyzing this novel, the researcher aims to dig deeper into the personality of a character named Jennie. In the novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah, Jennie's personality is the center of attention in the storyline because Jennie seems trapped in her own world and affects other characters in the novel so that readers will be brought into the psychology of a character full of tension, and emotion. A psychoanalytic approach can be taken to help understand Jennie's character personality more deeply.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be used to analyze Jennie's personality. According to Freud (1923), human personality consists of the Id (Primitive urges), Ego (Balancing between desires and reality), and Superego (Internal control). Through Freud's theory, Jennie's personality can be seen as the result of an internal conflict between her desire to escape from the past (id), her efforts to survive in reality (Ego) and Jennie's guilt that comes from her past actions (Superego). All of these conflicts are manifested in Jennie's actions throughout the storyline of the novel.

Similar research on the same novel was previously conducted by Melikhov (2021) with the title "Recontextualization of the Detective: Transforming H. Poirot's Image in S. Hannah's Novel *"The Monogram Murders"*". In his article, the author uses the theory of contextualization, which discusses the transformation of the Poirot character in the novel. The author also discusses the characteristics of the detective at different times. In his research, the author found that Hercule Poirot was depicted more systematically by Sophie Hannah than in the original because of the supporting characters in the story. Another previous study that discussed the novel *The Monogram Murders* is Barbara (2015) entitled "In Agatha Christie's Shoes. A Comparative Study of Sophie Hannah's Monogram Murders and Agatha Christie's Works". This study analyzes the characters, plots, language, and styles of the two authors, Agatha Christie and Sophie Hannah. In his research, the author wanted to explore the similarities and differences in the writing styles



of the two authors, and the author found that Sophie Hannah succeeded in bringing the character of Hercule Poirot in the novel *The Monogram Murders* in accordance with Agatha Christie's writing style.

From the description above, this study aims to examine the character of Jennie in the novel *The Monogram Murders*. The researchers focus on Jennie's personality and how her personality can influence her life in the novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah. By analyzing Jennie's character, researchers can learn about human personality and the influence of personality on human life. This novel contains several aspects of the personality of the character, so researchers use Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic study Id, Ego, and Superego. Researchers hope this study can provide clear information about human personality from a psychoanalytic perspective in a literary work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a theory that discusses the development of human personality. Personality can develop due to influences such as psychological conflicts experienced by a person. Sigmund Freud first introduced psychoanalysis itself. *Psychoanalysis* is a science developed by Sigmund Freud. In a book entitled "An Introduction To Theories of Personality," Ewen (2003) explains Sigmund Freud's theory, which emphasizes that we are not even the masters of our own minds, but are driven by many powerful unconscious processes (wishes, fears, beliefs, conflicts, emotions, memories) of which we are totally unaware (P. 11). It can be interpreted that many things around their environment can influence humans. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sigmund Freud developed a theory of personality in humans, namely id, ego, and superego. Freud explained that the id, ego and superego are an inseparable unity (Ewen, 2003, p. 18). Here is an explanation :

Id

Id is a biological component in which Id is a component that has existed since birth and is the prominent grandson of humans. The Id is in the human subconscious and is entirely unconscious, and the Id is an essential personality system in humans, which has a role in developing the ego and superego (Ewen, 2003, p. 18-19) .

Ego

Ego is a psychological component where the Ego controls the Id in humans. The Ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the Id, which contains the passions (Freud, 1923, p. 25). Id and Ego have a reasonably close relationship. If the Id is unconscious, then the Ego is part of human consciousness. The Ego is realistic and functions to find solutions to meet the id's needs, but at this stage, the Ego is still trying to avoid negative things (Ewen, 2003, p. 19).

Super Ego

The Super Ego includes two components: the conscience punishes illicit thoughts and actions, and the Ego ideal rewards desirable behavior (Ewen, 2003, p. 25). Super Ego is part of the unconscious within humans. Super Ego is a social component that controls the Id and persuades the Ego to choose positive things. The Super Ego controls the human conscience to tend to choose things that are ideal or not deviant.

Freud (1921) has an understanding of someone who commits a crime. An imbalance in the relationship between the Id, Ego, and Super Ego makes people weaker and tends to engage in criminal behavior. Sigmund Freud found that the emergence of excessive feelings of guilt caused the existence of deviations. This happened to the human Super Ego. Someone with an excessive Super Ego will continue to feel excessive guilt, which causes him to feel like he wants to be punished because that continues to suppress him, and then someone finally commits a crime. Criminal acts are committed so that a person feels that he has been released from the guilt he has been feeling. Super Ego that is not fully developed results in a person not being able to control their Id, which, in the end, someone is unable to control their Ego (Margaretha, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method, with the object of the study being the novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah. This study aims to describe and explain psychology in terms of the personalities of the characters in the story. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argued that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3 chapter 1). To explore the meaning contained in the novel, this study was conducted by reading, formulating problems, and collecting data.

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis theory. The researcher uses various sources such as articles, books, and research journals as secondary sources, and the researcher also reads the novel *The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah as a primary data source. Qualitative methods allow researchers to observe and analyze data more deeply.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Monogram Murders novel tells the story of a detective, Hercule Poirot, who meets a mysterious woman named Jennie at Pleasant's Coffee House. The woman looks terrified and warns Poirot that she will soon be killed, Poirot who knows this cannot remain silent, he is confused and curious about what really happened to the woman. Not long after, his detective friend Edward Catchpool informed him that three guests at the Bloxham Hotel had died. Unusually monogrammed cufflinks were found in each victim's mouth. Knowing this, Poirot becomes increasingly suspicious that the deaths have something to do with the woman he met at Pleasant's Coffee House. In this case, Jennie plays an important role in this mystery story. The researcher analyzed Jennie's personality and found that Jennie has the following personality.

Jennie's Personality portrayed in the story

Emotion; Jealous

Jennie has a jealous personality, as depicted in some of her dialogues. A jealous emotion can be seen when she reacts to certain situations, like her relationship with another character, Patrick Ive. "Of course I knew about him and Nancy Ducane... I knew how much he loved her, and I couldn't bear it. I had long ago accepted that he belonged to Frances and not to me, but it was intolerable to discover that he had fallen in love with a woman who was not his wife and that that woman was not me" (Hannah, 2014, chapter 19). Patrick Ive is Frances Ive's husband, and Jennie loves Patrick. Even though she knows that Patrick already has a wife, she accepts the fact that Patrick belongs to Frances. However, after knowing that Patrick likes another woman, Nancy Ducane, Jennie feels jealous because she feels that she is abandoned. Jennie's jealousy is complex because she also realizes that this is the wrong thing to do. Patrick already has a wife, and she should not like a married man, but her desire to get Patrick's attention because she cannot let go of his love just like that makes her jealous of Patrick and Nancy's relationship.

Emotion; Envious

Jennie shows her envious personality fuelled by unrequited love. Jennie feels jealous of Nancy and Patrick's relationship after knowing that Patrick prefers Nancy over her. Jennie's envy prompted her to spread cruel lies about Patrick to the people of Great Holling. "She was in love with Patrick, you see. Oh, I can't prove it, but I shall always believe it. She did what she did to him as someone who loved him: told an unforgivable lie because she was jealous. He was in love with me, and she wanted to wound him. To punish him." (Hannah, 2014, chapter 16). In the quotation, Nancy explains that Jennie is jealous and envious of her because Patrick chooses to love Nancy rather than Jennie. It caused jealousy, and Jennie felt she was not appreciated, so she spread a cruel lie against Patrick. Jennie's actions were done to damage the relationship between Patrick and Nancy because she felt hurt by the reality she faced. The feeling of envy shapes Jennie's negative behavior by trying to punish Patrick for not choosing her.

Fears; cowardly

Jennie has a cowardly personality can be seen from how she is afraid to reveal the truth behind the lies she has been spreading against Patrick because she only thinks about what other people will think of her. "The shameful truth is that I am a dreadful coward. People like Richard Negus and Ida Gransbury they don't mind what other people think of them if they believe that right is on their side, but I do mind. I have always cared about making a good impression. If I had confessed to my lie, I would have been hated by everybody in the village, and rightly so. I'm not a strong person, Monsieur Poirot. I did nothing, said nothing, because I was scared." (Hannah, 2014, chapter 19). She was afraid of being judged and hated by the people in Great Holling and chose to hide the truth to protect her image in society. Jennie has a cowardly personality because she does not want to admit her mistakes even though she knows she has caused a massive mess from her actions. Fear makes her act dishonestly, she more afraid that her image is terrible than having to correct the mistakes she has made.

Jennie's Personality influences her decisions and actions in the storyline

Jennie's jealous, envious, and cowardly personality can influence her actions throughout the story. These personalities influence how Jennie interacts with people around her, and she makes decisions that cause conflict throughout the storyline. Jennie shows that she is jealous of Nancy. Her jealousy causes her emotional harm and drives



her to take destructive actions. Her jealousy leads her to take action by spreading bad rumors and slander about Patrick, which defames him to the villagers.

Jennie's jealousy of Nancy's love for Patrick makes her want revenge; her jealousy makes her want to destroy Patrick's reputation. Patrick is a priest in the Village of Great Holling, and Jennie is the servant of the Ive couple. "The servant told Harriet Sippel that Patrick Ive was a swindler of the most cruel and sacrilegious kind: he was, she claimed, luring villagers to the vicarage late at night whenever his wife Frances was elsewhere helping parishioners, as she often was, and taking their money in exchange for passing on communications from their deceased loved ones—messages from the afterlife that these departed souls had entrusted to him, Patrick Ive, to deliver." (Hannah, 2014, chapter 12). Jennie spreads a rumor to Harriet, a villager in Great Holling, that Patrick is practicing a psychic trick, and then the rumor becomes more and more widespread among the villagers; she wants revenge on Patrick because she cannot have Patrick she slanders Patrick, and this rumor of course significantly damages the reputation of Patrick as a priest. Jennie just wanted to punish Patrick for not voting for her and preferring Nancy, another rumor was also added from Harriet about Nancy and Patrick to make it more dramatic. "Nancy had been seen several times entering and leaving the vicarage at night or in the evening, always when it was dark, always looking furtive, and only on nights when Frances Ive wasn't at home" (Hannah, 2014, chapter 12). Jennie used information about Patrick and Nancy's relationship to reinforce the rumors and her desire for revenge by creating the impression that Nancy and Patrick might be involved in a relationship. Jennie spread all those false rumors to make them feel ashamed and no longer together because she could not have Patrick either.

Jennie also admitted she was a coward for spreading lies about Patrick and leaving the Ive family destroyed. Patrick and Frances Ive committed suicide. "Frances Ive, unable to bear the ignominy any longer, swallowed poison and put an end to her unhappy life. Her husband found her ... Patrick Ive knew, also, that he could not live with the guilt and the pain, and so he too took his own life." (Hannah, 2014, chapter 12). She had destroyed the life of the man she loved, and she had also destroyed his life. She did not want it to end that way either. Jennie never imagined that her words would be so catastrophic. Her jealousy had led her to something horrible and vile, and Patrick's death had left her devastated. Nevertheless, she was still reluctant to admit it was all her fault. Even though

she could speak the truth and stop all the slander, she did not want to do so. She remained silent because she did not want to be judged by the community, and the situation became more complicated.

Jennie's Personality from the perspective of Freud's Id, Ego, and Superego

Id

The Id represents Jennie's instincts and unconscious desires and is primarily driven by her emotions and needs, namely her love for Patrick and her jealousy of Nancy. Jennie, who loves Patrick so much, her Id tries to fulfill this desire. She does not care about social morality and only wants the satisfaction of getting affection from Patrick. Knowing that Patrick likes Nancy makes Jennie feel jealous so that it triggers negative actions by spreading false rumors to meet her emotional needs.

Ego

The ego is the mediating part between Jennie's desires and reality. Jennie knows that spreading false rumors will damage her reputation, and the ego appears to rationalize this by assuming that it is her way of punishing Patrick and that she will eventually get back what she wants. Jennie, realizing that the consequences of her actions will be ostracised by the villagers, uses a defense mechanism by avoiding and not admitting to the lies she has made because she is afraid of being judged by the people of Great Holling.

Superego

The superego manifests from Jennie's feelings of guilt and shame from her actions. Deep down, Jennie feels very guilty about her actions and believes she deserves to be punished for her behavior. This can be seen when she tells Poirot that she deserves to suffer for the wrongs she has done. "I am a coward. I was afraid to die. Desolate as I was without Patrick, I had grown comfortable in my unhappiness, and I didn't want my life to end" (Hannah, 2014, chapter 20). She felt ashamed of everything she had done and realized the consequences of her actions. However, her cowardice showed a lack of strength in Jennie's Superego as she could not face the reality of her guilt directly and chose to seek redemption in other ways to get rid of her guilt.

CONCLUSION(S)

Based on the analysis above, the researcher concludes that Jennie's jealousy, envy and cowardice cause her to get in trouble with every action she takes in the story. Jennie

is jealous of Patrick for preferring to choose Nancy rather than her, causing her to take action by spreading rumors about Patrick that cause her lover to end his life. Jennie realizes that her actions are a mistake and chooses to admit her mistakes in the wrong way by planning a murder. Jennie eventually realizes it is also a bad plan and decides to live in deep regret for all her actions. Jennie's personality can be explained using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory that Jennie's Id describes her drive to escape her past and pursue her desires, her Ego is Jennie trying to balance the reality she faces while her SuperEgo is a deep sense of guilt from all her actions but she fails to control it because Jennie is a coward. It can be concluded that Jennie's personality can be explained using Sigmund Freud's psychological structure of id, ego, and superego. Psychoanalytic theory can be used to determine a person's personality, as in the novel *The Monogram Murders*.

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