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Exploring the Depths of the Psyche: The Id, Ego, and Superego in Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl

Charoline Rose Berliana

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Diponegoro

Email address: charolinerose9@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: In the context of psychoanalytic theory, the structure of human personality consists of three main parts: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. The Id is the unconscious part driven by instincts and basic needs, the Ego tries to satisfy the basic needs of the Id realistically and according to the norms instilled by the Superego, and the Superego which is the socially accepted moral aspect. The purpose of this study is to explain and describe the forms of Id, Ego, and Superego in the narrator and main character in the novel *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli. The method used in this study is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The theory used is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory with a Literary Psychology approach. The result of this study is that Id is more dominant in Stargirl, Ego and Superego is more dominant in Leo. The discussion of this research is that Stargirl's Id is described as something that is difficult to understand and difficult to hold. Leo's ego is described as reflecting an attempt to find a balance between individual desires and the demands of social normal, Leo's superego wants to show society the true name Stargirl. In conclusion, Stargirl novels depict the complex dynamics between id, ego, and superego in shaping characters and influencing their actions.

Keywords: *Psyche, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Id, Ego, Superego*

Psychology is one of the most relevant parts of literary knowledge (Boyd, 2014). Psychology plays an important role in analyzing a work by looking at it from a mental perspective, whether from the point of view of the author, the characters, or the work itself. It plays an important role in analyzing a literary work from the psychological point of view of the literary work from the perspectives of the author, the characters, and the reader, especially to analyze the inner conflict contained in the literary work. Psychology meets literature, resulting in the psychology of literature. This is the greatness of literature that can achieve things that other fields may not be able to achieve. Literary psychology focuses on psychological elements, including psychic turmoil. Psychological studies can be used to explore and uncover all mental and inner aspects in literary works. Literary psychology has the ability to accommodate the

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author's inner world. Therefore, literary psychology can be applied to study poems, rhymes, short stories, novels, monologues, dialogues, performing arts, and others as a way to sharpen the reality of humanity through various approaches to understanding the dynamics of life subjectively.

In psychoanalysis, authors can be categorized according to their type of psychology and physiology. Psychoanalysis can also explain mental disorders or even a person's subconscious. If a literary work is considered psychological evidence, psychologists must match it with documents outside of the literary work. Psychology has the ability to explain the creative process, and psychology can be used as a tool to assess literary works. One example is an author's tendency to review and rewrite his or her writing. Psychoanalysis offers greater benefits as it involves research into manuscript improvements, corrections, and more. It is useful because if used correctly, it can help us see the cracks, irregularities, changes, and distortions that are so important in a literary work. Psychological analysis of the characters in short stories can be done by using psychoanalysis in literary works. Sometimes, writers may incorporate the psychological theories they espouse unintentionally or consciously. Psychoanalysis can also analyze the author's psyche through their writing.

Psychoanalysis as a theory of personality is divided into several parts: personality dynamics, personality development, and personality structure consisting of the id, ego, and superego. The id is the aspect of personality allied with instinct, as a source of physical energy and functions according to the pleasure principle. The ego is the rational aspect of the personality, responsible for directing and controlling the instincts according to the reality principle. Meanwhile, the superego is the moral aspect of the personality that internalizes the values and standards instilled by parents and society (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). This psychoanalytic study only looks at the personality structure of each character. A person in

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justifying actions to others internally or externally will do anything to feel good about himself and believe that it is right; by showing a certain way to others, then instinctively the self-defense is to protect himself.

Stargirl is a novel written by Jerry Spinelli that tells the story of a unique and unconventional girl named Stargirl Caraway. The story is narrated by Leo Borlock, a high school student who becomes fascinated by Stargirl when she enrolls in Mica Area High School. Stargirl stands out from the crowd with her individuality, kindness, and free-spirited nature. She wears colorful and mismatched clothes, plays the ukulele, and performs random acts of kindness. Initially, her presence brings joy and curiosity to the school, and she quickly becomes popular among her peers. However, as time goes on, Stargirl's nonconformity begins to clash with the expectations and social norms of the students at Mica High. They start to reject her, fearing that her uniqueness threatens their own sense of identity and conformity. Stargirl's popularity declines, and she becomes an outcast. Leo, who has developed feelings for Stargirl, struggles with his own desire to fit in and be accepted by his peers. He grapples with the conflict between his love for Stargirl and the pressure to conform to societal expectations. Eventually, he chooses to distance himself from Stargirl in order to regain his popularity. As the story unfolds, Leo realizes the impact of his decision and the importance of embracing individuality and kindness. He learns that true happiness comes from accepting oneself and others for who they truly are, rather than conforming to societal expectations. In the end, Stargirl leaves Mica High, but her influence remains. She leaves a lasting impression on Leo and the other students, inspiring them to embrace their own uniqueness and to appreciate the beauty of individuality. *Stargirl* is a heartwarming and thought-provoking novel that explores themes of conformity, individuality, acceptance, and the power of kindness. It encourages readers to celebrate their own uniqueness and to be accepting of others, even in a world that often values conformity

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(Spinelli, 2000).

The researcher, in discussing the object of study—id, ego, and superego—did not find any existing studies that specifically examine the same concepts in Jerry Spinelli's *Stargirl*. However, the author identified several discussions that explore similar topics of the id, ego, and superego in different novels and by different authors. First, the researchers found a relevant article written by Sanobar Hussani, who applied Freud's tripartite model of id, ego, and superego to analyze the internal psychological dynamics that contribute to moral decision-making. These dynamics include the contrast between self-interest and concern for others, selfishness and moral values, and moral self-righteousness and social conformity. Although in a different novel and context, Hussani's study was used to understand the three central characters—Sandip, Bimla, and Nikhil (Hussani, 2019.).

Second, the researcher found a study by Winda Evyanto, who analyzed the aspects of id, ego, and superego in the character Amy from the novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. Using Sigmund Freud's theory and a psychological approach, the study revealed that Amy's personality is dominated by the id, as seen through her actions such as murdering without guilt to achieve her goals. The study also highlighted her satisfaction in deceiving the media and manipulating others, which shows the destructive potential when the id dominates one's personality (Evyanto, 2020).

Third, the researchers also found a study by Sari, Suwandi, dan Wardani, who explored the representation of id, ego, and superego in the novel *Mata di Tanah Melus* by Okky Madasari. Wardani's study used Sigmund Freud's theory of personality to identify how the main character embodies these three personality components. The forms of id, ego, and superego are reflected through the character's behavior, which helped the researcher reveal the character's complex psychological dimensions (Sari, Suwandi, & Wardani, 2018).

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From these three discussions, it can be concluded that although the novels and characters differ, each study shares a common research focus: the exploration of id, ego, and superego using literary psychology and psychoanalytic theory as proposed by Sigmund Freud. These findings support the relevance and applicability of psychoanalysis in examining literary characters, and this study attempts to fill the gap by applying this theory to *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli, a novel that has not yet been widely analyzed from this perspective.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research reveals psychoanalytic phenomena in short stories, the author uses a literary psychology approach. The literary psychology approach is defined as the psychological study of authors, aspects of literary works, or readers (Wellek & Warren, 1963). The author uses the theory of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud by using library research as a method of collecting data related to psychological phenomena in the novel "Stargirl" by Jerry Spinelli. Library research is a method to solve research questions by considering some real thoughts from experts through several sources (George, 2008). Related to library research in writing this research article, the author refers to two kinds of data: primary and secondary data. Primary data are original works that provide new information (George, 2008). The primary data comes from the novel "Stargirl" by Jerry Spinelli. On the other hand, secondary data are works or studies collected from different researchers found as text-based sources such as books, journals, web, etc (George, 2008).

FINDINGS

The results of research and discussion can be found the Id, Ego and Superego

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experienced by Leo as the narrator and Stargirl as the main character in the story. That way the author will discuss related to psychoanalysis of the Id, which is the unconscious part driven by instincts and needs of the dasar that seeks to meet immediate needs without regard to social norms or consequences, the Ego tries to meet the basic needs of the Id secara realistis dan sesuai dengan norma-norma yang ditanamkan oleh Superego, and the superego, which is the socially accepted moral aspect.

Id

Id in Stargirl

In the novel "Stargirl" by Jerry Spinelli, the character Stargirl Caraway can be interpreted as the embodiment or representation of the Id aspect of personality. Stargirl is not influenced by social norms or other people's expectations. He followed his instincts sincerely and spontaneously, regardless of how others judged him.

Quotes that can reflect the Id aspect in Stargirl characters:

> *"She was elusive. She was today. She was tomorrow. She was the faintest scent of a cactus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl. We did not know what to make of her. In our minds, we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merely went through and away she flew."*

In this quote, Stargirl is described as something elusive and difficult to hold. It's like the light smell of a cactus flower or the quick shadow of an elf. The attempt to "put her on a kork board like a butterfly" reflects the inability of those around her to truly understand and control Stargirl.

Ego

Ego in Leo

In Jerry Spinelli's novel "Stargirl," Leo Borlock's character may reflect aspects of the

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Ego in the story. This can be shown in the fact that it reflects the Ego aspect in Leo:

> *"She was bendable light: she shone around every corner of my day. She taught me to revel. She taught me to wonder. She taught me to laugh. My sense of humor had always measured up to everyone else's; but timid introvert Leo Borlock never tried his hand at stand-up."*

In this quote, Leo describes Stargirl's positive influence on him. Stargirl taught him to have fun, discover the magic in life, and even change the way he deals with humor. Leo, as the narrator and central character, reflects the Ego's efforts to find a balance between individual desires and the demands of social norms.

Superego

Superego in Leo and Stargirl

In Jerry Spinelli's novel "Stargirl," Leo Borlock can be interpreted as the embodiment of the Superego aspect as he tries to turn Stargirl into "Susan" to be more accepted by the school community. These actions reflect an urge to conform to social norms and overcome uniqueness that others find strange.

A quote reflecting Leo's efforts to transform Stargirl and adapt her to social expectations is as follows:

> *"Whenever I could, I said her name out loud, like blowing bubbles. The rest of the time I said it to myself. Susan... Susan... "*

In this quote, Leo tries to change Stargirl's name to "Susan" in an attempt to make her more acceptable to others. However, Stargirl shows her desire to be "somebody" according to social expectations. Leo's reaction to trying to convince him that he is already "somebody"

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highlights the conflict between the desire for conformity and self-acceptance.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In Jerry Spinelli's novel Stargirl, the psychoanalytic concepts of id, ego, and superego play an important role in shaping the main characters and depicting complex emotional journeys. Through this in-depth depiction of psychological dynamics, Spinelli invites the reader to reflect on inner conflict, self-acceptance, and the importance of accepting and appreciating each individual's uniqueness.

The id, which represents unconscious instincts and desires, is seen in the character Stargirl. Stargirl is the embodiment of freedom and spontaneity, acting on her own instincts without regard for the consequences or judgments of others. She wore different clothes, played the ukulele, and performed unexpected acts of kindness. Stargirl's freedom and uniqueness attract the attention of many, but it also inflicts discomfort and fear on those bound by social norms.

The ego, as a mediator between the id and reality, is seen in the course of the Leo character. Leo, who becomes the story's narrator, struggles with the internal conflict between the desire to be accepted by others and the attraction to the unique Stargirl. She feels social pressure that drives her to follow norms and become popular, but also feels a strong pull towards Stargirl's freedom and uniqueness. Leo tries to find a balance between his own identity and existing social expectations.

The superego, which represents morality and social norms, is seen in the conflict between Stargirl's desire to help others and the need to be accepted by society. Stargirl has a kind heart and deep empathy, yet she faces rejection and isolation due to incongruence with existing social norms. He has to face a conflict between the desire to maintain his own integrity

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and the need for social acceptance.

Through the journey of these characters, Spinelli teaches readers about the importance of accepting the uniqueness of oneself and others. The novel illustrates the complexities of human psychology and invites us to reflect on the inner conflicts we may face in an attempt to find our identity and place in the world. Stargirl teaches us about the power and beauty of being ourselves, even if it means breaking existing social norms.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, Stargirl novels depict the complex dynamics between id, ego, and superego in shaping characters and influencing their actions. The conflict between unconscious desires, the need for social acceptance, and moral considerations becomes a major theme in this novel. Through the journey of its characters, the novel teaches the importance of accepting the uniqueness of oneself and others, and finding a balance between personal desires and social expectations.

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