

## THE TRIPARTITE ROLE OF THE PSYCHE IN RON WILLIAMSON'S CHARACTER IN JOHN GRISHAM'S THE INNOCENT MAN: MURDER AND INJUSTICE IN A SMALL TOWN NOVEL

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**Abstract:** Psychoanalysis is the study to analyze the human's behavior and personality. It is one of the scientific disciplines developed by Sigmund Freud. It appears to scrutinize deeper of human personality. The tripartite psyche refers to id, ego, and superego. It exists to construct human's personality based from the experiences. The role of id, ego, and superego are to maintain or balance human's behavior. This thesis discusses about the tripartite role of the psyche in the main character in John Grisham's *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* novel named Ron Williamson. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate Ron Williamson's tripartite psyche portrayed in the novel. The researcher used qualitative research methodology and psychoanalysis approach. The results of this thesis Ron Williamson, as the main character is a unique character. The Id of Ron Williamson depicted in the novel are immoral, uncontrollable, unethical, troublemaker, selfish, drunk, childish, excessive, erratic, unpredictable, hallucination, disoriented, mood swings, uncertain, delusional, and confused. In the other hand, the ego of Ron Williamson are worried, regret, reduce the selfishness, responsible, mindful, slowly unconfused, reduced the troublemaker, honest, patience, and rational thinking. The last is superego of Ron Williamson are polite, good attitudes, servant of God, sympathetic, stable behavior, intelligent, more sensible thinking, more responsive to his surroundings, devout Christian, quit from troublemaker, break out from selfishness, and forgiving. Furthermore, the findings show that those depictions are from conflicts to other minor character, self-conflict, direct description from the author, dialogues, and events in each chapter.

**Key words:** Psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, Tripartite Psyche

**Abstrak:** Psikoanalisis adalah ilmu yang menganalisis perilaku dan kepribadian manusia. Ilmu ini merupakan salah satu ilmu ilmiah yang dikembangkan oleh Sigmund Freud. Ilmu ilmiah ini muncul untuk meneliti lebih dalam tentang kepribadian manusia. Tiga bagian pikiran manusia mengacu pada id, ego, dan superego. Tiga bagian di dalam pikiran manusia ini ada untuk membangun kepribadian manusia berdasarkan pengalaman. Peran dari id, ego, dan superego adalah untuk menjaga atau menyeimbangkan perilaku manusia. Skripsi ini membahas tentang peran tiga bagian pikiran pada karakter utama yang bernama Ron Williamson dalam novel John Grisham *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town*. Tujuan dari skripsi ini adalah untuk menyelidiki tiga bagian pikiran Ron Williamson yang tergambar di dalam novel tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif

dan pendekatan psikoanalisis. Hasil dari skripsi ini adalah Ron Williamson, sebagai tokoh utama adalah tokoh yang unik. Ia pada dirinya yang digambarkan dalam novel tersebut adalah tidak bermoral, tidak terkendali, tidak etis, pembuat onar, egois, mabuk, kekanak-kanakan, kurang ajar, berlebihan, tidak menentu, tidak terduga, halusinasi, disorientasi, perubahan suasana hati, tidak pasti, delusi, dan bingung. Di sisi lain, ego dari Ron Williamson adalah khawatir, menyesal, mengurangi keegoisan, bertanggung jawab, perlahan mengurangi kebingungan, mengurangi perbuatan onar, jujur, sabar, dan berpikir rasional. Yang terakhir adalah superego dari Ron Williamson yaitu sopan santun, sikap yang baik, hamba Tuhan, simpatik, perilaku stabil, cerdas, berpikir lebih masuk akal, lebih responsif terhadap sekitarnya, Kristen yang taat, berhenti dari pembuat onar, keluar dari sifat keegoisan, dan pemaaf. Selain itu, penemuan data tersebut ditunjukkan melalui penggambaran dari konflik terhadap karakter minor lainnya, konflik terhadap diri sendiri, deskripsi langsung dari penulis, dialog, dan peristiwa-peristiwa di setiap bab.

**Kata Kunci:** Psikoanalisis, Sigmund Freud, Tripartite Psyche

## A. INTRODUCTION

Literature reflects the human's real-life experience. The object of literary work is illustrated in real life. Hudson stated that "literature is the main record of what people have seen, experienced, and felt also thought in life about those aspects of it which have lasting interest for all of us" (11). It means that the existence of literature is not only to entertain and means nothing. It reflects the reality of literary work itself based on true events. The literature also portrayed occurrences that happened in the past such as how humans relate to others. This relation is related to human mind and behavior which will always be influenced by the personality.

There are sufficient themes in literary works. One of the most important is the human personality. Every human has a different personality. Furthermore, the author made literary work through the phenomenon of society, for example, in terms of psychological psyche. They can be a good or bad person based on social life. Humans can do violence when they get a rejection from society and feel desperate. These problems have a relation to human's behavior in their lives. One of the areas in the study of psychological psyche in literature is psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis is the study to analyze the human's behavior and personality. It is one of the scientific disciplines developed by Sigmund Freud. In other words, psychoanalysis appears to examine deeper about human personality and shows that every human has different personalities. It studies from many points of view, such as the way of thinking, how they communicate with each other, and how they solve the problems.

Psychoanalysis refers to the tripartite psyche which has its own role in human psyche. According to Freud, quoted by Dobie stated that "the human psyche separated into three parts which are id, superego, and ego. The id, which is the source of libido, the source of our psychic energy and our psychosexual desires, gives us our vitality" (57). In other words, the id is the system that originated in our personality. The id was only full of human desires and hunger for pleasure without any logic, morals, and ethics.

Meanwhile, the ego refers to the reality principle. It takes decisions to consider fulfilling expectations. Dobie stated that "the ego purposes to make the id's energies nondestructive by postponing them or distracting them into socially suitable actions" (57). Moreover, the ego itself is existed to control the human desires and pleasures based on the reality that happened in society to adjust or proper human's action to make human got accepted for every situation.

The last is the superego to control human desire and hunger for pleasure. Dobie said that "the superego controls the morality principle to provide the sense of moral and ethical wrongdoing" (57-58). Furthermore, the superego always made some demands with moral values for every human actions, even if is not situated with the reality or desires, because the superego did not concern about it and only focus to always do some good things or manners for every actions in the society.

The researcher believes this novel contains the psychological aspect of the main character. Therefore, the researcher intends to use psychoanalysis to the main character, mainly on Ron Williamson through his personality relates to tripartite psyche to make the researcher more understand about the novel or the main character himself how he must struggle alone in this world as described by John Grisham in *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* novel. In order to support the research, the researcher used a previous research with same approach or considered as reliable reference to do the research. The previous research is a thesis which used the same approach but different object with this research, the research entitled "An Analysis of Charlie's Personality Found in Daniel Keyes Novel *Flower for Algernon*" by Amelia Septya Rini.

In this case, there was only one similarity between Rini's thesis and this thesis which is only similarity in approach. It has difference in the object of the data. If Rini conducted the research to find out the changes of personality through id, ego, and superego on the main character named Charlie Gordon in *Flower for Algernon* novel, on the other hand, this thesis also has same focus which is discussed about the personality of the main character in different novel.

The purpose of this research is to find out Ron Williamson's tripartite psyche portrayed in the novel. Furthermore, the advantage of this research is to give deep and clear explanations about the character, specifically the personality through id, ego, and superego. The findings of this research are expected to inspire other researchers in the future research of literature and provide depth resource for the same analysis about character's personality.

## **B. METHOD**

### **a. Research Design**

One of the types of research methodologies that are already known is the qualitative research methodology. Martens explained that "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and they turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self" (225). It means that qualitative research is based on the phenomenon of the world that happens. Based on this statement, this research uses qualitative research methodology.

The research focused on analyzing the personality which is the tripartite psyche id, ego, and superego of the main character in the novel. Moreover, the research would be analyzed using Sigmund Freud's theory as the founder of the tripartite psyche to provide a detailed explanation.

#### **b. Data and Data Source**

The data source for this research is *The Innocent Man: A Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* novel written by John Grisham which was published in 2006 consists of seventeen chapters.

In this research, there are two categories of data, which are primary and secondary. The primary data of this research are phrases, words, sentences, and paragraphs that are related to psychological aspects, specifically the tripartite psyche which are id, ego, and superego by Sigmund Freud's theory. On the other hand, the secondary data of the research are from journals, books, articles, websites, and other sources related to this research.

#### **c. Data Collection**

The researcher uses direct observation as the data collection technique in two steps which are reading comprehensively the novel and highlighting then writing all of the important data.

Reading comprehensively means that the researcher reads the novel as a whole and conscientious in order to understand deeper about the main character's personality and behavior through the tripartite psyche which are id, ego, and superego. In this case, to gain these points, the researcher reads repeatedly. The purpose of this stage is to get deeper meaning and some issues related to the psychological aspects in the novel itself which might be unseen or missed by ordinary readers.

The next step is highlighting then writing all of the important data. It means that the researcher writes some important data in a notebook or paper's points related to the psychological aspects, specifically the tripartite psyche through the main character named Ron Williamson. Further, the researcher writes the chapter, page, and first sentence to get easier to do the next step which is data analysis.

#### **d. Data Analysis**

The researcher makes some important points related to the character such as the personality or behavior depicted in the novel. The researcher writes in the descriptive text to make it easier to identify the character's personality. There are a few steps that the researcher uses to analyze psychological issues in literary works.

The first step is the researcher investigates the character's irrational behavior which relates to the tripartite psyche. Further, the researcher reads carefully to obtain the personality of the character by seeing how the character deals with problems through the dialogues, acts, and attitudes. Through reading these points, the researcher can analyze the character's attitude and behavior.

The second step is making notes about how the narrator or author reveals the character which relates to id, ego, and superego. The researcher investigates the

personality specifically id, ego, and superego through the dialogues towards other characters or to himself. There are some points that the researcher may found while finding how the author reveals the personality and behavior of Ron Williamson such as he had some issues with the desires that he could not control and for the result, it affected on the reality and morality principle because it did not depend on those. Further, this kind of pattern can be written by the researcher as important points.

The last step is searching directly some evidences of the tripartite psyche. The researcher reads comprehensively to get evidence that show the character's id which is related to unconsciousness and desires without thinking straight towards the action the character's done. The ego exists to control the id based on the reality principle then the superego makes it related to morality principle in society. The evidence can be found in dialogues, acts, and attitudes towards the problem the character encounters in the novel. In this case, Ron Williamson as the main character has this tripartite psyche but unusually because he could not determine whether he deals with the problems in imagination or reality. The researcher makes and writes some relations or points about personality specifically the id, ego, and superego in a notebook to make patterns towards the personality and behavior of Ron Williamson.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Sigmund Freud's Tripartite Psyche in Ron Williamson's Character

The characters in every novel have different personalities based on the author's idea. In this case, Ron Williamson as the main character has unusual personality. Ron Williamson would cry and become sad without any logical reason, then in the next few minutes, he will be happy and smile. This condition is not always suitable in every situation. The personality of Ron Williamson is unstable and cannot be predicted.

As the result, the researcher investigates the personality of Ron Williamson's id, ego, and superego developed by Sigmund Freud because it is suitable for the problems of main character encounter in the novel. The first discussion is about Ron Williamson's desires and pleasures that are implied in the story through the dialogues, conflicts, and self-conflict which affect his personality.

#### a. The Id of Ron Williamson

The representation of Ron Williamson's Id when he was in a local bar and meet many people in Ada town and they witnessed directly that Ron Williamson is a person that always enjoying liquor and bad attitude in the following quotation below:

“Many of those present actually knew **Ron Williamson, a somewhat notorious carouser with a loud mouth.**” (Grisham, 15)

The quotation above explained that Ron Williamson was already infamous for his behavior which a drunken man. He did not care about people around him, even when police came to the bar to ask people in there about a murderer case that happened in Ada town. Ron Williamson only drank his liquid, because his Id made demand to fulfill his desire which was a troublemaker in public places without thinking anyone, ethics, moral, appropriate places, and any problems around him. He was a man with loud mouth who always talk uncertain things and most people knew him well-enough.



Another evidence of Ron Williamson's Id when he was child. His condition was unstable. As the result, this unusual personality affects to his family and his Id made a demand to seek pleasure without consider the impacts for his sisters and mother. Ron Williamson could be sweet and kind person, but in the next few minutes, became selfish and bad without any specific reasons. This case could be seen as the quotation down below:

**“He was also very confusing. He could be sweet and sensitive, unafraid to show his affection to his mother and sisters, and, a moment later, bratty and selfish, making demands of the entire family. His mood swings were noticed early in life but were the cause of no particular alarm.”** (Grisham, 27)

The Id tried to command him to became more sensitive and sweet. Then, in the next minutes, his Id would have made another demand him to became selfish and insolent. This situation was happened without any clear reasons and made his family became so confuse to understand him, because the Id of Ron Williamson always changes and also could not be predicted.

Further, Ron Williamson was one of the victim as being accused for became a murderer that he clearly did not do. He was an innocent man who only wanted to live peacefully without any kind of troubles come to his life. He never hurt anyone and did not want to kill anybody, because he and his family was well-known as the loyal servant of God. His historical background was far from bad reputation. When he was in stressed condition, he would seek baseball court in the backyard of the jail to keep his soul calm.

**“I was feeling down** the other night and needed some time to think things out. **I've always felt peaceful on a ball field.** I strolled out to the battlefield's southeast corner and kind of like and old blue-tick hound I curled up under the shade tree.” (Grisham, 91)

In this section, Ron Williamson was feeling so depressed after what he had been through for several days. He decided to visit the baseball field to make him think clearly. His biggest desire was only wanted to be a professional baseball player and break free from all the accusation towards him. He would never find peace if he still stayed in prison.

#### **b. The Ego of Ron Williamson**

Ron Williamson's ego portrayed in the novel when his mother lying in the hospital for her sickness and get worse every minutes. He was so worried. He could not visit her because he was in jail. The court and police did not let him to visit her as due to his crime to other people because he was accused as a murderer in that town.

**“Sitting in jail, killing days and weeks, Ron worried about his mother.** By August, she was lying in the hospital, and he was not allowed to see her.” (Grisham, 128)

He was sitting in jail, serving his punishment. The ego acted as an executor to his id's demand, that he must following the rules of the court given to him and could not argue to his condition. He did not allow to leave his prison in near time, even his

mother was dying. As the result, Ron Williamson only waiting and sitting in his cell without seeing his beloved mother in hospital.

Another data of Ron Williamson's ego was when Annette's husband asked the police and court to let him visit his mother for last time because she was dying and wanted to see her only son. The police agreed to his demand, then Ron Williamson could free from his prison but with not much time. He was guarded by two policemen on each side. He entered the room when his mother lying and they seeing each other for the first time since he was in prison.

**"Ron told his mother how much he loved her, how sorry he was for the mess he'd made of his life, sorry for all the disappointments. He cried and begged her to forgive him, and of course she did."** (Grisham, 129)

Ron Williamson felt so misery in that time. He only could tell her how much he loved her mother. He never wanted this bad life, neither his family. Ron Williamson asked forgiveness for the mess he made in the past years which affect the surroundings, such as family and society. His mother would always forgive him no matter what he had done, because as a mother, she would always love him and care so much without thinking the crime he made.

After several weeks, there will be another discussion for Ron Williamson's murder case and the day was here now. Judge Miller was concerned about Ron's absence. He decided to call him again to attend at the court. Ron Williamson was actually not agreed, but the police ensure him that, there would not be accused and whispers from the people of Ada town in the courtroom. Ron Williamson sat on the suspect's chair in front of Judge Miller. The Judge said that Ron expressed his desire not to be present during the preliminary hearing. Ron agreed with that statements and he said, he never wanted to be at the courtroom anymore.

**"I don't want to be here.** Whatever you all do I can't help it. **I'm tired of being crazy about this. It's suffered me so much;** I just don't want to be here.

Judge Miller replied "okay, and that's your decision. **You do not wish to be present?** Ron Williamson replied **"of course."** (Grisham, 191-192)

Ron Williamson was in great depression and suffered enough with the situation he encountered. His biggest ego acted as the man who did not murdered anyone. Ron Williamson's biggest ego was asked not to be in the courtroom, because he knew whatever he said to the Judge, the result would never good to him and decided to walkout from the courtroom again back to his cell.

### c. **The Superego of Ron Williamson**

The behavior of Ron Williamson was in great condition since he was moved to other prison. When he was still in Ada's prison, he did not have any friends to share with. The prison in Ada was cave-like prison, even for a person stay behind the bar, would not have enough space to stand up. Ron did not have any good cellmate for many years he spent in Ada's prison. His attitude was worst back then, but right now, he could change it slowly to be a better person in each day. Ron Williamson did many positive things, such as slept a lot for hours, made a conversation with Greg, and read many books. It was because of someone could listen what he really wanted for a long time.

**“His behavior was stable. He didn’t rant and pace scream his innocence. The mood swings were not as dramatic. He slept a lot, read for hours, chain-smoked, and talked to Greg.** They went to exercise yard together, each watching the other’s back.” (Grisham, 283)

However, when he was in The Row and met Greg, everything has changed to be better. They also went to exercise yard together. Ron Williamson’s superego was more controllable, because he did not yell anymore. His superego resisted the id, that always did something without logics and ethics such to become troublemaker in prison.

Mike Barret, his lawyer, was the man who helps Ron to find fair justice, because his dedication fight for the truth of this accusation case. He would do anything for his client because for him, everyone deserved fair justice without exception. He told the judge for another trial and it succeeded. The judge, jury, and Ron’s lawyer also people in the Ada town including his sisters gathered again in courtroom to make decision. As the result, Ron Williamson was found not guilty. In addition, he did not intend to chase everyone who mock him outside the prison.

**“Ron had made no secret of his desire to sue everybody in sight** once he was set free.” (Grisham, 368)

Ron Williamson never had grudge to anyone. His superego made control for his action to become a person who full of forgiveness because he was the servant of God. The superego of Ron Williamson could maintain his desires not to hurt anyone, even he got accused from everyone in Ada town including his close neighbor. As the result, Ron Williamson already became a man with kind hearted man and it was based on the morality principle.

The day of Ron Williamson’s freedom was finally arrived. He lost hope for a moment, and then realized God was always with him every time. He was so happy and still did not expect he would be visited the baseball field in Ada town again his life even he knew, he would never back to become professional baseball player anymore. After he visited the baseball field, he decided to focus on his dedication for the servant of God in his favorite local church.

**“Ron was serious about rejoining the church and cleaning up his life.** At his core was a deep belief in God and Jesus Christ. **He would never forget the Scriptures he’d memorized as a child nor the gospel hymns he loved.** He carried a nagging sense of guilt for the way he’d lived, **but he believed in Jesus’s promise of divine, eternal, and complete forgiveness.**” (Grisham, 410)

Ron Williamson’s personality has changed forever. After so many problems he encountered for twelve years, he got so many lessons in the prison. His biggest superego asked him to dedicate the rest of his life to the God and focus to cleaned himself from the sinners he had. The biggest superego of him wanted Ron Williamson to become the man with full of forgiveness and loyal only to the God.

## 2. Discussion

The research is focused to the tripartite psyche of the main character in the novel named Ron Williamson. The tripartite psyche was the part of human’s mind



and how the personality was built from it. There were three parts of the tripartite psyche which are id, ego, and superego. The id was existed since human was born and it took control of human's desires and pleasures without thought ethics also logic. The ego's function was to make a decision for every human's action and how ego must balance the desires and the reality principle. The superego was an image or worked as an example how human must act as a kind person, never do bad things in real life, and follow moral values in the society in every situation and it based on morality principle.

Based on the discussion above, it was found that the portray of Ron Williamson's tripartite psyche were unique and unpredictable based on the problems he encountered in the story. The id of Ron Williamson was uncontrollable, chaotic, illogical, immoral, unethical, selfish, self-absorbed, demanding, egocentric, downright childish, confusing, mood swings, drunkard, carousing, erratic, suspicious and distrustful to others, disoriented, delusional, detached from reality. His biggest id was He wanted to become professional baseball player without thinking his condition in reality and surroundings that made him so selfish, illogical, immoral, and unethical. He also wanted to escape from his accusation as the murderer of Debra Sue Carter.

On the other side, his ego was worry to his mother, lament, responsible for his crime in the past, looking for a job after he got out from jail in very short time and caught again, admit he never killed Debra Sue Carter, and be patient for his case. Ron Williamson's ego was worked with the reality in that time when he still in jail and how his ego must make a balance with desires and reality without created confusion in his mind. Ron Williamson's ego also reduce the sense of selfishness and self-absorbed in his life after his mother died and it change him a lot that made him aware to his surroundings. His biggest ego was Ron Williamson did not want at the courtroom because he admitted he was not guilty and he decided not to make an argument to defense his innocence because the jury and judge would never believe his words.

However, the superego of Ron Williamson was behaved himself after he got expelled by the judge in the first trial, changing his bad attitudes from a selfish and self-absorbed person to become good attitudes person which were care and pay attention to his surroundings slowly in every trials, a devout Christian, reading books to increase his knowledge and reduce depression, behavior was stable after he met Greg, slept for hours, exercised, intelligent, rational, aware of his predicament and surroundings, rejoining the church in Ada town after he was set free and cleaning up his life. Ron Williamson's superego succeeded to guide him to become a man who did not have any grudge, troublemaker, selfishness, and self-absorbed anymore because he was in prison without any valid evidences. He still followed the morality principle as a person full of forgiveness as the God's words said in the Bible. His biggest superego was Ron Williamson wanted to rejoin the church in Ada town and cleaning up his life. He dedicated of his rest life to God after he was found innocent and not guilty because he never involved to the murder case of Debra Sue Carter from the beginning.

#### D. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the depiction of the tripartite role of the psyche in Ron Williamson's Character in John Grisham's *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* novel using psychoanalysis approach and the proofs of characterization of Ron Williamson as the main character, the researcher deduced that:

The tripartite psyche of Ron Williamson divided into three parts which were the Id, the ego, and the superego. The Id of Ron Williamson was illogical, immoral, uncontrollable, unethical, troublemaker, selfish, drunk, childish, insolent, excessive, erratic, unpredictable, hallucination, disoriented, mood swings, uncertain, delusional, confused, and detached from reality. He also had his biggest Id was Ron Williamson wanted to become professional baseball player without thinking his condition and reality what is really happening in his life that made him so selfish, self-absorbed, immoral, and unethical. He also wanted to break free from his case as the murderer of Debra Sue Carter.

Furthermore, the ego of Ron Williamson was worried, regret, reduce the selfishness, responsible, aware for his surroundings, unconfused, reduced the troublemaker, honest, patience, rational thinking, calm, cooperated, fight back by denying, and defense for himself. His biggest ego was Ron Williamson did not want in courtroom to do some trials and jail because he never murdered Debra Sue Carter. In other words, he was an innocent man. As the result, he decided not to make an argument to defense his innocence because the jury and judge would never trust him.

The last is superego of Ron Williamson was polite, well behaved, servant of God, reading books to reduce the depression, sympathetic, stable behavior, intelligent, more sensible thinking, more responsive to his surroundings, devout Christian, quit from troublemaker, break out from selfishness and self-absorbed, and forgiving. He had biggest superego which was he wanted to rejoin the church in Ada town and cleaning up his life. He dedicated of his rest life to God asking the guidance and forgiveness after he was found innocent for his murderer case which only focus on accusation from people's point of view without searched from valid evidences.

The representation of tripartite psyche of Ron Williamson could be seen through the dialogues between other minor characters such as Annette Williamson, Renee Williamson, Juanita Williamson, Roy Williamson, Barney, Patty O'Brien, Al Roberts, Dr. Charles Amos, Norma Walker, Officer Rick Carson, Garry Simmons, Detective Mike Baskin, John Christian, Judge John David Miller, Greg Wilhoit, and Mark Barret. His tripartite psyche also portrayed through the description from the author himself directly, conflicts between other characters, events, and self-conflict.

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