

# The Struggle to Achieve Superiority of the Main Character in the Novel *Nun at a Mirror* Afifah Afra's Work is Based on Alfred Adler's Psychology

Puput Puji Lestari, Sarwiji Suwandi, Muhammad Rohmadi

Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

[puputpujilestarilurah@gmail.com](mailto:puputpujilestarilurah@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

This research emphasizes the struggles and challenges faced by the main character of the novel *Nun* to achieve superiority in surviving her life based on Alfred Adler's psychology theory. The analysis results show that the character *Nun*'s struggle in the novel encounters many twists and turns and conflicts. The conflict experienced by *Nun* was a symptom of hallucinations after her mother left. Interestingly, *Nun* was able to rise again from adversity thanks to the support of her sister and friends. *Nun*'s struggle for life on the banks of the Bengawan Solo River reflects what also happened to the local community at that time. Based on the analysis that has been carried out, data was found for 90 quotes related to the struggle of the character *Nun* to achieve superiority in her life. This type of qualitative research uses data collection techniques that use document analysis in the form of novels.

**Keywords:** Individual Psychology Alfred Adler, The Struggle to Achieve Superiority, *Nun in a Mirror*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works according to Horace in Teew (1998: 8) are "dulce et utile" which are both entertaining and educational. One literary work that can be used as entertaining and educational reading is a novel. A novel is the work of someone who is imaginative and inspired by real human life. Many novel stories are based on the author's personal life or stories from the community around the author. An example of a novel title that has this character is *Nun On A Mirror*, This novel tells the story of a girl's struggle to achieve her dream of completing her education. Apart from that, *Nun* also has to fight to defend herself and her family. This novel has an interesting side in terms of the psychology of the main character as an individual.

Individual is a noun derived from the word individual which means person, individual, and also individual (Echols and Shandaly: 1975). More deeply, this individual will grow and develop in an environment that is able to stimulate self-potential and bring about desired changes in lifestyle and attitudes. Individuals or a person will develop according to their environment. This is in line with Adler's opinion which states that living

creatures, including an individual, are a social unit that is interconnected with one another and cannot be separated. They relate to other people or the community around them to achieve social cooperation, prioritize collective welfare above personal interests, and have a lifestyle that triggers them to gain power in a social organization.

According to Wicaksono and Rohman (2017: 186), literary studies view work as a mental activity, the author will use creativity, feeling and creation in his work. Meanwhile, according to Endraswara in Wicaksono and Rohman (2017: 186) explains that literary works and psychology are closely linked, indirectly and functionally. Both literature and psychology have similarities in the study of their object, namely human life. Meanwhile, psychology and literature have a functional relationship because they both study other people's mental states, the difference is that in psychology the symptoms are real, whereas in literature they are imaginative.

The term "Literary Psychology" has four possible meanings. The first is a psychological study of the author as a type or as a person. Whether they realize it or not, writers often include psychological elements in their work. The most basic example is when the author creates a character in his story with a certain character and certain psychological characteristics. This departs from the reality that the author encounters in his daily life. For some artists, psychology helps them to sharpen their sense of reality, sharpens their powers of observation, and provides opportunities to explore previously unexplored patterns (Wellek and Warren, 1993: 116).

Second is a creative case study. The creative process includes all stages, starting from the subconscious impulse that gives birth to a literary work to the final improvements made by the author. For a number of authors, this last stage is the most creative stage (Wellek and Warren, 1993: 97).

Third is the study of the types of psychological laws applied in literary works. Writers influenced and influenced society: art not only imitated life, but also shaped it. Many people imitate the lifestyles of fictional world figures. They make love, commit crimes or commit suicide like stories in novels (Wellek and Warren, 1993: 120). Literature has its own reason and purpose for existence. Indirectly, literature can influence its readers to a greater extent and influence society. Therefore, literature has an educational function which can be reflected in the content of the story and the values that the author sets forth in his literary work.

Fourth, study the impact of literature on readers (reader psychology). In this case, the study of individual psychology is closely related to the third meaning. (Wellek and Warren, 1993: 90). The role of literary psychology from points one to four are related if a red line is drawn. Everything has its own function and can become a unified whole that is useful for human life. The most basic thing that readers can take away is new knowledge and problem-solving from literary stories, especially novels.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This form of research is descriptive qualitative research. Research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words originating from the people being observed (Moleong, 2002: 3). Creswell stated that qualitative research is a scientific research process that is intended to understand human problems in a social context by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that is presented, reporting detailed views from information sources, and is carried out in a natural setting without any intervention from researcher (Herdiansyah, 2010:8). Qualitative research activities are observing, interviewing and analyzing activities. These three activities are the main activities in qualitative research. Herdiansyah (2010: 1) believes that qualitative research is research that aims to investigate, discover, describe and explain the qualities or characteristics of social influence that cannot be explained, measured or depicted through a quantitative approach.

The sample in this research was taken using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is the quality of research which is not only influenced by the suitability of the research methodology and instruments, but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy used in the research (Morison, 1993: 112-117). Louis (2007:102) generally describes that in sampling a population with the same heterogeneity, the larger the population, the larger the sample that must be taken to describe the population. If the greater the heterogeneity in a particular variable, the larger the sample needed in the research. The data in this research are texts in the form of sentences and paragraphs taken from novels *Nun On A Mirror*.

Data validity in this research uses data triangulation techniques. Moleong (2002: 178) believes that triangulation is a data validity checking technique that uses something other than the data for checking purposes or as a comparison of the data. The most widely used triangulation technique is checking through other sources. Sutopo (2002: 79) distinguishes four types of triangulation, namely data (source) triangulation, method triangulation, researcher triangulation, and theory triangulation. In this research, source triangulation is used, namely by exploring other sources in the form of text, notes or other documents that contain and are related to the text of the research data.

The data analysis technique in this research was analyzed based on the data analysis technique proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994: 10) there are three main components in the analysis process, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main principle of Adler's theory is that the dynamic force behind human behavior is the struggle to achieve success or superiority. Adler reduces all motivation to

one single drive, namely striving to achieve success or superiority. Individual psychology teaches that everyone begins life with physical weaknesses that give rise to feelings of inferiority, feelings that motivate a person to struggle. Psychologically unhealthy individuals will strive for personal superiority, whereas psychologically healthy individuals seek success for all of humanity. Regardless of the motivation to struggle, each individual is controlled by the final goal (Feist and Feist, 2010: 82).

Based on the explanation above, the principle of achieving superiority is greatly influenced by the individual's feelings of inferiority and the individual's ultimate goals. These two things ultimately create a strong determination to achieve superiority or self-success. Novel Nun On A Mirror illustrates this in the main character named Nun. His struggle stems from economic difficulties and a strong desire to complete his education.

#### a. Feelings of Inferiority

*Nun remembers, when she had just graduated from junior high school and her parents said they couldn't afford to pay for her to go to higher school, she had been in and out of offices looking for vacancies, and apparently no one was willing to accept her. Finally, becoming a ketoprak player was the only option. Better than being a scavenger like his mother (Afra, 2015: 37)*

Nun is the main character in the NPSC novel. Nun experienced economic difficulties in her family. So he was unable to continue to high school. He was asked by his mother to join in scavenging so he could help the family's economy. Finally, Nun was forced to give up school and work at Ketoprak Candra Poernama. According to him, this job is better than being a scavenger.

*Is there a greater suffering than the loss of a hope? All this time, he was able to live with hanging on to hopes. But now, the vines of hope were cut mercilessly by the sharp sword of life. (Afra, 2015: 51-52)*

Nun was very devastated by her mother's words and decision. Even though at school, Nun is an outstanding child. That wasn't enough to get him to go to school in the place he dreamed of. Even just to continue his education his mother would not be able to pay for it. Nun's self-confidence and enthusiasm were shattered by the realities of life that befell her. Feelings of inferiority increasingly plague him, considering himself to be worthless because he is unable to realize what he wants.

*"I don't want to play ketoprak, I don't want to! I want to go to school. I want to be a teacher. I want to be a smart person."*

*"Nun, this is just a stepping stone, you won't be a ketoprak player forever."*

*"I can't play ketoprak. Instead of playing ketoprak, it's better if I just become a scavenger... or become*

*a beggar, begging at Tirtonadi Terminal."*

*"Don't just talk, Nun..."*

*"What else do you want to talk about? I wanted the finger of a smart person, I wanted to go to school, but instead I was told to be a scavenger. You said playing ketoprak was easier, but instead you kept getting shouted at. I don't know what else to say. I don't have any hope anymore. (Afra, 2015: 56)*

Nun had almost given up hope with the condition she was experiencing. Her feelings of inferiority escalated when Nun was deemed incapable of acting by Denmas Daruno, owner of the Candra Poernama ketoprak. Nun felt like she was going to give up and obey her mother's wishes to become a scavenger. Nun is depressed because she always fails to do everything she wants. Even though playing ketoprak is something new for him. Nun was willing to try it, but unexpectedly, she would get yelled at because her abilities were disappointing. Making his spirit more and more broken and gone.

*Nun bit her lip. What kind of love does Tuham want to give him? His father died, then the family went bankrupt and became homeless. Living in poverty in slums. Drop out of school. Then the mother was killed. And now, the man who promised to marry her suddenly left... (Afra, 2015: 345)*

It doesn't just stop at work and education problems. Nun also experienced a mental crisis when she lost her mother due to a murder committed by her stepfather. At almost the same time, Nun was disappointed again when the man she liked did not marry her and left Nun. So continuously that Nun experienced depression and excessive hallucinations.

*It's okay, sir. precisely because the mirror is no longer there, I no longer suffer from what is that disease... hallucinations? Mr Raharja said, one of the causes of hallucinations is deep trauma. (Afra, 2015: 365)*

Nun finally experienced deep trauma because she had to lose and fall many times. Although the feelings of inferiority that arise in Nun are not due to physical weakness or cognitive deficiencies. However, Nun has the status of a girl with a life of deprivation, having lost her father and mother at a young age, and was disappointed by the man she liked because of social factors.

Due to various things that foster this feeling of inferiority. The character Nun is determined to leave behind her wounds and adversity. He wants his life to be better and more comfortable. Therefore, Nun has several goals that she wants to achieve. These ideals are what make Nun persist and become enthusiastic again, and try to improve her

shortcomings.

b. Goals to be achieved

Another factor that can spur a character's enthusiasm to achieve superiority or success is the character's goals. Nun also has several desires or goals that she wants to achieve.

*"I don't want to play ketoprak, I don't want to! I want to go to school. I want to be a teacher. I want to be a smart person." (Afra, 2015: 56)*

Nun has dreams of becoming a teacher. He wants to be a useful person to the people around him. Knowledgeable and broad-minded are things that Nun likes. Therefore, Nun is very enthusiastic about pursuing education. When he was in junior high school, Nun was an outstanding student. Always wins first place in a school where the school is a junior high school favorite in Solo. Nun also often becomes a reference for her friends to ask questions about things they don't understand.

*"But, I don't have time to prepare for the gig."*

*"You don't make much money from performing."*

*"I like playing ketoprak, ma'am..." (Afra, 2015: 131)*

As time passed, Nun enjoyed her work playing ketoprak. Nun has good skills in the field of acting. Supported by her beautiful face, Nun always gets the main role and is an important character in her drama stories. Nun also often performs at important events. This made him get to know many people from various backgrounds. Apart from that, Nun can also expand her circle of friends. His ability to dress up and play a role is also increasingly honed. Therefore, Nun also has an interest in this field to continue to develop.

*"But, Mom... I want to go to school." (Afra, 2015: 48)*

Nun's biggest wish is to be able to finish school and have broad insight. Therefore, Nun has a strong determination to be able to achieve education in the way she can.

c. The struggle to achieve superiority or success

*It's not true that he performs every day. Only three times a week, namely every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday evening. Every day, she does household chores, such as cooking, sweeping, ironing and cleaning the house. Because the house is very small and has little furniture, Nun only needs a short time to clean. He also worked as a matchmaker at the house of a neighbor who opened a laundry service. (Afra, 2015: 60)*

Since Nun moved to the city because her father died, her life has gotten even worse. The mother was only able to get a job as a scavenger after deciding to migrate to the city. Nun had to help her mother earn a living, so she was forced to drop out of school until junior high school. Even though at first it was very difficult for Nun, in the end Nun tried to get up and do what she could. Nun helps her mother by working at laundry and at Ketoprak Candra Poernama. Even though she doesn't earn much money, Nun is still enthusiastic about working. Always try to develop your skills and abilities.

*"Come on, cheer up! Never give up. I know, you are a beautiful butterfly that is time to come out of the cocoon. You will become a famous ketoprak star. You will be loved by the audience. You will be a flower, a prima donna..." (Afra, 2015: 59)*

Nun received harsh ridicule when he first demonstrated his abilities in front of Denmas Daruno, the owner of the Candra Poernama ketoprak. Nun was deemed incapable of performing the role. Very impressed with the totality of Mas Wiranto's acting. Nun was devastated and almost gave up. Finally, Denmas Daruno comforted him and encouraged him. Nun started studying and was finally able to become one of the most needed players. Nun is always the main female character in her ketoprak appearance. His skill is also widely recognized by Nun's fellow ketoprak players, Candra Poernama.

*"I... I want to register for the Package C Pursuit Program, sir!" Nun answered, a little stuttered.*

*"Oh, please come in!" (Afra, 2015: 155)*

Nun, a smart girl who was forced to drop out of school, finally got the solution to her educational problems that she wanted. Nun, with permission from her mother, finally pursued package C to get a high school diploma. Nun's passion for education has never faded. Nun is always enthusiastic about everything related to education. His dream of becoming a smart person never made him stop just because of circumstances.

*Nun thought for a moment. "Ngg...after being good at reading, we are told to write?"*

*"Yes! You're so smart. And what should I write?"*

*"Beauty of morals, human goodness? Because, in the verses of Surat Al-Qolam, as you said earlier, God spoke about the beauty of the Prophet's character?"*

*"MasyaAllah, you are really very smart, Nun! Very quick to catch a lesson. OK, today, I declare that you have been accepted as a student in the Package C Pursuit Program here. All costs are free. Study well, Nduk. I will continue to monitor your progress myself." (Afra, 2015: 160)*

Nun's abilities were even immediately visible before the class started. Nun easily followed the flow of discussion developed by Mr. Raharja, Chairman of the Foundation

where Nun will take part in Pursuing Package C. Nun always tries to understand well the material being discussed with other people. He easily understands and memorizes terms he has just heard. It would be a waste if a Nun had to drop out of school because of circumstances. Above-average intelligence means that Nun will be a useful person in the future. Especially with Nun's good and commendable morals. Always professional in his work and hard working.

*"And, we will still go to Europe. Which sponsors UNESCO and Egypt Hotel. He said, this will also be a promotional event. Play ketoprak later at the worldwide Egypt Hotel network. We will honeymoon by busking in 30 European cities, Nun." (Afra, 2015: 367)*

Struggle Nun achieving her dream was not in vain. Thanks to his skill in playing the role of ketoprak. And his intelligence to continue fighting to finish school. Finally he was able to leave for Europe. Introducing ketoprak in several European countries as a representative from Indonesia. As well as a honeymoon facility with the husband she loves most. Namely, the young man he had liked since he was in junior high school. Nun's family's economy is getting better because her younger siblings have grown up.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on Adler's individual psychology theory of the novel Nun On A Mirror, There are three important factors in the main character's struggle to achieve success, namely a sense of inferiority, goals or ideals, and success itself. Adler's theory summarizes six aspects of individual psychology, namely, the struggle to achieve superiority, lifestyle, social interests, personality unity, subjective perspective, self-creativity. These six are normal personal requirements. However, to achieve success two important aspects are needed to be able to survive until the end, namely goals and a sense of inferiority. The character Nun has a sense of inferiority in the form of poverty and loss which drives her to achieve her dreams. Nun dreams of becoming a smart girl, useful to others, and one day she can become a teacher. This is what brought her to struggle to a superior point, namely being able to complete her education, and Nun was even able to travel around Europe thanks to the skills she had.

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