

The Sexual Deviations of the Main Character in the Novel *Sang Guru Piano* by Elfriede Jelinek (A Study in Psychology Literature)

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Abstract

Humans serve as subjects in literary works as they embody behaviors observable via the lens of their experiences. Behavior constitutes a facet of the soul's conflict, as psychological disorders manifest through human conduct, each exhibiting distinct characteristics. Human beings can be examined through science, particularly psychology, which pertains to the psyche. Consequently, literary works are seen as a psychological phenomenon. Literary works, stemming from the author's endeavors, are frequently linked to psychological phenomena, as they represent the author's creation, whereby psychological theory is employed both intentionally and unconsciously.

Keywords: *Chracter; Ego; Id; Psychology Literature; Sigmund Freud; Super Ego; The Sexual Deviations*



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INTRODUCTION

Literature, being a manifestation of human creative artistry, will invariably remain intertwined with language, the fundamental medium of literary expression. Writing and humanity are intrinsically linked, as the essence of writing frequently arises from the challenges and dilemmas inherent in human existence and their surroundings. An author, with a considerable degree of creativity, seamlessly integrates the challenges surrounding them into a literary composition. Literary works frequently address themes like sexuality, erotic love, animosity, violence, bigotry, and existential dilemmas. Consequently, as literary works originate from authentic human experiences, it is unsurprising that sexual themes can influence the narratives within a literary piece. The Indonesian nation is recognized for its wealth of Eastern culture and the moral values of its people. Consequently, the topic of sexuality remains a taboo subject due to its immoral overtones. Consequently, it is imperative to address the matter of deviant sexual behavior to enable society or readers to eschew and refrain from emulating such conduct.

The author seeks to analyze sexual deviance in Elfriede Jelinek's novel "The Piano Teacher," which presents several deviant sexual concerns. This investigation was undertaken to elucidate the protagonist's sexual aberrant habits. This research is pertinent due to the escalating prominence of sexual activity in contemporary culture. This exacerbates the proliferation of sexual behavior, ranging from moderate to severe manifestations.

Literature, as a psychological phenomenon, encompasses occurrences associated with the psyche or mind. Consequently, literary works may be examined through a psychological lens. This is permissible, given the indirect and functional relationship between literature and psychology (Jatman in Aminuddin, 1990:101). The distinction in psychological symptoms observed in literary works is that they pertain to fictional characters, but in psychology, they relate to actual individuals (Endraswara, 2003: 97). Psychology and literature will intersect and inform one another, as this might elucidate the creative process underlying a literary work. Psychology is employed to animate characters that were not deliberately conceived by the creator (Ristiana & Adeani, 2017).

To examine characters in literary works, a literary critic must also depend on psychological theories and principles that elucidate human behavior and character. The psychological theory frequently employed in the examination of literary works is psychoanalysis, introduced by Sigmund Freud. (1) Id. The id constitutes the fundamental component of human personality. It represents the most sinister facet of human personality within the unconscious, encompassing primal instincts and worthless wants, and appears to embody a form of "blind energy" (Endraswara, 2003: 101). (2) Ego. The ego is a personality construct that mediates an individual's interaction with the external reality, operating according to the reality principle. The ego is an operational aspect of personality, indicating its engagement with the external environment (Endraswara, 2003: 101). (3) Super Ego. The super ego encompasses the moral principles ingrained in an individual. The super ego is essentially synonymous with consciousness. The social dimension of personality embodies the conventional values and ideals of society as conveyed by parents to their offspring, imprinted through diverse mandates and restrictions.

METHODS

This research is qualitative, as the data source is the literary piece itself (Ratna, 2007:47). This research is descriptive qualitative, as it focuses on the depth of understanding the interactions between the empirically researched concepts rather than prioritizing numerical data (Semi, 1993: 23). To address the issues in this study, the author employs a descriptive methodology, which entails delineating various data derived from the novel's content, articulated through words. Reader endurance is crucial. The work is read multiple times to enable the author to grasp the main character, highlighting the sexual deviance under examination, thereby facilitating analysis and interpretation through literary psychology studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nurgiyantoro (2000: 176) asserts that the principal character is the one whose narrative is emphasized in the respective work. The protagonist is the individual most often depicted, either as the catalyst of

occurrences or as the recipient of those occurrences. The novel *Sang Guru Piano* features multiple characters, each possessing distinct characteristics. In this analysis, the author will concentrate solely on the protagonist, Erika Kohut. Erika is a distinctive individual.

"Erika is a person of strong character, who stands on her own..." (SGP, 2006: 10).

The aforementioned sentence indicates that Erika is incapable of obedience to any entity or individual. Erika's steadfast convictions render her inflexible in adapting to her social context. Erika is obstinate.

She (the mother) was afraid that Erika, the stubborn one, would buy new clothes again tomorrow (SGP, 2006: 157).

Despite her obstinacy, Erika is fundamentally a compassionate individual. Erika's affection for her mother is evident when she disputes her mother's authority on her autonomy, ultimately feeling remorse for her outburst.

"Consistent with her pattern, following a dispute with her mother, Erika swiftly experiences remorse due to her affection for her." (SGP, 2006: 6).

Erika is a liar.

She (Erika) lied to her mother about the purpose of the trip earlier [the peep-show performance] (SGP, 2006: 55).

Erika audaciously deceived her mother merely to attend a peep-show performance. Upon concluding her piano instruction at the Vienna Conservatory, Erika opted not to return directly to her flat, but rather decided to attend an erotic concert. Erika asserts that this is the source of her happiness, allowing her to momentarily forget her life's problems. Erika possesses a volatile temperament.

"You whore, whore!" Erika yelled angrily at her mother. "The Ruler" (SGP, 2006: 5).

Erika wants to rebel against the ruler. Erika was very angry when she found out that the new clothes she had just bought and neatly stored in her closet were missing.

He also knew who the villain was. Only one person would be capable of doing that. Erika's anger was uncontrollable, so she cursed her mother as a vile criminal (SGP, 2006: 6).

Erika is someone who gets sad easily.

Erika, still weeping, retrieved the unfortunate dress and mournfully hung it in the closet beside the other garments: jackets, trousers, skirts, coats, and suits. He did not don those garments (SGP, 2006: 7).

Erika has sadness as she seldom dons the attire she like when departing her flat. Erika's mother prohibited her from wearing the attire she preferred. Erika is a female character subjugated by her mother.

"She [Erika] would never be able to yield to a man after years of yielding to her mother" (SGP, 2006: 11).

"Her mother disapproved of Erika's marriage." (SGP, 2006: 11).

"Should she [Erika] aspire to beauty, her mother would promptly prohibit it" (SGP, 2006: 24).

"Erika's mother reprimanded her for purchasing a new hat." (SGP, 2006: 206).

Erika is a youngster whose autonomy was usurped by her mother. Erika, from childhood until nearly the age of forty, was subject to her mother's authority. All aspects of her style and life decisions were dictated by her mother. This, undoubtedly, deprives Erika of her right to life. Her mother's influence ensnared Erika

in a detrimental sexual connection. In the novel *The Piano Teacher*, Erika is identified as engaging in the sexual deviations of voyeurism and sadomasochism, or sexual masochism.

Voyeurism. The term voyeurism, commonly referred to as scotophilia, is derived from the French word "voyeur," signifying "peeper." Individuals with this condition attain sexual gratification by observing others who are unclothed, bathing, or engaging in sexual activities. Following surveillance of the victim, the offender refrained from taking any subsequent action against the individual observed. He was merely observing, nothing farther. This form of sexual deviance is evident in the character of Erika Kohut, as illustrated by the following quote:

"Erika, the true teacher, entered the venue, a highly strategic locale where naked women contorted and writhed." The women alternated. They alternated, adhering to a principle of non-lust, in the "Peep-Show" performance rotation (SGP, 2006: 47).

"He merely desired to sit and observe. Observing. Erika desires solely to observe without physical interaction" (SGP, 2006: 51).

Id Aspect. The id component constitutes the fundamental system within the psyche. From this perspective, the other two parts develop. The id aspect encompasses innate characteristics or biological factors present from birth. The id element functions to uphold the ideal of 'enjoy', which entails the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of unpleasantness. Erika Kohut is the protagonist whose autonomy is usurped by her mother. Erika must adhere to all the regulations of the game. Even the acquisition of new clothing, leisure walks, and the pursuit of a marriage are orchestrated by the king. Erika had tension and expressed her aggravation by viewing a peep show, an erotic performance.

"Erika, an authentic educator, visited the red-light district, a compact, strategically significant area where nude women leaned out and writhed. The women alternated. They alternated in the "Peep-Show" performance rotation according to a principle of non-arousal (SGP, 2006: 47).

In this scenario, the id satisfies the pleasure principle, resulting in the superego, which is meant to regulate the id, becoming diminished owing to significant internal and external pressures. This is seen in the subsequent quotation:

"He just wanted to sit and look. Watch. Erika just wanted to watch without touching (SGP, 2006: 51).

Ego Aspect. The ego is a psychological construct that emerges from the organism's necessity for reciprocal interaction with reality. The ego component is seen as a conjectural facet of personality. The ego operates on the reality principle, enabling the manipulation of the id to fulfill its instincts while accommodating external stimuli. Consequently, the ego may differentiate between phenomena that are solely in the mind and those that exist in the external objective world and reality. The ego component in the story *Sang Guru Piano* is apparent when Erika seeks to enter the red-light district, where women engage physically with male partners. This is seen in the subsequent quotation:

She [Erika] now desires to enter the previously mentioned location [the Peep Show] (SGP, 2006: 48).

Through viewing the peep show, Erika is restoring her self-assurance. The life that had been inducing him considerable tension was effortlessly forgotten by viewing an amorous scene. Erika's ego defenses got repressed. The id's potency obscures the truth that the pleasure sought is a form of sexual deviation. Erika's superego, responsible for discerning right from wrong, is malfunctioning.

"However, she [Erika] still has to watch. For his own enjoyment. Every time he tried to move, something from above forcefully pushed his neatly styled head back against the windowpane, forcing him to keep looking" (SGP, 2006: 54).

By watching a peep show, Erika unknowingly fell into and became a slave to uncontrollable sexual urges. The ego gives in and surrenders power to the id. Erika's superego and ego are defeated by the id, resulting in sexual deviance in Erika.

Super Ego Aspect. The superego functions to ascertain the distinction between good and wrong, appropriate and improper, moral and immoral, hence conforming to societal standards. The primary roles of the superego are: (a) to restrain the id's impulses, particularly sexual urges, (b) to motivate the ego to seek moral actions, and (c) to aspire for perfection. In sexual deviation, Erika's identity as the protagonist is not evident from the perspective of the superego in voyeurism. The id's potency is sufficient to subdue the superego. The superego, intended to impart moral and ethical ideals, malfunctioned, prompting Erika to partake in sexual deviance and neglect the adverse repercussions of her actions. This is illustrated in the subsequent quotation:

"Erika picked up the tissue wad with the remaining sperm from the floor and held it to her nose. He took a deep breath, smelling what others had produced with hard work. He breathed in and watched and spent a little time in his life" (SGP, 2006: 51).

Sadomasochism or Sexual Masochism. In addition to relishing peep show performances, the character Erika is categorized as a practitioner of sadomasochism or sexual masochism, signifying the consent to endure pain and torment for sexual pleasure; this behavior is deemed immoral, overt, and unabashed, propelled by disintegrated, "immature," and unnatural sexual urges (Kartono, 2009; 34).

"Erika bit into the bird's head. The crown remained unscathed, nevertheless its possessor yelled frantically" (SGP, 2006: 181).

Erika is unreserved in inflicting harm on her spouse during sexual contact. This is a consequence of Erika's aberrant sexual behavior. Upon completing the sexual attack of her boyfriend, Erika experienced a sense of peace and satisfaction.

"She administered a massage to him. He examined the hue and state of the bird, which was owned by Klemmer. She placed her fingernails beneath the young man's foreskin and prohibited him from vocalizing, regardless of whether it was due to pleasure or discomfort" (SGP, 2006: 180).

Erika's sadistic tendencies are becoming increasingly evident. Erika derived sexual gratification from inflicting cruelty, while also relishing the pain and torment inflicted upon her by her partner. This is known as a masochist, an individual who permits themselves to endure pain and suffering to enhance the satisfaction of the partner during sexual activity.

"Erika wanted Walter Klemmer to apply torture to her (SGP, 2006: 226).

Being tortured and hurt, Erika felt happy, satisfied, and wanted to continue this cruel relationship with her own student, Walter Klemmer. Erika asked Walter Klemmer to do crazy things during sexual intercourse without considering the risks to herself.

"And you will leave me in various positions, then hit me, trample me, even whip me" (SGP, 2006: 219).

"The man must drive his knee into this woman's stomach, if you please" (SGP, 2006: 219).

"The woman [Erika] asked him to hit her stomach and sit on her body so that the woman lay like a board and could not move in her cruel sweet bondage" (SGP, 2006: 219).

Id Aspect. The presence of the id in Erika's body always influences her behavior to do things without regard for the safety of others. As in the following quote:

"She [Erika] massaged him. He observed the color and condition of the bird, which belonged to Klemmer. She inserted her fingernails behind the young man's foreskin and forbade him from crying out, whether from pleasure or pain" (SGP, 2006: 180).

In the text excerpt below, the id within Erika influences her behavior, making it clear that she does not care about Walter Klemmer.

"Erika sank her teeth into the bird's crown. The crown was unharmed, but its owner screamed wildly (SGP, 2006: 181).

The pleasure principle, which is the basis of the id, will not allow the organism to experience tension. It will quickly reduce tension when it arises and quickly return it to pleasure, fear, and anxiety. In the following event, Erika experienced tension when Walter Klemmer was about to impose a punishment on her. However, the ego within Erika caused her to return and be willing to be tortured, beaten, and whipped.

"And you will put me in various positions, then beat me, trample me, and even whip me" (SGP, 2006: 219).

Ego Aspect. The ego is a psychological aspect of personality that arises from the organism's need to interact reciprocally with reality. The ego aspect is viewed as a speculative aspect of personality. The presence of ego in Erika can be seen in the following quote:

"Erika intended to offer herself to the man as a snack. The man cannot be too full, he must always be thirsty for Erika (SGP, 2006: 244).

The text excerpt above is also an aspect of the ego used to achieve the id, namely Erika's attempt to satisfy her sexual desires with Walter Klemmer. Erika's weak ego affected her superego, leading her to become rebellious and engage in masochistic deviations. As a result of her sexual deviation, Erika's personality became so aggressive.

"The woman [Erika] asked him to hit her stomach and sit on her body so that she lay like a board and could not move in her cruel sweet bondage" (SGP, 2006: 219).

According to Freud (in Muis 2009: 13), the purpose of destructive drives is to return the organism to an inorganic state. Therefore, the ultimate goal of aggressive drives is self-destruction. This is evident in the following quote:

"Tie me up with rubber socks, I'll show you how, so my mouth is tightly sealed and I can't stick out my tongue. Socks are now available! Use the blouse to enhance my pleasure: cover my face tightly and completely so I can't take it off. Then let me spend hours in this excruciating position until it's finished, so I don't do anything" (SGP, 2006: 222).

In this process, Erika's ego becomes weak, causing the id, which has no contact with reality, to continue striving to reduce tension through basic, pleasurable desires.

Super Ego Aspect. In the sexual deviation of masochism, Erika's personality as the main character from the superego aspect is not visible. The id is so strong that it suppresses the superego. The superego, which is supposed to distinguish between good and bad, does not function properly.

"Threaten me that you will leave me in that position for hours if I don't do what you tell me correctly. You can let me suffer for hours with my face under you! Do that until I turn blue" (SGP, 2006: 229).

Erika's weak ego affected her superego, leading her to become rebellious and engage in masochistic deviations. As a result of her sexual deviations, Erika's personality became extremely aggressive in inflicting pain. This can be seen in the following quote:

"The man should drive his knee into this woman's stomach, if you please (SGP, 2006: 219).

CONCLUSION

The protagonist of Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Sang Guru Piano* is Erika Kohut. The protagonist in this story exhibits sexual deviations characterized by voyeurism and masochism, indicating a preference for observing sexual acts, peep shows, and participating in violence during sexual encounters. The protagonist has endured sexual deviance since their mother revoked their autonomy, resulting in sadness, psychological problems, and a quest for self-identity. The protagonist is indifferent to the bodily consequences arising from sexual encounters.

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