

Promoting Personality Psychology through Literary Learning: An Appreciative-Reflective Study

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This appreciative-reflective study aims to explore the understanding of personality psychology, through literary learning. The literature used is *Maleficent* (film). The method is qualitative psychology. The respondents were 44 students in a literary theory program. Data analysis techniques used the stages of identification, classification, reduction, and exposure of data in an interpretive-heuristic manner. The results showed that more students understood *Maleficent* films from a psychological perspective. Students are more likely to focus their research on the main character *Maleficent*, who brings up many psychological elements through his behaviour and mental processes. However, they understood that psychology is still in the stage of general psychology. Therefore, the teacher gives a deepening of material related to personality psychology contained in *Maleficent*.

Key words: *Personality, psychology, literature, film, teaching, learning.*

Introduction

The tertiary study of the psychology of literature, especially in language or literature majors, is not new. However, the psychology of literature is not as strong as other studies; the sociology or anthropology of literature for example (Ahmadi, 2015; 2019a; 2019b; Ahmadi, 2019c; Ahmadi, et al., 2019). This shows that in fact, psychology does not have a position or influence in literary studies. The lack of psychological studies in the context of literature has three main causes. First, there remains a lack of literary experts/literary critics in the field of psychology. Second, literary psychology is still rarely used. Third, the study/community of literary psychology also continues to be very rare. The study of psychology in literature is no less important than other studies, such as sociology of literature, anthropology of literature, or feminism in literature. In fact, in some universities that have literary study programs, literary psychology courses are optional studies, not compulsory studies. These trigger further the lack of psychological studies in literature.

Studies on psychology and literature have been conducted by Clough (2008), Frankland (2000), Hayes (1995), Lindauer (2009) and Moghaddam (2004). The authors point out the connection between psychology and literature. This connection can appear directly or indirectly. Psychology in literature emerges in the form of concretization of the author which indeed gave rise to psychology in literature or psychology in literature which appeared in the unconsciousness of the author. When viewed through a historical perspective, the study of psychology in literature strengthened when Freud (1910, 2011) linked his psychological analysis to literary context. Some theories in psychology that were raised by Freud were adapted from literature (especially mythology). Subsequently, Jung (1964, 1966a) followed Freud's view that psychology could be reviewed through literary media. He showed empirical data in literature which indeed contained knowledge in its elements. However, to understand the psychological elements in literature is not easy because the researcher must be able to interpret the symbols contained in literary works. Therefore, literary psychology researchers must know psychology to be able to interpret the elements of psychology in literature appropriately.

Starting from the initial presentation, the researchers linked psychology and literature more in a pure context not associated with learning. Therefore, this research aims to uncover the learning of literary psychology in the Indonesian Language and Literature Department. This research is very important because to understand psychology, students not only learn through psychology, but they can also study psychology through literary works. The teacher must also understand the science of psychology (Ahmadi, 2019d) so that he can understand his students in examining the setting of literary psychology. This study is referred to as appreciative-reflective, because this study is the result of a literary teaching of researchers categorized in individual experiences.

Literature Review

Psychology and Literature

Psychology of literature is a study which examines psychology in a literary context (Emir, 2016). As a study, it seeks to elevate the psychological elements contained in literature, both those that appear concretely and metaphors. The study of literary psychology can enter literature through four areas; namely the creative process, author psychology, work psychology, and reader psychology (Wellek & Warren, 1963). The four studies in the psychology of literature are general, but the most widely used by researchers is the psychology of works. The study of the psychology of works is indeed easier. It is more focused on literary texts in which it relates to dialogue, monologues, narratives, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs contained in literary works.

Literary psychology indeed appears later when compared with literary sociology. Literary sociology is indeed more robust because many experts understand sociology. Indeed, many studies in literature talk more about sociology than psychology; for example Marxian sociology, Hegelian sociology, or Goldmannian sociology. Psychology, as a 'younger brother' in the study of literature, slowly began to multiply studies to balance out and follow the development of science in the study of literature. Psychology of literature as a study of literary criticism is divided into two.

First, the study of monodisciplinary literature. Monodisciplinary literary studies discuss classical psychological theory, or focus more on one psychological figure. Examples include Freudian psychoanalysis, Jungian psychoanalysis, and the psychoanalysis of Fromm; a figure in psychoanalysis. The theories raised by these figures are well-established, so researchers who study the psychology of literature can more easily apply them in literature. Researchers no longer need to bother interpreting the theories raised by these psychological figures, because many have used the theory of psychoanalysis in literary or non-literary contexts. However, the drawback is that the more that have used monodisciplinary studies in literature, the less strong is the impression of originality. Therefore, the supporters of monodisciplinary studies revealed that they assume their studies are 'loyal to established theories', because strong theories are theories that have been around for a long time and are indeed raised by experts in their fields.

Second, the study of psychology in literature in an interdisciplinary context. This study is a study of psychological psychology in which it is related to interdisciplinary studies. This psychological study is indeed considered a more contemporary study, compared to a monodisciplinary study which is considered a classic study. Contemporary studies try to answer challenges in research that are currently increasingly complex and require complex studies as well (Blunden, 2010; Bærenholdt, 2010). Thus, interdisciplinary studies provide greater benefits in responding to the challenges of science which are increasingly complex from year to year. However, interdisciplinary literary psychology, as a new study, is less strong in terms of theory. Theories in the study of interdisciplinary literary psychology thus appear more in the form of hybridization. Interdisciplinary perspective literature studies are currently trending, for example psychotherapy. This study is a psychological study that links to the psychological context as a therapy/healer (Ward & Plagnol, 2019). It is an alternative effort in exploring psychotherapy contained in literature. Likewise with the study of trauma and literature which is currently also still a trend in the context of literary research (Kurt, 2018; Prorokova & Tal, 2018). The interdisciplinary study further enriches the study of psychology in literature. Thus, a literary researcher can get more knowledge from literary works.

Film and Literature

At present, this type of literature does not only refer to the realm of literary texts, such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama. Instead, along with the times, literature also entered the digital context (which is also called digital literature) and is also filmed. Therefore it is also called film literature. Related to this, the film is also considered as part of the genre of modern literature because some films are lifted from literature; for example, “Maleficent” (2019) which is lifted from classical literature. Similarly, “Joker” (2019) was adopted from a comic published around 1940 made by Bill Finger, Bob Kane, and Jerry Robinson.

Film and literature as they are now enter into various areas of science. At present, film and literature are connected together, so films can enter the literary genre (McParland, 2013). Films that appear in cinemas are sometimes adaptations or adoptions of literary works. Thus, there are also literary studies that relate to the film context, and there are also film studies that relate to the literary context.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative method because it more describes the data used in research and interprets it heuristically. It uses qualitative psychological methods because the researchers focus on descriptive expositions. Numerical data is used in the study as a description amplifier (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994; Riley, Sullivan, & Gibson, 2017; Lyons & Coyle, 2016). The descriptive data presented are the results of researchers’ analysis and interpretation.

The respondents were 44 students of the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, in a literature theory program. Data collection techniques were carried out through stages: interviews, questionnaires, and essays. Data analysis was carried out in stages of literary appreciation, namely (1) identification of data related to personality psychology contained in Maleficent; (2) classification of data relating to personality psychology contained in Maleficent; (3) data reduction that has a high relevance to personality psychology; and (4) data presentation related to personality psychology. The research was implemented over a period of around four months (August to December 2019). In August 2019, students were invited to watch Maleficent collectively. In September-October, students were asked to give responses related to Maleficent. For this stage, the context of the interview is carried out. In October-November, students wrote articles appraising Maleficent. In December, the instructor provided input on students’ work, relevant to their understanding of the psychological context, through literature (in this case Maleficent film-literature). Furthermore, the article was published in the form of a book chapter.

In this context, researchers act as instructors in literary theory courses, as constructors, and as interpreters of research. Thus, researchers are key instruments because they act as researchers, instructors, and also participants involved in research. In the final stage, the researcher triangulates the data so that the research results are more comprehensive, theoretically and methodologically. For the stage of appreciation of Maleficent, the initial stage is to watch Maleficent together, accompanied by a lecturer. Furthermore, students are asked to appreciate the results of watching the film in a psychological context. Appreciation occurs in the form of articles 1500 words in length.

Results and Discussion

In the first stage, students are asked to watch Maleficent, together. Second, students are asked to respond to the film. Students give responses related to the contents contained in the film. The student responses can be visualised thus:

Table 1: Student Responses to Maleficent

Student responses	Number
Psychological perspective	34 students
Sociological perspective	5 students
Anthropological perspective	3 students
Ecological perspective	2 students

Based on the table, 34 students gave responses related to psychological perspectives. The response to psychology is the highest in number and ranks first. The second sequence is sociological. The third sequence is anthropological and the lowest is ecological. This shows that students respond more to Maleficent films through psychological perspectives than other perspectives, eg sociological, anthropological, and ecological. Based on the results of interviews with students, 34 students did choose a psychological perspective because Maleficent raised more psychological contexts than other contexts. Five students responded that the Maleficent film was a sociological context, because the film tells more about the conflict between two big families, namely the royal family and the Maleficent family.

Each are large families with very different social backgrounds. The royal family lives in a city with a normal life, while the Maleficent family lives in the forest with fairies. Students who responded that the film was related to anthropology, did so because it raised two different cultural lives between Maleficent and the kingdom. The students who chose that Maleficent was more dominant in the ecological perspective, did so because it told about the forest ecology and its contents. The ecology has two sides, namely those that protect the forest ecology and those that damage the forest ecology. Each, which disparately destroys and protects the ecology of the forest and its contents, provide a natural balance when taken

collectively. On the one hand, there is damage to the environment. On the other there is a built-up environment. This is in line with the view of Fromm (1976), that life will give rise to dualism, namely to build and destroy. This term is known as biophilia and necrophilia. Both will try to strengthen each other so that there is a balance in natural life, both macrocosmic and microcosmic.

After giving responses that are related to the film *Maleficent*, students wrote articles following their responses to their instructors. Articles written by students have criteria of being; (1) 1500 words, (2) languages that are consistent and following grammar, (3) written themes related to psychological contexts, but if students prefer other contexts, eg sociology or anthropology, they are welcome. The article was sent to the teacher via email within one month. These articles were sent collectively to the instructor's email. Articles by these students appear in various writings that lead to a psychological perspective. The following are the results of the visualization of student articles that lead to psychology.

Table 2: Theme of Student Articles

Theme	Number
Psychology	40 students
Anthropology	4 students
	44 students

Based on Table 2 it appears that students predominantly wrote articles about psychology, when writing about the *Maleficent* films; specifically about the psychology of *Maleficent* figures. The theme of psychology in *Maleficent* occupies the first number with 40 students. They chose its psychology because they assumed that *Maleficent* was indeed predominantly set in a psychological context. Besides, *Maleficent* is indeed the title of the film and its appearance is the most dominant when compared to other figures. The second place is occupied by articles with cultural themes. Students who write about culture wrote about fashions used by *Maleficent*. Four students chose articles with cultural themes.

After the articles were collected and posted, the teacher gave input related to the psychological context of *Maleficent*. The teacher narrated the psychology contained in *Maleficent* and associated with work written by students. Thus, students understand the psychological context that comes from two directions.

First, students try to understand the psychology contained in the film through their understanding. As connoisseurs of (film) literature they explore and inquire about the psychology in the film. Of course, through digging and heuristic enquiry, students are expected to get empirical knowledge. Second, they gain an understanding of psychology in literature through the exposure provided by the instructor. Thus, students get personal

knowledge by digging out their own experiences, and from knowledge presented by the instructor.

Through *Maleficent*, students get psychology through the characters who appear in the film. The psyche that appears in *Maleficent* is associated with personality psychology. Personality psychology was chosen as the dominant psychology in the film. Therefore, it is raised as the subject. Even so, it does not rule out other psychological possibilities. Personality psychology in the film is more directed at Jungian psychology.

First, in the film talks very strongly about persona. In Jungian psychology, persona is raised to save face before the crowd. Persona is not a bad character, because the persona is indeed needed in social life. One needs to use a persona to be considered an ethical person by the community. Therefore, a persona cannot be separated from human ethics. However, the problem is the persona 'mask' used to cover up the evil contained within so that evil intentions are not visible, and remain unknown to others. Personas like this are very dangerous. The 'mask' is raised to cover up evil, not to bring up ethics in society.

In *Maleficent*, the Queen character appears as a very good person. Her goodness was raised in the three following segments. First, she agreed to the prince marrying his adopted woman *Maleficent*. The Queen strongly supports the prince marrying the woman of his choice and gives the freedom to choose women. Second, the Queen forgives *Maleficent* and asks her all her citizens to come for a dinner to be held at the palace. Third, during the prince's wedding party, the Queen requested all the subjects of *Maleficent* to attend the wedding held at the palace. The goodness raised by the queen is not true, but only false. Goodness is used to cover up the evil contained in her. She does not want her evil intentions known by others. The prince did not know that the Queen had evil intentions towards his future wife, *Maleficent*, and also towards the fairy residents who she considered her biggest enemies. That is called the Queen's persona. She uses her persona to cover up her crime. She wanted to kill *Maleficent* because the Queen had a huge grudge against *Maleficent*. Besides, the Queen also wants to destroy all the fairies in the forest, by inviting them to come to the prince's wedding. But when the fairies come, they are trapped and destroyed by deadly ingredients. *Maleficent* was shot using iron which is the main weakness of *Maleficent*. Fortunately, *Maleficent* can be saved by her friend.

Through this persona, students are expected to be able to understand the persona that may appear in the community and the persona that may not be raised in the community. If the persona is raised for ethical reasons, someone may use it in society. However, the persona may not be used to cover up a crime so that it is not known by others. This certainly harms others and is an unethical act.

The second element of personality psychology in the film directed at Jungian psychology involves anima and animus. A man has an anima, which is the nature of women owned by men. Men use anima to recognize women. As for women, they have animus, which is the nature of men found in women. Both are a balance in humans. A man will be able to understand the character of women through the anima found in him. Women will understand men through the animus character contained in her. In *Maleficent*, the prince who wants to get the princess tries to recognize what women want and like. This can be understood by the prince using the anima found in him. Vice versa, the princess who is the adopted son of *Maleficent* can understand what the prince wants, by using the animus contained in him. Thus, the two can understand and match each other so that a psychological balance arises.

Related to this, students take lessons that a man can understand women because he has anima. Women can understand men by using the animus contained in her. If both use the anima and animus inherent in themselves, they can balance the psychological condition, so that it is expected that there will be no misunderstanding in psychological problems. This understanding of mental balancing can only be obtained from psychological results. Therefore, Jung (1966a; 1966b; 1968; 1934) underlined that humans can indeed understand themselves and others, through a psychological context called unconscious psychology, because humans are driven by many unconscious factors.

Conclusions

These conclusions indicate that students can obtain psychological understanding through literary media (film). They gain understanding and learn about psychological contexts through behaviours and mental processes raised by characters in film. Therefore, when they write about it in the form of articles, it is easier for students to create psychological themes related to the films they watch. Thus, students can gain an empirical understanding of psychology based on personal experience, from watching films. Instructors can also provide material on psychology that is connected with films. Thus, students gain an understanding of psychology through empirical searching and also from lecturer exposure. Learning psychology through the context of literature is learning psychology in non-psychology students. By learning psychology through the medium of literature (film), students will more easily accept the cause of literature (film) being closer to the world of students. Learning psychology in students is an additional science. They not only understand lecture material which relates to the literary context, but also get enrichment by additional psychological material.

This study is a small scale research, so it does not rule out the possibility of differences in results with research conducted elsewhere on a larger scale. Thus, the researchers suggest that



the context of literary psychology be taught by instructors with an interest in psychology. This makes it easier for teachers to promote the study of literary psychology among students.



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