

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF A CHILD'S EMOTIONAL JOURNEY IN FACING THE LOSS OF A FATHER FIGURE IN THE NOVEL AYAH, WHERE IS THIS GOING?

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Received: January 2026; Accepted: January 2026

Abstract

This study aims to describe the emotional journey of children in dealing with the loss of the father figure as represented in the novel *Father, This Is the Direction to Where, huh?* by Khoirul Trian. This study uses a literary psychology approach with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory which includes aspects of id, ego, and superego. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with data collection techniques in the form of documentation studies through the extraction of relevant quotes from the novel. The data analysis technique is carried out using content analysis with the stages of reading the text in depth, determining the unit of analysis, classifying the data based on psychological aspects, and interpreting the meaning of the text. The results showed that the id aspect was the most dominant element with six citations, while the ego and superego aspects were found in two citations each. Thus, this novel represents the psychological process of children who experience the loss of a father in a complex and layered manner, as well as depicting psychological dynamics that are relevant to the emotional phenomena of the younger generation in the Indonesian social context.

Keywords: Emotional Journey, Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis, Psychology

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan perjalanan emosi anak dalam menghadapi kehilangan figur ayah sebagaimana digambarkan dalam novel *Father, This Is the Direction to Where, ya?* oleh Khoirul Trian. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi sastra dengan teori psikoanalitik Sigmund Freud yang mencakup aspek id, ego, dan superego. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa studi dokumentasi melalui ekstraksi kutipan yang relevan dari novel. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis konten dengan tahapan pembacaan teks secara mendalam, menentukan unit analisis, mengklasifikasikan data berdasarkan aspek psikologis, dan menafsirkan makna teks. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aspek id merupakan elemen yang paling dominan dengan enam kutipan, sedangkan aspek ego dan superego masing-masing ditemukan dalam dua kutipan. Dengan demikian, novel ini merepresentasikan proses psikologis anak-anak yang mengalami kehilangan ayah secara kompleks dan berlapis, serta menggambarkan dinamika psikologis yang relevan dengan fenomena emosional generasi muda dalam konteks sosial Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Perjalanan Emosional, Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud, Psikologi

How to Cite: Yulyanti – 1, Alsunah.A.A – 2, Nurwahidah L.S – 3, Julianto.C.D – 4. (2026). *A Child's Journey In Facing The Loss Of Father Figure In The Novel Ayah, Where Is This Going?. JEE, 9 (1), 112 - 119*

INTRODUCTION

The emotional journey of children who lose their fathers shows significant psychological impacts, such as loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem, which impact their emotional and social development. Popenoe (1996) highlighted the increased risk of juvenile delinquency and conduct disorder due to fatherlessness, while Lerner (2011) suggested that fatherlessness can lead to feelings of anger and shame. Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda (2004) emphasized the importance of fathers' roles in children's mental health, and research by Alfama, Santi, & Kusumandari (2022) demonstrated a link between fatherlessness and stress and low emotional maturity. Psychologists from Gadjah Mada University (2023) added that minimal paternal involvement impacts children's morals and behavior. Overall, experts agree that fatherlessness significantly impacts a child's psychological state and emotional development into adulthood.

Literary psychology aims to understand psychological aspects through scientific procedures in literary works. The world of fiction is an imitation of reality, so each character has a distinct psychological state that can be analyzed using psychological theory. Siswantoro (2005) stated that character behavior is empirical data that must be analyzed using adequate psychological theory.

Previous research by Ashlah (2024) examined the personality structure of the Id, Ego, and Superego of characters in Jostein Gaarder's novel *Dunia Anna*, demonstrating the dominance of the Id aspect through the main character's strong desire to save the earth from environmental damage. Meanwhile, Zukhruf (2019) found in Ayu Utami's novel *Lalita* that the main character is dominated by the Id, which is ultimately controlled by the Superego after experiencing trauma. Furthermore, Rosyidah (2024) used Abraham Maslow's theory to analyze character development in Boy Candra's novel *Bu, Tidak Ada Teman Menangis Malam Ini*, which shows the process of fulfilling basic needs through self-actualization. These studies provide insight that character in literature can be analyzed psychologically using different approaches to understand the dynamics of personality and psychological development of the characters.

The researcher sees a problem that needs to be studied through a literary psychology approach because the story in this novel contains important lessons. The researcher is very interested in exploring the psychological aspects of the characters in this novel. Based on these reasons, this research examines the novel *Ayah Ini Aarahnya Kemana, Ya?* by Khoirul using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The reason I researched this book is not only to invite readers and the pain of loss, but also to teach the importance of rediscovering hope and direction in life. This book successfully raises the theme of the role of fathers where the importance of the role of fathers presents a very relevant experience especially for teenagers and those who have experienced similar losses. This novel has a plot of how difficult the journey of a child who has to grow up without a father figure in his life. In addition, there is a feeling of a child whose fear covers his days and is difficult to live his life. But this book also describes the child rising and sincere and conveys deep emotions for anyone who feels the loss of someone, especially a father.

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative approach with descriptive qualitative methods. Descriptive qualitative methods in novel research are used to systematically and in-depthly reveal and describe facts related to the content and meaning of the novel.

Data sources were taken from the novel *Ayah, Ini Arahnya ke Mana, Ya?* by Khoirul Trian, as the main study material. Data came from scientific journals discussing the grieving process and emotional dynamics of children who lose their fathers. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focused on understanding phenomena in depth based on the context and subjectivity contained in the study materials, namely books and scientific journals.

Data collection techniques used document observation with relevant quotations from books. This research was also strengthened by theories from articles and journals. Data analysis techniques used content analysis from books, with the stages of selecting narrative data or quotations from journals. Stages of content analysis: Reading and understanding the novel thoroughly, reading the novel *Ayah, Ini Arahnya ke Mana, Ya?* repeatedly to understand the storyline, characters, and emotional context presented without rushing. This stage aims to capture the general picture and essence of the story. Determine the Unit of Analysis, Analyze and Interpret the Content of the Text Present the Results of the Analysis, Write a narrative description of the findings of the content analysis, with relevant quotes from the novel as supporting evidence. Explain how the novel conveys a message about the emotional journey of a child who loses a father. Next, Draw Conclusions and Implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Khoirul Trian's novel "Father, Where Is This Heading?" presents the main character as someone experiencing emotional loss of direction after the death of his father, reflected in the psychological conflict of an inner struggle between grief, confusion, and acceptance. This research examines the novel using Sigmund Freud's literary psychology approach, encompassing the aspects of the id, ego, and superego.

The analysis reveals six quotes representing the id, two quotes representing the ego, and two quotes representing the superego, for a total of eight quotes containing elements of literary psychology. The dominance of the id indicates that the main character's emotional drives and inner feelings are more prominent than the ego's control or the moral values of the superego. This finding is supported by theoretical foundations referring to the opinions of Zaviera (2020) and Minderop (2011), thus concluding that the characters' psychological conflicts in the novel are driven more by instinctive and emotional drives resulting from the loss of their father figure.

Discussion

The dominance of the id aspect in Khoirul Trian's novel *Ayah, Ini Arahnya ke Mana, ya?* indicates that the main character's psychological conflict is largely influenced by emotional and instinctive drives resulting from the loss of his father. The id aspect, which emerges in six quotes, represents the character's overwhelming grief, confusion, and emotional instability, which aligns with Freud's concept of the id as the source of basic human drives.

Meanwhile, the emergence of the ego and superego aspects, each found in only two quotes, indicates that self-control and internalization of moral values are not yet fully dominant within the character. This indicates that the character is still in the process of seeking psychological balance between emotional drives and reality. These findings are relevant to the views of Zaviera (2020) and Minderop (2011), who stated that loss can strengthen the dominance of the id before the ego and superego develop as coping mechanisms.

The Id aspect found in this analysis consists of six quotes (50%). The main character appears as a "sailor without a compass" tossed by waves of primitive emotions: a burning longing for a father's embrace, blinding anger at his absence, and existential confusion that culminates in impulsive expressions such as a child's question, "Daddy, where is this going?" An example of this quote is the ongoing longing of a child, encompassing both psychology and existentialism.

"Daddy, where is this going? This little child has lost his way home."
(on the first page or opening section)

The first quote depicts the existential psychology that devastates the main character. Psychologically, the id explosion manifests as a regression to the stage of a child struggling to seek a father's embrace for instant instinctive gratification. Existentially, the metaphor of "his way home" symbolizes the absolute structural nihilism of the loss of the entire compass of life's meaning (values, identity, purpose) previously found in the father figure, resulting in a crisis that has shaken Indonesia's Gen Z with the trauma of collective fatherlessness.

"Daddy, where are you?"

In every longing I send,
You caught one of them, right? (page 23)

Depicts the peak of the id crisis for both main characters, where each child's longing drives the most basic emotions that arise from psychology.

The idea in this section doesn't dwell on logic, but rather illustrates the feelings a child experiences when losing their father directly. In the section "Dad, where are you?", this section depicts someone losing an important figure within them, such as a father who provided comfort, security, and affection. This loss creates anxiety, emptiness, and fear, like a child who has done something wrong to their parents.

"Dad, I want you to congratulate me on even the smallest of my achievements.
Because the word "congratulations" is never simple.
That will be the best mantra for me." (page 44)

This quote presents a demand for the word "congratulations." Achievement is not merely interpreted as personal success, but as a means of gaining emotional legitimacy. The word "congratulations" is not intended as a mere expression of achievement, but rather as a sign of gratitude for the achievement. "The best mantra" indicates that the father's desire is acknowledged. Thus, this quote emphasizes that the father-child relationship is the greatest foundation for the child's self-esteem and emotional well-being.

"Where else will I find more?"

The phrase that always dances in my head at night and every time loneliness comes" (page 66)

Yulyanti – 1, Alsunah.A.A – 2, Nurwahidah L.S – 3, Julianto.C.D – 4. A Child' Journey In Facing The Loss Of Father Figure In The Novel Ayah, Where Is This Going?

Represents the work of the id in the form of repetitive urges that arise from affective emptiness. The phrase functions as a psychic echo of unmet basic needs, particularly related to the search for a figure who fulfills a sense of security and meaning. Within Freud's psychoanalytic framework, the id operates through the pleasure principle by producing repetitive and invasive thoughts in an attempt to reduce inner tension. Its emergence at night when ego control is weakened indicates the dominance of instinctive drives that are not channeled in reality. Loneliness acts as a trigger that reactivates the wound of separation, so that the subject is trapped in a cycle of desires and deficiencies that find no concrete resolution but continue to be reproduced in the mental realm.

"No matter how badly my father loved me, there was at least one day when he looked at my face as I fell asleep.

Back when everything was fine, I slept soundly. (page 88)

Representing the work of affective memory as a compensatory mechanism for an unequal relationship. The subject does not affirm the consistent presence of love, but instead holds on to minimal but meaningful fragments of positive experiences as a form of emotional validation. emotional attachment to the father figure. This memory serves to mitigate feelings of loss and ambivalence, affirming that love—though limited and less than ideal—was once present. The follow-up statement, "Back when everything was fine, I slept very soundly," reinforces the link between relational stability and psychological security, where sleep quality is an indicator of a protected emotional state. Psychodynamically, this narrative demonstrates the subject's attempt to maintain continuity of affection through a partial idealization of the past, as a way of managing the absence and fragility of the bond in the present.

"My father may not be visible, but he is in the deepest part of me.

In a heart that can no longer be touched by his hand,

In every second of my heartbeat,

All I know is that he will always live there." (page 112)

Although the father is no longer physically present, his presence remains alive in the subject's inner structure. The father figure transforms from a tangible presence into an internal representation that resides in the deepest layers of affective consciousness. He is no longer empirically accessible, but continues to operate in the emotional and symbolic realm—in the heart, in the rhythm of the heartbeat, and in everyday existential experience. This internality demonstrates a process of experiencing loss that does not end in absence, but rather in the perpetuation of the father figure as an inseparable part of the self. Thus, the father does not die in a psychological sense, but rather experiences a shift in the form of his presence: from external to immanent within the subject.

The ego aspect in this novel's characterization is identified through two quotes (17%) that mark the emergence of the main character's pragmatic awareness. The ego appears in the form of the bitter admission that "a sailor must keep sailing even without a compass," and through the attempt to establish an independent routine despite still being haunted by the shadow of the father figure. This condition demonstrates the ego's function as a fragile mechanism for compromising reality between the instinctive urge to return to the primary object of affection and the existential demands of survival without clear direction. The minimal presence of the ego (17%) actually has methodological significance, as it confirms Minderop's (2011) view that in Indonesian family trauma literature, the process of rational adaptation often lags behind emotional outbursts. This dynamic shapes the representation of a young generation (Gen Z) subject experiencing a fatherless state, trapped between the desire for primordial regression and

the necessity of survival. These two ego quotes serve as a crucial narrative bridge to the superego integration process in the final stage of the story.

"The me now is no longer pursuing much... I leave the rest to the Almighty."

"I don't know where reality takes my body, but that's where I survive." (page 78)

I'm in a phase where the urge to continue pursuing many things is no longer as strong as before. I continue to strive to the best of my conscious ability, while leaving the rest to a power greater than myself. In the current of reality that takes my body and life in directions I don't always choose, I'm learning to persevere, be present, and accept my existence as it is where I stand now.

"Dad, I'm sorry I often feel tired and want to give up."

"My desires are simple; I just want to make my family happy." (page 102)

Dad, I'm sorry I often feel tired and secretly want to give up. Behind all that, my desire is simple—I just want to make my family happy, even though my steps sometimes falter and my hopes don't always follow a straight path. If I'm still holding on today, it's because of the love and responsibility I continue to embrace, even in a silence that isn't always easy.

The superego aspect in Khoirul Trian's novel *Ayah, Ini Arahnya ke Mana, ya?* appears in two excerpts (17%) as a relatively weak yet transformational form of moral integration. The main character's superego develops through delayed ethical awareness, when he finally embraces social norms and the value of sincerity in Indonesian culture, accepting his father's sacrifice as part of the sandwich generation phenomenon while simultaneously inheriting responsibility for the next generation. Unlike the primitive impulses of the id and the ego's tendency to hesitate, the superego operates by transforming personal grief into collective strength, enabling the character to move forward not for self-interest, but to honor the paternal legacy. This condition reflects the paradox of Indonesia's Generation Z, who develop a moral compass not through direct direction, but through belated reflection on the sacrifices of deceased parents.

"Father, In your arms I take refuge from the evil world, in your arms I can tell stories without making a sound, in your lap my little self is celebrated so cutely. And now, Let me be the one to guard you from senility and the annoyance of old age Until you reach Gone and gone, my prayers are there. My prayers are everywhere. You must be happy too, so it's fair." (page 128)

The quote on page 128 represents the relationship between a father and a child as an intimate and layered emotional sanctuary, where the father figure is present not only as a protector from the harshness of the world, but also as a safe place to express feelings without words. The narrative moves from warm childhood memories to an awareness of the changing roles of aging, as the child takes on the role of guardian amidst memory decline and the fragility of old age. The prayer mentioned symbolizes the continuity of love that transcends physical presence, spreading "everywhere" as a form of love that is not bound by space and time. The closing sentence affirms emotional justice—that the father's happiness is also worth fighting for—while also demonstrating the subject's maturity in accepting loss as part of the cycle of life.

"Son, it feels comforting to receive the words 'Thank you' from so many people.

"You'll grow up that well, okay?" (page 142)

This quote is a source of peace. One day, grow into a person who can provide meaning, bring goodness, and cultivate gratitude to those around you—until your very existence becomes a source of peace for the world.

CONCLUSION

Khoirul Trian's novel "Father, Where Is This Heading?" presents the emotional journey of a child who has lost a father figure as a layered and non-linear psychological experience. Through the dominance of the id, the narrative shows how grief, longing, and existential confusion become the initial and most powerful responses to loss. The ego and superego appear in limited ways, but play a crucial role in marking the process of inner maturation, as the character slowly learns to survive, accept reality, and internalize moral values and familial responsibilities.

This dynamic illustrates that the process of emotional recovery does not always move toward complete resolution, but rather occurs as an ongoing negotiation between past wounds and the demands of present life. Thus, this novel not only represents the character's personal experience but also reflects the emotional phenomena of the younger generation growing up with the loss of a father figure. This work is relevant as a psychological, social, and cultural portrait within the context of contemporary Indonesian society..

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