

**MINNIE'S IMBALANCE PERSONALITY AS MANIFESTED IN HER  
DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR IN PHOEBE GLOECKNER'S  
*THE DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL***

Nur Astuti Sa'diyah  
Yogyakarta State University  
nurastutisa@gmail.com

**Abstract**

This research aims to: 1) reveal Minnie's imbalance system of personality which is triggered by her unpleasant experience, 2) scrutinize the relation between Minnie's imbalance system of personality and its manifestation as reflected in her delinquent behavior and increased sexual pleasure-seeking drives. This study is a qualitative research. Content analysis method was employed to analyze the data. The object of this study was a hybrid novel which contains both of words and graphic illustrations by Phoebe Gloeckner entitled *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*. The forms of the data of this study were expressions in words and pictures related to imbalance personality of Minnie which taken from the novel. The data collection was conducted by comprehensively reading the data and taking some notes of the important words and pictures expression related to the topic. The data were observed by using psychoanalysis theory from Sigmund Freud, focusing on the organization of personality, mainly in the domination of the id within the system of personality. In order to come to the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher applied proof-reading methods. The findings of the research show that Minnie's imbalance system of personality is caused by the domination of the id. Her parents' twice marital divorces which makes her lack of love and affection stimulates her id to seek for pleasure and to reduce the pain through delinquency such as having sexual activity to older men and girl of her age, stealing, engaging to drugs, and getting drunk. Minnie neglects the superego's state of morality; she keeps pursuing pleasure in an inappropriate way.

**Keywords:** delinquent behavior, psychoanalysis, the imbalance system of personality, the domination of the id, *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The nature of human beings is interesting to study since human beings possess different characteristics which make them unique. One of important aspects that distinguishes human beings from one another is their personalities. According to

Feist and J. Feist in their book entitled *Theories of Personality*, personality is "a pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior" (2006: 4). Thus, every person has diverse personality because they also have

different experiences in their lives. It can be a happy experience or an unpleasant one. Past experience influences someone's personality. A person with relatively joyful experience will have a balance personality in his/her later period of life. On the other hand, a person with unhappy or horrible past experience needs to undergo unhappy experience within him/her mind. It will bring a result of having imbalance personality or maladjustment to a person.

The essential roles of past experiences in shaping someone's personality is in line with the notion of psychoanalysis which was first introduced by Sigmund Freud. Freud (in Feist and J. Feist, 2006: 61) believes that past event is the key which determines most of human behavior. Psychoanalysis itself is a prominent instrument to understand human behavior as it deals with human psyche. It offers a study between consciousness and unconsciousness and it provides an analysis of behavioral deviation which is the result of the imbalance system of personality. Psychoanalysis theory can be used to study juvenile delinquency as Freud explains in his paper which is written in 1925 entitled "Psychoanalysis and Delinquency" that psychoanalysis can be applied in "the theory and practice of education"; he infers to the

capability and benefit of employing psychoanalysis to give more understanding about children and juvenile delinquents (Freud, 1950: 98-99).

Childhood experience is the most significant one in influencing someone's personality because it serves as the basic foundation of how a person would perceive the world. An example of childhood experience, to be precise past event, is the divorce of parents. Parents' divorce gives big contribution in influencing youth delinquent behavior and the issue is significant since it is still relevant to today's condition. Marital divorce will trigger children's psychological distress if the parents cannot provide affection and attention to their children any longer. It is said so since in many cases children with divorced parents are, on average, more likely to engage in "problem behaviors and delinquent acts" (Amato, McLanahan & Sandefur in Carr, 2009: 166). Also, Raley and Bumpass (in Carr, 2009: 164) says that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the ratio of marital divorce increased intensely with the highest rate in 1980. The notion that divorce is a common condition in most of family structure is highlighted by Amato (in Carr, 2009: 164): "at the beginning of the 21st century, about a half of all marriages ended

in divorce, with half of these involving children". In other words, around 40% of children will experience paternal divorce before the age of 18 (Raley and Bumpass in Carr, 2009: 164). As stated above, the amount of divorce which triggers juvenile delinquency is still high, whereas it is the major reason which makes adolescents engages in delinquency.

Gloeckner's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* portrays the issue of adolescent delinquency. It shows the condition of a broken-home girl who experiences twice parental divorce during her young age. Minnie, the main character in the novel, embodies the life of teenagers in common: most of teenagers have to deal with unescapable effects of the divorce of their parents. The inevitable effects are psychological distress and difficulty to grow up with less affection of the parents. As the result of the bitter experience, Minnie grows up as a teenager with delinquent behavior. This novel is a good representation of the complexities that adolescents have to contend with. Minnie has to cope with unpleasant past event i.e. her parents' divorce along with a lesser amount of affection, attention, and guidance from them, which is the circumstance that most of young people have to deal with.

Furthermore, Gloeckner's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* has some distinctive features that differ the novel from many other novels: "it truly looks and reads like a diary. However, it is important to note that Gloeckner does not describe her work as autobiographical despite numerous commonalities between her life and Minnie's: she refers to her work as fiction" (Booker, 2010: 261). Besides, *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* has the feature of graphic novel as it is a 'hybrid' one: it has both pictures and words. The combination between the words and pictures gives a sense of uniqueness to the novel. It shows the style of the author in delivering the story in an amusing technique. As *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* is considered as a novel, it has a larger amount of words than the graphic illustrations. However, the researcher intends to analyze both the words and pictures as the data. Gloeckner's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* shows the voices and thoughts of a teenage girl who narrates her experiences during adolescence in a delightful way.

This study focuses on the importance of unpleasant childhood experience that triggers Minnie's imbalance system of personality i.e. the domination of the id and the relation between the domination of the id

and its manifestation as reflected in her delinquent behavior. This research applies Psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud focusing on the organization of personality. Barry (1995: 96) says that psychoanalysis is originally a therapy to cure mental disorders by exploring the relation of consciousness and unconsciousness within human's mind. The main notion of Freud's psychoanalysis theory is the count on the unconsciousness, the part of human's mind beyond consciousness which strongly influences someone's action (Barry, 1995: 96). Unconsciousness is a concept that "human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware" (Tyson, 2006: 12). To be able to study the nature of human being deeper, however, it needs more than the understanding of conscious and unconscious; the knowledge of conscious and unconscious is not enough and insufficient. Therefore, Freud comes to formulate the organization of personality as "a coherent organization of mental processes" (Freud, 1960: 8). The organization personality is divided into id, ego, and superego.

The function of the id is to fulfill "the primordial or initial principle of life" called as *pleasure principle* (Hall, 1954: 22).

Freud says that the purpose of the pleasure principle is to get rid of tension (in Hall, 1954: 22). The id has no acknowledgment with logic or reality since it is "not governed by laws of reason or logic and it does not possess values ethics or morality" (Hall, 1954: 26). The ego represents "reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passions" (Freud, 1960: 19). While the id runs by pleasure principle, the ego is governed by *reality principle*: "the aim of the reality principle is to postpone the discharge of energy until the actual object that will satisfy the need have been discovered or produced" (Hall 1954: 28). Meanwhile, the superego is the "moral or juridical branch of personality" and it serves as the person's moral code (Freud in Hall 1954: 31). Freud (in Hall 1954: 31) adds that the ego develops through a child assimilation with his parents regarding "what is good and virtuous and what is bad and sinful."

The id, the ego, and the superego need to work together in harmony to create a healthy personality. When those three major systems are able to operate effectively, human needs and drives can be fulfilled. On the other hand, maladjustment within a person's psyche occurs if there is a system which dominates the other. If the ego

surrenders to the superego, a person's personality "will be dominated by moralistic considerations" rather than being realistic. In contrast, when the id gains more powerful control towards the ego, the person behavior tends to be "impulsive and primitive in character." The id-dominated person tends to be destructive and do not consider the consequences towards his actions and behavior because the id is "a selfish, pleasure-seeking structure, primitive, amoral, insistent, and rash" (Schultz and Schultz, 2009: 57).

Since the topic of this study is about an adolescent who commits delinquency, the theory of juvenile delinquency is employed. The term juvenile delinquency itself denotes to "any adolescents who break the law" (Brandt, 2006: 2). juvenile delinquency is not only included of criminality:

While delinquency does include crimes, it also includes a variety of other behaviors that are not criminal. Examples of such offenses include running away from home, truancy from school, and disobeying the lawful commands of parents or legal guardians (Shoemaker, 2009: 3).

Those statement is in line with Brandt who says that underage drinking and petty latency such as shoplifting and experimentation with drugs are classified to minor offenses which called as "status

offenses" (Brandt, 2006: 2-3). In addition, this study uses graphic illustration as the data; thus, it is important to understand the term of graphic novel. According to Rothschild, graphic novels use "words and pictures in ways that transcend ordinary art and text [...] In the ideal graphic novel, the text does not distract from the art or vice versa; the eye flows naturally from element to element, creating a whole that a text-only book cannot match" (1995: xiv).

## RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research method was used to conduct this research and the data result is in the form of words expressions. The source of the data was taken from *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* by Phoebe Gloeckner which was published 2015 in California. This novel is different from most type of novels since it is a hybrid novel: it consists of both words and comical pictures. The researcher read the novel carefully and comprehensively, took some notes of the important expressions related to the topic, then identified and categorized the data into table lists to answer research objectives. To gain trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation and consulted her study with her thesis advisor to validate the data.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings can be divided into two parts:

### A. The Trigger of Minnie's Imbalance Personality and Its Effect towards Her Personality

*The Diary of a Teenage Girl* narrates the condition of a broken-home girl who experiences twice parental divorces during her young age. The main character named Minnie experiences a psychological problem related to her imbalance system of personality. Her id, ego, and superego cannot work together in harmony due to her excessive needs for pursuing pleasure. The novel tells that Minnie engages in delinquency by getting herself into drugs, alcoholic beverages, latency, and sexual relationship without thinking about the consequences of her action towards herself and people around her; Minnie's id takes control over her ego and superego as she ignores the importance of others as long as she can gain pleasure and immediate gratification of her urges. Thus, the imbalance system of personality within Minnie comes from the domination of the id.

The domination of the id within Minnie's system of personality is triggered by her parents' divorce. Minnie experiences her parents' twice marital divorces and it

affects her life as well as her personality. The first divorce that she has to go through with happens when she is only a little kid and it makes her lack of a father figure:

I wish my father cared whether I was dead or alive. I never see him, never heard from him. I don't even know where he lives now. [...] Once my grandfather went to Bora-Bora and got me a little wooden monster carving with mother-of-pearl eyes. He told me that the spirit of my father was in it, and that I should keep it near me, and it would be just like my dad was next to me, thinking about me, hugging me. Magic (Gloeckner, 2015: 99).

The first divorce of her parents that she experiences in her childhood makes her lack of love and affection from her real father. The above quotation shows how Minnie is longing for love of her biological father; she portrays vividly the need for her real father figure in which she tries to feel the spirit and the existence of her father through the wooden doll that her grandfather gives her. This remark gives the first stepping stone to uncover the trigger behind Minnie's delinquent behavior because it gives significant effect towards Minnie's action and behavior. This condition is in line with Freud statement (in Feist and J. Feist, 2006: 61) that past event is the key which determines most of human behavior.

After the first divorce of her parents, Minnie does not live with her real father anymore; Minnie stays with her mother and her mother decides to have a second husband, Pascal: "I've known Pascal since I was four years old. He lived with us in Philadelphia for several years before he married my mother" (Gloeckner, 2015: 13). Pascal then makes Minnie, her mother, and her sister move from Philadelphia to San Francisco, but then he and her mother decided to get divorce: "We moved to San Francisco three or four years ago because of his job. He and mom split up very shortly after that. They are now almost divorced" (Gloeckner, 2015: 13). Minnie has to cope with the consequences of her parents' marital divorce. She says it vividly in her statement:

I said. "Yeah you made us move to California. Whether you should have or not. And then you and Mom immediately decide to get divorced. Now mom doesn't have a job, so we might have to go back to Philadelphia whether we want or not, and our lives will be disrupted and ruined and it's all your fault" (Gloeckner, 2015: 83).

Her parents' decisions to move to San Francisco and to get divorced give significant influences towards her life. Minnie considers it as the reason of her chaotic life. This condition is corresponding

to Amato's statement (in Carr, 2009: 167) that divorce leads to "residential changes." Moreover, since Minnie's mother gains the custody of Minnie, she works in the library to support the family life. It makes Minnie being left alone at home since divorce alters to "the mother's work schedule" (Amato in Carr, 2009: 167). Thus, not only Minnie has to deal with the loss of her real father because of the first divorce when she was only a little kid, but she also has to cope with the separation of her mother and her step-father. This case makes her lack of affection from her mother.

That circumstance triggers Minnie's id to avoid the pain from the lack of affection within herself. Therefore, Minnie seeks for love and attention from her mother's boyfriend, Monroe, who is "dashing thirty-five-years-old blonde" (Gloeckner, 2015: 145). The id stimulates Minnie to seek for pleasure and avoiding pain by getting into physical touch with the man who is so much older than him:



(Gloeckner, 2015: 84)

The illustration above shows how content Minnie is when Monroe touches her in affecting and friendly ways. She likes it whenever Monroe grabs her arm when she let him in the door or when he pats her on the shoulder when he says goodbye. Minnie feels that Monroe cares about her when he does so (Gloeckner, 2015: 84).

The urges of getting psychical affection become more intense; for cannot getting the need of love from her parents, she makes out with any guy as she feels that she can get attention from it: "I have gone to bed with someone every day for the past four. Tuesday, it was Monroe. Wednesday, Monroe and Ricky. Thursday, Monroe, and Friday, Ricky. I wonder if I can keep it up. I've sure been getting fucked a lot lately" (Gloeckner, 2015: 115). Minnie attempts to reduce the pain and consequences that is caused by her parents' divorce by getting the love and affection that she lacks of. Minnie's effort to reduce pain within herself happens because the id serves the demand of pleasure principle in which "the aim of pleasure principle may be said, then, to consist of avoiding pain and finding pleasure" (Freud in Hall, 1954: 22).

Also, Minnie admits that she does things in accordance to her instincts: "I don't care I don't care all the world is a stage, I

don't care. Am I the only existing natural person in the world? I want to obey my instincts, is that so wrong?" (Gloeckner, 2015: 76). While people in her surrounding label her as a girl who is willingly to go with any guy that comes along, Minnie thinks that there is nothing wrong with it; there is nothing to be ashamed of. She just wants to do as what her instincts command her to do without caring about anything else.

#### **B. The Manifestation of Minnie's Imbalance Personality**

The domination of the id within someone's personality occurs because the ego cannot master the battle between the id and the superego which is initiated by the id's unconscionable demand for pleasure. Thus, the relation between Minnie's imbalance system of personality and its manifestation can be seen from Minnie's delinquent behavior and increased sexual pleasure-seeking drives. Freud (1950: 223) believes that a person who has id domination personality possesses two traits: 'boundless egoism and a strong destructive impulse'. Minnie reflects these characteristics as she likes to engage with drugs: "He says I have to stop taking drugs. He told me that the test he gave me showed me that my iq had fallen ten points compared to the result from school a year ago" (Gloeckner, 2015: 275).

It shows the traits of boundless egoism and strong destructive urge of the id. Her encounter with drugs destroys her brain.

Not only dealing with drugs, but getting drunk is also the conduct of delinquency that Minnie does a lot:

I had seven rum and grapefruit juice. I was very drunk [...] I can't quite sure remember what happened.... It's all very unclear.... The liquor had been completely absorbed into my bloodstream by then, and the poisoned liquid had eloped my brain.... I was practically delirious (Gloeckner, 2015: 78).

The strong destructive urge which is one characteristic of the id portrayed in above quotation as Minnie tends to put herself in astray. The rum takes her body and mind as the id controls her personality. Minnie gets drunk, talks bad words, and disrespect older people as reflected in the picture below.



(Gloeckner, 2015: 78)

The graphic illustration also displays that Minnie keeps hanging out with Monroe and

ignores the facts that he is her mother's boyfriend and that he also has a romantic relationship with her mother. She only wants to pursue pleasure. The superego which holds the principle of morality surrenders to the id as Minnie does not care about the morality of her actions.

Besides, with the id that taking in charge, she makes her life in no direction by keeping herself being kicked out from schools:

The Urban School faculty has discussed the matter, and decided it best that I do not return next year. I was kicked out. It seems that Minnie has been doing very little work and has completed only half the requirements necessary for the credits she had aimed at getting. My mother was really mad because my grandparents are the ones who pay my tuition... (Gloeckner, 2015: 78).

Minnie gets kicked out from her second school which means that she fails her mother again. She behaves like a bad teenager with a poor school life. She neglects the fact that her mom has not got enough money and therefore she has to ask for support from her parents. However, Minnie does not care that the consequence of her behavior also put her mom in a difficult situation.

Minnie's id domination personality makes her conducting delinquency because the natures of delinquent traits are the same

with id domination personality which are reckless, harsh, selfish, and impulsive. It can be seen when she does shoplifting of some nail polish from a shop: "I paint my toenails nowadays. I stole the color—dark brown-red, red-red, purple, and shimmering pearly pink-red. They are all from Woolworth's on Polk Street" (Gloeckner, 2015: 121). Besides, Minnie steals money and pot in Monroe's house:



(Gloeckner, 2015: 135)

The picture expresses the characteristic of the id which is very selfish and recognizes no guilt of the unlawful conduct of her action. Minnie comes to Monroe's house with Kimmie, her friend, and when Monroe is taking shower, she and Kimmie decide to steal the pot and money; then they just leave the house before Monroe goes out from the bathroom.

The id as the place of all the instincts and desire recognizes two main instincts: the life instinct and the death instinct (Hall, 1954: 58). In addition, Freud (1950: 135) named the life instinct aslibidinal or sexual instinct which is known under the name of

*Eros*. Minnie clearly reflects the possession of the sexual instinct within her system of personality. She has an excessive drives for this instinct because her personality has been controlled by the domination of the id:

Maybe I should ignore everything. But I like sex. What am I supposed to do, ignore sex? I need sex. I really want to get laid right now—in fact, any time—the desire is insatiable. I don't know if I've made that clear—I really like getting fucked (Gloeckner, 2015: 26).

Minnie's domination of the id which always tries to pursue pleasure is vividly shown in her increased sexual-pleasure drives. She cannot get enough of having sex and always craves for it. Freud (1961: 4) explains that "the pleasure principle long persists, however, as the method of working employed by the sexual instincts." Thus, the id dominated personality which is controlled by the id will be dominated by the impulses of sexual instinct as well. This statement is in line with Minnie's condition that she tries to pursue the pleasure principle of the id by engaging in more and more sexual pleasure.

Furthermore, the pleasure principle which is the main function of the id is "often succeeds in overcoming the reality principle" (Freud, 1961: 4). Minnie often being overwhelmed by the pleasure principle

that she forgets about the reality of her surrounding:

Monroe and I went to the kitchen to eat eggs and soon we were caught up in a passionate embrace. We scrambled five eggs and made French toast of the rest. We kissed with crumbs in our mouths while the butter burned. Mom and Burt had fallen asleep while waiting for their eggs. Everyone loves eggs. We stumbled down the back stairs to the basement and made love by the washer and dryer. I cannot tell you how passionate, like waves, hot moist breath... [...] When we went upstairs Burt was in the kitchen stumbling around. He seemed surprised to see us together. He mumbled something about how he thought I was asleep (Gloeckner, 2015: 137).

Now Minnie neglects the reality principle as she keeps having sexual activity with Monroe even though her mother and everyone else are in the house. She does not even consider the potential problem if anyone finds out or sees her when she is doing it. Minnie abandons the ego's warns that the id needs to stop of committing sexual conduct. Her superego which reserves as the moral guidance of her personality also loses its control that "My body seems to have an overwhelming presence—I can move it anyway and it moves of its own accord. My mind has no say right now in the actions of my body"

(Gloeckner, 2015: 111). It shows the domination of the id which is manifested in her increased sexual pleasure-seeking drives that the reality principle loses its charge over Minnie's personality.

## CONCLUSION

Experiencing her parents' twice marital divorces, which makes her lack of love and affection from her parents, triggers Minnie's id to seek for attention and to pursue pleasure by engaging in delinquency. Minnie's id keeps pursuing for pleasure and immediate gratification by committing delinquency because she can repress her ego and reduce the pain of her psyche. Her personality neglects the superego's principle of morals and goodness; her id takes command over her ego to gain more attention and joy by engaging in delinquency.

Minnie engages in delinquency as the result of the domination of the id within her personality. She fulfills the id's demand by encountering with drugs while actuality this kind of behavior is illegal. Minnie smokes pot, joint, and poppers which makes her in the state of feeling high. She enjoys smoking those drugs because it brings pleasure for her. Minnie is also manifested the domination of the id by getting drunk into any alcoholic beverages. She does not

care that those drugs and alcoholic drinks poisoning her body and lower her intelligence. Also, Minnie vividly portrays 'the boundless egoism and a strong destructive impulse' as one characteristic of the id dominated personality by being kicked out from several schools. Moreover, as Minnie's personality is dominated by the id, she has an excessive urges of sexual needs. Minnie clearly shows a portrayal of a person who has id dominated personality. She is impulsive and always doing things without thinking about what consequences she has to take when she commits those delinquencies. Minnie, whose id dominated her personality, only cares about pursuing pleasure and getting satisfaction.

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