

## ***A STUDY ON AMBITION REPRESENTED BY THE TWO CHARACTERS IN AGATHA CHRISTIE'S THE ABC MURDERS***

### **(Kajian Terhadap Ambisi yang direpresentasikan oleh Dua Tokoh dalam Novel *The ABC Murders* Karya Agatha Christie)**

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#### ***Abstract***

Literary works are the reflection of real life. Novel is a literary work that tells a story in detail. The character in a novel usually describes the human attitude and behavior. Ambition is one of human attitude. This research discusses about the ambition of the two characters in *The ABC Murders* by Agatha Christie. This novel tells about the ambitious detective and the ambitious murderer. They have ambition to fulfill their psychogenic needs. The fulfillment of psychogenic needs that is experienced by the detective and the murderer is analyzed in Henry Murray's The Need Theory of Personality. The purpose of this study is to know the causes and the effects of the ambition of the detective and the murderer. The research is conducted by using the qualitative method. This research uses psychological approach to analyze the fictitious characters and the creative process of the author. The result from this study is that the ambition has the causes and the effects. The lesson taken from this research if the ambition is in control, it can change one's personality into good deeds.

**Keyword:** *Personality, Psychogenic Need, Ambition.*

#### **Abstrak**

Karya sastra adalah cerminan dari kehidupan nyata. Novel merupakan karya sastra yang menceritakan sebuah kisah dengan cukup detail. Tokoh cerita dari sebuah novel biasanya menggambarkan sikap dan perilaku manusia. Ambisi merupakan salah satu sikap manusia. Penelitian ini membahas tentang ambisi yang ada pada dua tokoh cerita di *The ABC Murders* oleh Agatha Christie. Novel ini menceritakan tentang seorang detektif yang ambisius dan ambisi seorang pembunuh. Mereka memiliki ambisi untuk memenuhi kebutuhan psikologis mereka. Pemenuhan kebutuhan psikologi yang dialami detektif dan pembunuh dianalisis dengan teori kebutuhan kepribadian dari Henry Murray. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui penyebab dan akibat ambisi dari detektif dan pembunuh. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi untuk menganalisis karakter fiktif dan proses kreatif penulis. Hasil penelitian ini adalah ambisi ada penyebab dan akibatnya. Pelajaran yang bisa diambil dari penelitian ini adalah ambisi yang terkontrol, dapat mengubah kepribadian seseorang menjadi baik.

**Kata kunci:** *Kepribadian, Kebutuhan Psikologi, Ambisi.*

## INTRODUCTION

*The ABC Murders* is a novel about solving serial murder cases. There are two characters in the novel to be analyzed. First, a detective named Hercule Poirot challenged the killer to reveal the murder. Second, Franklin Clarke who makes serial murders with initial alphabetic ABC. Both the two characters have ambitions and in the ending makes them involved in murder case.

Every human has an ambition. The ambition done by everyone does not have always good impact. If the ambition is in control, it can change our personality into good deeds.

Back to the novel written by Agatha Christie entitled *The ABC Murders*, it is one of Agatha Christie's novels about an ambitious detective named Hercule Poirot and Franklin Clarke as an ambitious murderer. This novel presents the solving of the serial murder cases.

In this novel, ambitious attitude becomes the discussion. There are two reasons in choosing *The ABC Murders* as the subject matter to be analyzed. First, is about the psychology in the novel. Some of the stories in the novel influenced the life of Agatha Christie. Studying psychology in *The ABC Murders* gives knowledge to the author's psychology when this literary work was created. It is also to know how Agatha Christie describes the ambition of the two characters in solving the problem so it is interesting to read. Readers will know how the two characters solve the problem and achieve their ambition.

The second reason is about the ambition that is reflected from the two characters. Ambition is one product of the needs of one's personality. Learning about ambition will give knowledge how to fulfill the needs properly to achieve the satisfaction of the goal.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of this research of this study is qualitative research. Qualitative method is a method of research which describes and explores the phenomena by collecting the data. The data format of the research is textual data and non numeric data. Thus, this research explains and explores the information, the data, and the fact. Qualitative research can be used to strengthen the opinion based on the data collected.

The data collection in this thesis is divided into two kinds: primary data and secondary data. The primary data of this research are the narration and the dialogues which focus on the ambition in *The ABC Murders* novel by Agatha Christie. The secondary data are information, opinions, and facts related to psychological approach and personology.

This research needs the psychological approach in application to analyze the fictitious characters in a literary work and the creative process of the author.

This thesis uses The Need Theory of Personality by Henry Murray. In this theory, Murray divides need into two kinds: they are primary (viscerogenic) need and

secondary (psychogenic) need. Viscerogenic need is a requirement that must be met. This need related to the physical.

"The secondary or psychogenic needs, which are presumably dependent upon and derived from the primary needs, may be briefly listed. They stand for common reaction systems and wishes. It is not supposed that they are fundamental, biological drives, though some may be innate. The first five pertain chiefly to actions associated with inanimate objects. (Murray, 1938:80)"

There are some needs in psychogenic needs which are used to apply in the analysis. Such as the need of acquisition, need of superiority, need of achievement, need of recognition, the need of exhibition, and the need of dominance. The six needs are needed in this thesis because they have a close relation with the two characters' ambition in their life. The theory of personality is very important in this thesis, because it is used to analyze, explore, then encounter the two characters' personality in this thesis.

## RESULT

The uncontrol ambition can cause big problems to someone, as shown in the story of the novel in the serial murders. In this novel, the author implicitly puts some messages, one of them is to control an ambition. Ambition that is done by everyone does not always have good impact. If the ambition is in control, it can change one's personality into good deeds.

## DISCUSSION

In *The ABC Murders*, Agatha Christie creates two characters who have ambition. The two characters are Hercule Poirot as a detective and Franklin Clarke as a murderer.

Poirot comes from high social status. This condition influences Poirot's personality, he is ambitious to defend his social status by revealing the murder case. He tries to reach his ambition because he wants to fulfill his psyche requirement. When he reaches his goals to defend his social status as a famous detective, he gets satisfaction. This condition happens when Poirot gets a letter from a murderer. Poirot feels challenged because there is a tone of contempt in a letter directed to him. The letter contains a challenge message to solve a case. Poirot feels compelled to defend the social status as the famous detective that is capable of revealing all murder cases encountered.

Actually, Poirot faces the serial murder cases. The murderer with ABC initials, starts in Andover with the victim named Alice Ascher, Bexhill-on-sea with the victim Betty Barnard, and in Churston, Torquay with the victim Carmichael Clarke. Poirot is ambitious to solve this case. Poirot only reveals special cases of murder, which the murder case is considered complicated to solve. Poirot chooses and takes the case which has the special cases. Choosing special case is an effort to fulfill the need of

achievement. He also wants to show that he is a detective who has high social status with high standard implements where he gets high social status in an effort to achieve the need of recognition.

To fulfill the other need, Poirot is pleased to get attention from others, to be seen, to make others excited, amazed and awed. With his appearance, Poirot knows that he will get attention from others as an effort to fulfil his psychogenic need especially the need of exhibition. In solving the murder case, Poirot always wants to control others to get information. This is because Poirot wants to fulfill psychogenic need especially the need of dominance. To control others is an effort to fulfill the need of dominance.

Poirot's ambition that is caused by his psychogenic need especially the need of superiority, the need of achievement, the need of recognition, the need of dominance, and the need of exhibition. If this need is fulfilled, Poirot gets mental satisfaction.

Even though both are ambitious, the murderer has different needs with Poirot. Franklin Clarke as the murderer character has ambition in his life. He struggles to reach his ambition to get property. Clarke comes from rich family and lives with his brother. Although he is from a rich family, he is always dissatisfied because of the failure in his life. He worries about his future. This condition influences Clarke's personality. His ambition to get his brother's property makes Clarke do the murder plan.

To get his ambition, Clarke does the serial murders. The real purpose of the victim is his brother. In fact, he plans the serial murders just to cover the real murder.

Clarke needs to murder his brother is to reach his ambition to get the property. The ambition to get property is to fulfil his psychogenic need especially in the need of acquisition.

Having done the murders, he always tries to make others surprised and intrigued, like to send a letter to Poirot. It is because he tries to fulfill psychogenic need especially the need of exhibition. To get attention, surprised, and intrigued others is an effort to fulfill the need of exhibition. When Poirot as a detective has not yet succeeded to solve this murder case, he feels satisfied of his success that can surpass others such as the famous detective. He tries to fulfill his psychogenic need especially the need of achievement. To surpass others is an effort to fulfil the need of achievement.

When he blends with the police, Poirot and as the victim's families, he also pretends to help in solving the murders to avoid suspicion. He wants to fulfill his psychogenic need especially acquisition and the need of recognition. To show the property is an effort to fulfil the need of recognition.

Clarke kills his brother is to reach his ambition to get the property. The ambition to get property is to fulfill his psychogenic need especially in the need of acquisition. Clarke did the murders to fulfill his ambition to get the wealth of his brother. His ambition is caused by the psychogenic need especially the need of acquisition, the need of recognition, the need of achievement, the need of exhibition, and the need of dominance.

The ambition always has the effect including the two characters' ambition that have different effect. Their ambitions lead them to some problems and it is an effect by their needs of psychogenic need to fill.

Poirot's ambition leads him to some social conflicts. Poirot gets social conflict from the people around him as the witnesses, the people who have relation with the victims, the police like Crome, and of course the murderer. Though in the end, Poirot succeeds to reveal this serial murder cases. Poirot's ambition has been achieved. If only Poirot did not have ambition to get high social status as a famous detective, his life will be fine from this serial murder case. It is as the effect of Poirot's ambition. Hence Poirot wants to fulfill his ambition to get high social status as a famous detective who is always successful to solve every murder case that he faces. He tries to fulfill his psychogenic need especially the need of superiority, the need of achievement, the need of recognition, the need of exhibition, and the need of dominance. Not only social conflict, but also Poirot reaches his ambition.

Even, Franklin Clarke must plan the serial murders as an effect of his ambition. Clarke's ambition had been reached after the death of his brother. He enjoys a moment the wealth of his brother. But his ambition to get property now is not reached after the murder is solved by Poirot. If only Clarke did not have ambition to get property, his life will be fine without doing the murders. Clarke did the serial murders with the main purpose of the victim is his brother. It is an effect by Clarke's ambition to get property legally from his brother. What he has done is to fulfill his psychogenic need especially the need of acquisition.

The ambition of the fictitious character in the novel has relation with Agatha Christie's life as the author of this novel. It is called Agatha Christie's creative process. Like her experience about poison that always appears in her novel shows that she became a nurse in World War I, include in *The ABC Murders*. Then, when Agatha Christie began to write a novel is challenged by her sister, like Poirot when he gets the threatening letter to solve the murder case. And the ambition of her husband as an archeologist then he joined to go to the Middle East the same as the murderer's brother as an archeologist. She also joined with the Detection Club along with the other ambitious writers, and her experience with her mother as a good teller when she was a child. It also is reflected in this novel when Poirot has a team to solve the case and the story of the mother of Mr. Cust. The relation are like *The ABC Murders* is one of Agatha Christie's novels that influenced her life. Therefore, Agatha Christie's life and her literary work has relation.

## CONCLUSION

This research discusses about ambition. Every human has desire, and strong desire will be an ambition. The ambition of someone caused by someone who wants to fulfill his needs. Henry Murray divides need into two kinds, they are primary (vicerogenic) need and secondary (psychogenic) need. Ambition has relation with the psychogenic need, because this need helps to analyze the individual mental condition. Ambition done by everyone not

always has good impact. If the ambition is in control, it can change our personality into virtue.

In this research, it is found that the two characters in the novel have ambitions. The two characters are Hercule Poirot as a famous detective and Franklin Clarke as a murderer. Poirot's ambition is to defend his social status as a famous detective who is always successful to solve all of the cases that he faces. Poirot's ambition is caused by the desire to fulfill the need of superiority, the need of achievement, the need of recognition, the need of dominance, and the need of exhibition. Poirot reaches his goals to solve the murder case, so he gets satisfaction. Whereas Franklin Clarke's ambition is to get property from the heritage of his brother's wealth. Clarke's ambition is caused by his desire to fulfill the need of acquisition, the need of exhibition, the need of achievement, and the need of recognition. Clarke can not reach his ambition, so he can not fulfill his psychogenic needs. Clarke does not get satisfaction.

In this research is also found the effects of the two character's ambition. Poirot gets social conflicts is because of his ambition. Social conflict happens with the murderer, the witnesses, and the people who are related to the victims. Clarke did the murders as the effect of his ambition. He did the serial murders with the purposed target is his own brother.

Besides the ambition of the characters in *The ABC Murders*, this research also analyzes the creative process of Agatha Christie. Her ambition writing the novels is influenced by her life experience, as shown in *The ABC Murders*. Like her experience about poison that always appears in her novel showed that she became a nurse in World War I. Agatha Christie began to write a novel is challenged by her sister. Along with the ambition of her husband as an archeologist, then he joined to go to the Middle East. She also joined the Detection Club along with the other ambitious writers, and her experience with her mother as a good teller when she was a child.

Based on this research, it should be a lesson that we should keep our ambition well. Everyone has desire and needs. Strong desire can be an ambition. In the fulfillment of ambition it should be controlled, so the ambition gives a good impact and changes our personality into good deeds.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praises to the highest Allah, the almighty God for His blessing that I can finish my study. I would also like to thank to Dra. Supiastutik, Mpd, The Head of English Department who give me change to write my thesis, to my first and second advisers, who gives their valuable correction, support, intellectual inspiration, and suggestion in writing the thesis, and all my best friends in English Department, thank you for accompanying me and your support.

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