

# THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF WAR ON MAIN CHARACTER: A FREUDIAN PERSPECTIVE ON "GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES"

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## Abstract

This study uses Freud's psychoanalysis to examine the psychological growth of the main character in Akiyuki Nosaka's story *Grave of the Fireflies*. The writer examines the dynamic interaction of Freud's tripartite model of the id, ego, and super-ego by analyzing the choices and actions of the main character. Every element of the main character's tripartite Id, Ego, and Super-ego is identified and explained in the novel with the use of the qualitative technique. The results demonstrate that when the character strives to get some nourishment for himself and his sister, his id is clearly visible. The ego can be seen in his efforts to make rational decisions and find the best ways to protect himself and his sister. A clear example of the influence of the super-ego is his feelings of guilt and regret over some of his decisions, such as not returning to his aunt or refusing to seek further help from others. The analysis reveals how war impacts the psychological states of individuals, highlighting the internal conflicts that arise when basic survival needs overshadow ethical standards.

Keywords: *Grave of the Fireflies*, Freudian tripartite psychoanalysis, War Impacts

## INTRODUCTION

War is an armed conflict between nations, groups, or opposing parties, typically involving physical violence, military strategies, and widespread social impacts. Beyond battlefield confrontations, war often brings about massive destruction to infrastructure, economies, and human lives, directly or indirectly. The casualties of war are not only soldiers but also civilians who often find themselves caught in the violence, losing their homes, resources, and even family members. In addition to physical losses, war leaves profound psychological trauma on survivors, with

effects that can last long after the fighting has ended. Recently conflict between Palestine and Israel, which affects children as innocent victims, can significantly impact their psychological development. Children exposed to war often face deep trauma that can disrupt the development of their ego and super-ego. This trauma may lead to instability in managing basic id impulses, such as fear and aggression. Long-term psychiatric illnesses like anxiety, sadness, or post-traumatic stress disorder may develop in children who see violence and bereavement. According to Freud, childhood trauma can also have an

impact on how a person develops their personality. As a result, these kids may find it difficult to balance their id impulses with moral standards and social reality or to build appropriate defense mechanisms. This may have a lasting negative effect on their mental well-being throughout their lives.

Both in the conflict between Israel and Palestine and in the story of *Grave of the Fireflies*, there are shared themes that can be illustrated through literature: both highlight the human toll of conflict. In the Israel-Palestine conflict, we see how this prolonged tension results in civilian suffering, displacement, the loss of loved ones, and profound trauma. This reminds us of the *Grave of the Fireflies* story, where children who were affected by the war in Japan likewise suffered an enormous amount of suffering and struggled to survive in the face of the chaos carried on by World War II.

The suffering of civilians, where violence particularly impacts children, and families not directly participating in the battle, upending their lives and leaving them scarred, is one of the commonalities between two stories. Both demonstrate the idea that, despite not having contributed to the outbreak of the conflict, civilians frequently bear the brunt of its effects. Losing Childhood Seita and Setsuko are forced to grow up too soon in *Grave of the Fireflies* because they must live lives that are very different from the innocence of childhood. Similarly, in the Israel-Palestine conflict, many children are forced to live under the shadow of prolonged conflict, losing the opportunity to experience normal childhood.

In literature, the depiction of human suffering in war invites empathy and awareness of the devastating impacts, inspiring hope for peace and mutual understanding

among people. Akiyuki Nosaka's semi-autobiographical short fiction, *Grave of the Fireflies*, known for its profound depiction of suffering and tragedy during World War II. The story focuses on the lives of two siblings, Seita and Setsuko, who struggle to survive after losing their parents in an air raid. Seita, as the main character, becomes the center of the story's emotional and psychological dynamics. Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, particularly his tripartite concept of the id, ego, and super-ego, the character can be analysed to uncover deep internal conflicts and the impact of war conditions on his psychological development.

In this context of research on *Grave of the Fireflies*, the character represents a civilian victim of war, particularly a child forced to survive amidst devastation. Along with his younger sister, the main character faces the harrowing consequences of war, including the loss of parents, starvation, and social alienation. Through the character story, it portrays the tragic impact of war on the innocent younger generation, showing how war not only destroys physically but also obliterates their future. This highlights the often-overlooked human aspect of war, emphasizing its profound effects on those who are most vulnerable. Psychoanalysis, for example, is seen as a therapeutic technique that aims to cure mental problems by investigating the interplay between conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind (Hossain, 2017). It analyses how our deepest fears and personal meanings connect to culture, offering a perspective on these as cultural constructs.

In this analysis of *Grave of the Fireflies*, the writer will explore how the impact of war and environmental pressures affect the character's psychological development, as well as how the conflict between the id, ego, and superego shapes his emotional

journey, using Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Hazer and Gredebäck (2023) highlighted that refugee families often face traumatic experiences during war, displacement, and resettlement, which significantly impact child development. Both parents and children are more susceptible to mental health problems, such as psychopathology and psychosomatic symptoms, as a result of these traumatic experiences.

According to Freud, a child's unconscious motivations and early experiences interact to determine how they develop psychologically. The Id, Ego, and Superego are the three primary parts of the personality structure that Freud separated. The most fundamental element is the id, which includes primal and innate urges including the need for comfort, nourishment, and sleep. The pleasure principle underpins a child's development, which means that the youngster inherently seeks out immediate satisfaction for their needs and wants without taking the repercussions into account. And more from Harcourt (2017) psychoanalysis is to possess virtue, as they understood it, is also to have mental health, where the different parts or faculties of the mind such as reason, desire, and others are in proper balance with each other. This form of mental health represents the most favourable state of life for the person living it.

The mental iceberg, also known as depth psychology, represents the human psyche as an iceberg. The smallest part, visible above the water, is the tip of the iceberg, which symbolizes consciousness. Just below the water's surface lies the subconscious or preconscious, representing the impulses that may rise to the conscious level. The largest portion of the iceberg, submerged beneath the water, is the unconscious, which contains deeper urges striving to reach consciousness. These impulses cons-

tantly push to the surface, even though the space available in the conscious mind is limited. According to Romeo, Freud's innovative model compared the mind to an iceberg, with the unconscious mind forming the large, unseen part below the surface. This model highlighted how unconscious processes significantly influence conscious thoughts and actions. It divided mental processes into three systems: the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious. The unconscious housed repressed desires and memories, the preconscious stored information that could be accessed by the conscious mind with some effort, and the conscious represented immediate awareness. (Romeo, 2024).

The initial study was taken from Daisuke Akimoto (2014) entitled *Peace education through the animated film Grave of the Fireflies Physical, psychological, and structural violence of war*. He studied three forms of violence: structural, psychological, and physical. First, the Kobe bombing is classified as an indiscriminate strike, direct physical violence, and a war crime that murdered people, especially women and children. He added that it is critical to keep in mind that Japan started the conflict, making this an example of the violent cycle that needs to be covered in peace education. Second, the aunt's severe treatment of the two main characters whose violent behavior drove them from her house and ultimately resulted in their deaths reveals psychological violence. Furthermore, structural violence also played a role in the siblings' deaths, as the government, society, and social systems failed to protect war orphans, exposing them to economic inequity and social discrimination.

A prior study conducted by Yamamura (2020) entitled *Travelling Grave of the Fireflies: The gap between creators' intentions and audiences'/tourists' interpretations*. In his study, he

explains how *Grave of the Fireflies* director, Isao Takahata, sought to produce a realistic portrayal. Takahata's early experience escaping incendiary bomb assaults in Okayama served as inspiration for his highly detailed depictions of the incendiary bombs and wartime scenarios. He voiced his worry that air strikes are no longer depicted truthfully in many contemporary movies. Takahata and his crew went location hunting in areas like Kobe and Nishinomiya that are connected to Nosaka's original novel in order to guarantee the film's authenticity. To provide authentic portrayals of the buildings and landscapes in the movie, they examined the sites and took pictures. The *Grave of the Fireflies* Blu-ray from 2012 includes some of these images. Takahata claimed that he did not mean to deliver an anti-war message, despite stressing the value of truth and detail in his film. He clarified that enhancing a movie's quality is one thing, but incorporating a message into it is quite another.

Another previous article by Ivan Gunawan (2017), in the academic research journal entitled *War and Children Pictured in Isao Takahata's (1988) Grave of the Fireflies*. According to his studies, a film can also serve as an instrument for expressing disapproval of events that occur in the real world, like war. *Grave of the Fireflies* is one of the films that tries to express opposition to war. In his journal, he also demonstrates how horrible and brutal the situation was in Kobe, Japan, during the war. Using Seita and Setsuko as the primary protagonists, he also analyzes the film's portrayal of children and how it effectively illustrates how defenseless children are during times of conflict.

A preceding study written by Kiyomi Wilks (2017), entitled *The Narrator, the Mute, and the Familiar: Configurations of Children in War Films*. She discusses three war films that

focus on children, one of which is *Grave of the Fireflies*. She investigates how and why children frequently appear in war movies in her studies. In contrast to such attempts at showing the child as a naive and innocent person, she argues that children in war films disrupt mainstream narratives about war and victimhood by presenting questions that break through conventional plots and show the child as an agency with adult knowledge. This is in contrast to the widely held belief that children are compelling as victims and objects of observation because of their innocence.

Other studies were taken from the Journal of Theory and Practice in Language Studies by Manli Peng and Yan Hua (2020), entitled *Who has Stolen Their Childhood? A Comparative Study Between the Book Thief and Grave of the Fireflies from the Perspective of Trauma Narratives*. They compare two stories from *Grave of the Fireflies* and *The Book Thief* in their paper, concluding that war and heedless patriotism have robbed children impacted by conflict in their youth. They argue that love, care, togetherness, and the opportunity to express pain can serve as healing. By comparing two stories, they found many similarities, such as themes and story backgrounds, traumatic experiences caused by war, and the didactic meaning inherent in both.

In contrast to previous studies on Akiyuki Nosaka's *Grave of the Fireflies*, this study is different. The majority of earlier research has typically focused on the story's social, cultural, or historical elements, such as how war affects children's lives, how war is criticized, or how trauma is portrayed. But, this study takes an alternative approach by exploring further into the main character's psychological growth utilizing Freud's psychoanalysis. Studies on *Grave of the Fireflies* have not extensively explored this method, particularly when it comes

to a thorough examination of how the id, ego, and super-ego interact to influence the choices and actions of the character.

By concentrating on the main character's psychological dynamics, this study offers a more intimate and comprehensive view of how traumatic experiences influence identity and behavior in addition to offering fresh insights into the personality traits and internal struggles. Because of this, this study adds something special to literary studies, particularly in relating psychoanalysis to the character's role within the story.

### **Id**

The three components of personality identified by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory are the id, ego, and super-ego. The most fundamental aspect of personality is the basic id. It is the storehouse of fundamental impulses and drives, including the need for food, alcohol, and sex. The pleasure principle, which the id follows, seeks instant delight at the expense of reality and consequences. It does not recognize logic, morality, or social rules; its sole focus is on the immediate fulfillment of desires and impulses. An example of the id's function can be seen in a child's behavior. For instance, a hungry baby will cry loudly, regardless of whether the mother is sleeping or busy. The baby demands immediate satisfaction, without regard for the situation or the comfort of others around them. Similarly, a child who is angry when their toy is taken away may immediately hit or grab the toy back because the id demands instant gratification of their desires. In adults, the ego and the super-ego usually regulate the id, but it continues to operate. However, id impulses can still emerge as impulsive desires, such as the craving for fast food, even when on a diet, or the urge to buy expensive items without considering financial conditions. When these impulses

arise, the ego typically works to balance the id's needs with reality and social norms, while the super-ego may provide moral or ethical considerations. The id is the disorganized element of the personality structure that holds human's basic, innate urges," Hussaini said in the journal's discussion. (Hussaini, 2019).

### **Ego**

The ego acts as a mediator between the internal desires of the id and the moral demands of the super-ego and the outside world. In this sense, the ego is the most sensible and practical aspect of the personality, striving to meet the id's demands in a way that is consistent with moral and societal norms. Freud described the ego as the aspect of personality that operates based on the reality principle, in contrast to the id, which functions on the pleasure principle. The ego attempts to find realistic ways to fulfill the desires and needs of the id without causing negative consequences. For instance, if the id desires immediate gratification, the ego will consider external circumstances and decide when and how these desires can be fulfilled without harming the individual.

Additionally, the ego plays a crucial role in maintaining psychological balance. When conflicts arise between the id and the super-ego, the ego employs various defense mechanisms to reduce the anxiety or stress caused by these conflicts. These defense mechanisms, such as denial, rationalization, or projection, work unconsciously to protect the individual from painful realities or internal threats. Yang made the observation that in addition to the id and super-ego, a person's "ego" is another facet of their personality. The ego serves as a mediator between the id and the super-ego, representing the conscious and logical aspect of the mind. Its function is to satisfy

the id's cravings in a way that is consistent with the person's values and objectives and acceptable in society. (Yang, 2023).

### **Super-ego**

Super-ego embodies the internal voice of morality and social control, which children develop from an early age. Freud explains that individuals shape their super-ego by internalizing the norms, values, and rules instilled by parents, teachers, and society. It acts as an ethical guide that evaluates an individual's actions, thoughts, and impulses based on learned moral principles. In other words, the super-ego is not just an internal judge but also a motivator for a person to do what is considered morally right. Freud explains that the super-ego often conflicts with the "id," which is the part of the personality that seeks instinctual gratification and desires without considering social consequences. While the id seeks immediate fulfillment of desires, the super-ego demands restraint and adherence to moral standards. Because the ego attempts to strike a balance between the irrational demands of the id and the strict moral standards of the super-ego, the super-ego often battles with both the id and the ego. Overall, super-ego has a crucial role in guiding human behavior towards what is socially and morally acceptable. However, in cases where the super-ego becomes too strong, individuals may experience excessive feelings of guilt or become overly self-critical, which can negatively impact their mental health. According to Toksoz, super-ego is encompassing social and cultural demands, taking on the role of a father, boss, authority figure, or even God within a person's mind. In its effort to fulfill the expectations of society, the super-ego is in direct opposition to the id's impulses and is also partially at odds with the ego. (Toksoz, 2017).

### **Conscious**

At this level of consciousness, individuals can process information they receive from their environment and make decisions based on that information. For example, when a person is talking with a friend, the thought processes used to understand the words, respond appropriately, and be aware of their surroundings all occur within the conscious mind. However, Freud argued that a larger portion of the human mind lies below the surface of this conscious awareness, within the realms of the preconscious and, most significantly, the unconscious. Freud believed that drives, memories, and experiences in the unconscious heavily influence conscious thought, even though the conscious mind is the visible and accessible layer. The conscious mind is merely the tip of the iceberg, while the most significant part of our mental life is hidden below the surface, shaping our behaviors, attitudes, and reactions in ways we are often unaware of.

Recent studies by Hendrix, he highlighted that consciousness is linked to that ego; during the mirror stage, it serves as a crucial foundation for the ego, while in the symbolic order, the ego becomes essential for consciousness. The distinction between the imaginary and symbolic orders lies in their relationship to consciousness; the imaginary involves the conscious ego, including elements of the unconscious that are accessible in the preconscious and brought to the conscious level through perception. (Hendrix, 2019).

### **Preconscious**

The preconscious includes all information, memories, or feelings that a person is not consciously aware of at a given moment, but which can be easily recalled to consciousness when needed. For example, the name of a friend that may not current-

ly be on your mind but can quickly be remembered when someone mentions it or when you try to recall it. In other words, the preconscious functions as a kind of bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. Freud argued that the preconscious plays an important role in mental life because it contains experiences, memories, or ideas that have been set aside from current awareness but are not entirely repressed or forgotten as they might be in the unconscious. Thus, function allows humans to filter relevant information from irrelevant information, enabling more efficient thinking and problem-solving processes. Joseph and Amalaveenus argue that the preconscious mind lies beneath the conscious mind and holds accessible memories. From the preconscious, individuals can bring memories into their conscious awareness. The existence of these two layers of the mind is generally undisputed. However, Freud proposed that these layers represent only a small portion of the mind, with the unconscious mind making up the larger part. (Joseph & Amalaveenus, 2022).

### Unconscious

One of the main ideas of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the unconscious, which is the term used to describe the majority of the human mind that is made up of memories, desires, sensations, and thoughts that are not conscious. The unconscious serves as a repository for all experiences that the conscious mind has repressed or rejected because they are too painful, anxiety-provoking, or socially unacceptable. These unconscious thoughts remain active and continue to influence a person's behavior, emotions, and thoughts, even though the individual is not aware of them. Many crucial aspects of human be-

havior, such as hidden impulses or motives, originate from this unconscious realm. Primal drives, such as aggression, sexuality, and fundamental desires or fears, often stem from the unconscious and may manifest in symbolic forms through dreams, slips of the tongue, or inexplicable behaviors.

Moreover, the unconscious plays a key role in psychological defense mechanisms, such as repression, where unpleasant thoughts or feelings are pushed from conscious awareness into the unconscious. Even when repressed, these elements remain active and can cause anxiety or other emotional problems if not properly processed. According to Hossain, the unconscious is a part of the mind that exists beyond the unclear and flexible limits of consciousness, shaped partly by the suppression of thoughts or experiences too distressing to stay within conscious awareness (Hossain, 2017). Additionally, Giordano (2021) highlighted the example of a human personality theory that describes how personality develops and what drives the creation of new thoughts is Sigmund Freud's theory of the Id, Ego, and Super-ego. Psychoanalytic theory can be used to analyze the characters' emotional difficulties and psychological conflicts in *Grave of the Fireflies*, especially the relationships between the Id, Ego, and Super-ego. The characters' psychological journey is portrayed in the novel in a way that reflects the evolution of psychoanalytic theory, specifically the influence of external conditions on internal psychological states. In line with Freud's theory of the struggle between the Id, Ego, and Super-ego, the psychological effects of war and its destruction show how trauma, terror, and survival instincts drive the characters' behavior.

## METHOD

This study prioritizes the implementation of qualitative methods. The qualitative method is a method of study that aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of social or cultural phenomena by looking at the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations offered by individuals or groups (Lim, 2024). According to Aspers and Corte (2019), this strategy requires gaining insight by approaching the subject being researched to discover relevant new features, which provides a more thorough and deeper understanding.

The writer in this study takes on the role of research instrument. In qualitative research, the writer is not merely an observer but plays a pivotal role as the instrument, shaping the process of data collection and analysis. Young and Frosh (2018) highlighted how psychoanalysis offers both conceptual and methodological tools to reintroduce the emphasis on subjectivity, especially its affective aspects, within the realm of narrative. Primary and secondary data are the two kinds of data employed in this qualitative study. The original subject that the primary data examines directly is Akiyuki Nosaka's novel *Grave of the Fireflies*. In order to gather primary and secondary data, the writer used an organized method that includes reading, identifying relevant information, and analyzing the findings. In contrast to secondary data, which includes additional information like articles, e-books, and journals, this data comprises phrases, statements, and quotations. The writer will use the explanations, citations, states, and relevant texts that were provided to help support the analysis. In order to gather primary data, researchers actively participate. A pre-existing data source known as secondary data is utilized to support primary data. (Nisa, Muhid & Heriyanto, 2022).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This structural model of the mind states that it is composed of three parts: the id, ego, and superego. Memories and impulses flow freely between these parts, each of which functions at a distinct level of consciousness. The id, fully unconscious, is the source of basic desires, continually active and driven by the pleasure principle, seeking immediate gratification without care for the consequences. As it and the superego generally arise from the id, the ego primarily operates in the conscious and preconscious domains. However, it also contains unconscious components. Following the reality principle, the ego resists incorrect urges and only operates on them when the proper conditions occur, thus controlling the id's desires. The superego, partially conscious, acts as a moral overseer of the ego, shaped by familial and societal values. It is the source of ideals, guilt, and fear of punishment, influencing the ego's decisions (Cherry, 2022).

### The Unconscious Aspects in The Character's "Id"

Pleasure is an emotion or longing that seeks to bring satisfaction. The desire for love, the fulfillment of basic needs like hunger, and the gratification of various wants are all natural and unpredictable parts of one's self. We can prove this statement when the character wants to fulfill of his basic needs just like anyone else.

"Seita, attracted solely to the smell of food, straying aimlessly about". (Nosaka, 1978:445). In that sentence telling that, the character exhibits traits of the "id" as described in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which focuses on instinctual drives, the fulfillment of basic needs, and primary desires. Usually, the "id" is focused on fulfilling physiological or emotional desires right away, ignoring truth or morals. The quo-



tation demonstrates how the character's actions are driven only by instincts, particularly the need to find food in order to survive.

*"by selling at a used clothing booth consisting of one laid out straw mat, a long woman's undergarment, an obi, a collar for the undergarment, a waistband, keepsakes from his mother"*. (Nosaka, 1978:445). Selling keepsakes from his mother, particularly personal items that likely hold emotional value, also shows that the character is governed by the "id." His immediate concern is to satisfy pressing needs, such as food, rather than preserving sentimental items, demonstrating that the basic survival instinct has taken precedence.

A new framework was proposed by Kerr (2024) according to Freud that since the id is impersonal, it cannot be regarded as a personal being. It functions beyond the individual ego and is derived from the natural rules of reality rather than the idealistic notion of free choice. The id, which is partially a part of the ego, serves as a storage for instincts and suppressed wants, giving it a special place in the psyche, a secret world of uncontrolled feelings that are uncontrollable by societal forces. Another evidence showing that the character exhibits characteristics of the id can be seen in the following sentence.

*"Seita, his composure gone, for an instant dashed into the entranceway, but black smoke was already streaming slowly out from inside"* (Nosaka, 1978:447). That sentence illustrates that the character lost his composure *"his composure gone"* and acted impulsively by running toward the entrance, even though the situation was highly dangerous. It reflects an id reaction, which focuses more on spontaneous actions without considering rational consequences, in this case, the danger of fire and bombs threatening his life. This impulsive action demonstrates that a

basic instinct drove the character to act immediately in the face of danger. More evidence proves that the main character possesses id traits in the novel.

*"Seita as if he had been sent a staggering blow broke into a run; his previous plan had been to escape to the embankment at Ishiya River, and he ran eastward along the elevated line of the Hanshin Railway, but the area was already in a state of chaos with people dashing for shelter, people dragging large full bedding"*. (Nosaka, 1978:448).

Here, the character acts based on an instinctive drive for survival, running away without a carefully thought-out plan. He reacts instinctively, driven by fear and the urge to escape. This reflects the id, as his behavior is focused more on flight and fulfilling the basic need for safety without considering the broader consequences or logic. Another proof about the main character "id" can be found in page 449, when he said.

*"You make it OK, Setsuko?" "one of my geta is lost," "your brother will buy another, a better one,"* (Nosaka, 1978:449). In this sentence, the character responds to the loss of Setsuko's geta (traditional Japanese sandals) by saying he will buy her a new and better one. This shows the character's impulsive reaction to immediately fulfill Setsuko's desires and needs without considering the larger situation, such as the war and their unstable financial situation. The desire to replace the geta without thinking about their resources or the hardships they are currently facing is an example of the id's drive for immediate gratification or satisfaction. According to Freud, our unconscious desires and thoughts stem from the id, which operates on the principle of instant satisfaction. Consider a situation where a child witnesses another child consuming a favorite snack. Impulsively, the first child snatches up the snack and devours it in a flash. This impulsive behavior serves as an

example of the id's instincts and desires. (Tarzian, Ndrrio & Fakoya, 2023).

### The Conscious and Preconscious Aspects in The Character's "Ego"

The interaction between the id and the super-ego results in the ego. It operates on the basis of the reality principle, which decides whether to follow the super-ego or the id and converts ideas into actions.

The ego will follow the id's wishes, while the id is in control. In a similar vein, the ego will adhere to the moral precepts of the super-ego if it is dominant. The novel *Grave of the Fireflies* serves as an example of this changing, as the actions of the main character are directly impacted by either the super-ego or the id. They exhibit various ego states or levels of consciousness together with a continuous pattern of complex activities. A component of the human psyche known as the "ego," which mediates between the moral values of the "superego," the unconscious impulses of the "id," and the demands of the outside world, is the focus of psychoanalytic ego theory. Following the reality principle, the ego seeks to satisfy the id's goals in a way that is acceptable to society while taking limitations and consequences into account. It manages internal problems and lessens anxiety by using defense strategies like repression, denial, or rationalization. All things considered, the ego is in charge of preserving stability and negotiating between natural desires, moral principles, and realistic circumstances in ordinary life. Here some evidence that the writer found in the novel about character ego that we can prove the ego statement above. When the character begs for forgiveness after being caught stealing food:

*"I'm sorry, please forgive me," in front of the terrified Setsuko on his and knees he apologized to the farmer, but no mercy, "my little sister,*

*she's sick, if I'm not here there's no way she can get by," "ya gotta lotta nerve, thievin' crops in war-time is one serious crime,' he was knocked down"* (Nosaka, 1978:459).

The main character actively tries to avoid punishment while showing awareness of the consequences of his actions (external expectations) by asserting that his motivation is the desire to care for his sister. This can be seen as the character's ego adapting to the external situation, where he feels threatened, but tries to maintain control over the situation. This is also further evidence that the character stealing to survive during the war to fulfill his and his sister's needs, driven by his ego:

*"Seita waited for the broadcasting of the air-raid warning alarms, set out stealing, in fear of these planes which just as they were seen glittering in the distant summer sky would suddenly come swooping in raining bullets and sweeping fire over their heads, the farmers all hid themselves in the shelters, waiting for this opening he snuck into the kitchens through wide open gates, randomly taking what he could"* (Nosaka, 1978:459).

The main character is aware of the threat posed by warplanes and uses the opportunity when the villagers are hiding to steal food. This is an example of how the character's ego balances the id's need (the desire for food and survival) with the dangerous reality of his environment. The character taking a kimono to trade for food:

*"In all that confusion had he chosen a colorful kimono that would be profitable in exchange?"* (Nosaka, 1978:459). The character's ego is at work making a logical and strategic decision for survival, like stealing a kimono that could be exchanged for rice, even in the midst of air raids. These passages show how the character uses rationality (a function of the ego) to deal with a harsh reality, even though his actions, like stealing, might conflict with moral or ethical norms super-ego. A new framework was proposed by

Ying & Ruilan (2024), from Freud's theory that the ego, an essential aspect of consciousness, manages how we interact with reality. It ensures that we adhere to the law and social norms while balancing our relationship with the outside world.

*"Watching Setsuko laying there dozing, clutching her doll, how 'bout cutting my finger, letting her drink the blood, hell, wouldn't make much difference if I cut just one off, I could give her the meat of it,"* (Nosaka, 1978:460). Rational action amid desperation when the character considers cutting off his finger to feed Setsuko, this illustrates the role of the ego, pressured by the id's drive to satisfy basic needs (hunger), but also influenced by the reality that such an extreme action might be futile. The character's decision to continue caring for Setsuko until the end, even though he knows there is nothing that can be done to save her, signifies an internal struggle within him, possibly linked to the dynamics of the ego, id, and the harsh reality. The ego also plays a role in balancing the Id and the Superego.

The ego, in Freud's view, is the conscious and logical aspect of the mind that strikes a balance between the id's demands and the outside world. Its goal is to satisfy the id's cravings without causing harm and in a way that is acceptable to society. A child who witnesses another child enjoying their favorite snack, for example, would fight the impulse to grab it by force since they know that doing so could result in punishment from an authority figure. In order to accomplish their aim in a way that is acceptable in society, the child may instead bargain, giving some of their own food in return for a portion of the other child's. (Tarzian et al., 2020).

### **The Conscious and Preconscious Aspects in The Character's "Super-ego"**

The aspect of the personality that serves as the moral and ethical monitor is called the super-ego. The values and norms instilled by parents, society, and the surrounding environment shape the super-ego. Its main role is to control the impulsive drives of the id by enforcing rules, inducing feelings of guilt, and motivating individuals to act according to moral and ideal standards. Another proven sentence can be found in the novel at page 450 that supports the character's super-ego is when he feels guilty after fleeing and leaving his mother behind.

*"Knowing that only because the short cut to the shelter had been blocked by fire, he had lost all concern for his mother's safety, Seita reproached himself, having run away at top speed like that"* (Nosaka, 1978:450). In this sentence, the character blames himself for neglecting his mother's safety while running away. This reflects the super-ego aspect, which causes the character to feel guilt for actions perceived as morally wrong. Another evidence proving that the character exhibits characteristics of the super-ego can be seen in the following sentence.

*"May I have the bandages removed so I can look at her?" The doctor, wearing the uniform of a military medic, at Seita's request stripped off the white cloth, "it would be better not to look, that would be better."* (Nosaka, 1978:451). The aspect of the personality that relates to moral principles, ethics, and social norms is referred to in this context as the super-ego. The main character requests to see his deceased mother, even after being advised that "it would be better not to look," reflecting his strong sense of responsibility and

moral obligation. He wants to face reality, even though it's incredibly painful. The super-ego is reflected in his effort to honour his mother, showing emotional restraint, and trying to act according to higher moral values, despite the extreme circumstances. Another sentence that indicates the character exhibits traits of the psychoanalytic super-ego can be found in this part:

*"Do ya remember that, Setsuko," he started to say, but no, no good to needlessly make her think about it.*" (Nosaka, 1978:454). In this context, the character decides not to remind Setsuko about their mother because he worries it will make her sad. This reflects the super-ego because the super-ego helps control emotional impulses that may conflict with moral or social norms. The character restrains his own urge to talk about their memories in order to protect Setsuko's feelings, showing a sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice for the well-being of others.

*"It was a kimono his mother had worn when she was younger, Seita remembered, during the parents' association's class observation he had looked back to confirm that his mother was the most beautiful, seeing her filled with pride"* (Nosaka, 1978:455).

The super-ego in this context emerges when the character recalls fond memories with his mother and feels a sense of pride for her. Even though there is a practical urge to trade his mother's kimono for rice (to meet basic needs like food), the character's super-ego manifests through moral and emotional feelings that remind him of the sentimental value of the kimono and his mother. This reflects the conflict between practical desires (id) and moral or sentimental values (super-ego), where the character struggles to maintain respect for his mother's memory despite the urgent circumstances.

Another evidence that reflects the character's super-ego is when he feels a sense of injustice regarding how his aunt treats them after trading his mother's kimono:

*"but now, one to of rice, just hearing the sound of those words one to be felt a joy welling up in him sending shivers through his body... once having fresh in her mind the taste of rice Setsuko lost her appetite for the stuff, 'I don't know how you can say that, that being our rice,' 'what, you saying your aunt's tryin' to trick you outa somethin?."* (Nosaka, 1978:455).

In this situation, even though the character realizes that he and his sister depend on their aunt's kindness, his super-ego makes him feel that their moral right to rice, traded from his mother's kimono, has been violated. This feeling arises from the character's internal moral code, which compels him to fight for fairness and dignity for his family. The conflict between gratitude and the sense of injustice highlights how the super-ego operates, balancing practical needs with a sense of moral responsibility to his family's memory and rights. According to Hussaini's (2019) study, the super-ego, which is derived from Freud, serves as the conscience, maintaining our sense of morality and keeping us from breaking taboos. Its nature is fundamentalist. This sentence evidence reflects the character's moral responsibility and guilt towards his younger sister, Setsuko, as well as his efforts to protect and care for her despite their difficult circumstances.

*"mamma too is in a grave, isn't she," at a loss for what to say, "I heard it from auntie, she said mamma already died and is in her grave," for the first time Seita broke into tears, "sometime we'll go visit her grave, d'ya remember Setsuko, I think you've been once to Kasugano Cemetery, near Nunobiki, that's where mamma is now,' in a small grave under a camphor tree, right, if I don't put her bones in there she'll never get to heaven".* (Nosaka,

ka, 1978:458).

This part shows that the character feels a duty to perform the proper rituals for his mother so she can “enter heaven.” This is an example of the super-ego, reflecting internalized moral values and social norms. “Whenever Seita went out he always stole from the home vegetable gardens a cucumber the size of his little finger or a green tomato, feeding it to Setsuko,” (Nosaka, 1978:458).

The part where the character tries to find food for Setsuko, such as stealing from vegetable gardens or feeding her whatever he can find, also illustrates the super-ego at work. He feels a sense of duty to care for his sister, even in desperate situations. This behavior demonstrates his moral responsibility and the urge to fulfill his obligations as an older brother. According to Freud, the super-ego is a moral guide that establishes what is right and wrong based on ethical and cultural norms, and it represents an acceptance of societal norms and ideals. It preserves moral values and could cause feelings of shame or guilt when one’s behavior deviates from them. In an ideal scenario, a child might be tempted to steal a snack, but they will remember that stealing is forbidden because of their favorite cartoon character’s moral lessons. Because of the cultural influence of their favorite cartoon character, the child chooses not to eat the food. (Tarzian et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The summary of this writing, the writer hopes that it will be beneficial for readers from all walks of life, providing valuable insights that can be applied to the community in the future. *Grave of the Fireflies*, a story about two siblings fighting for their lives in the thick of conflicts, is the main subject of my writing. The writer hopes that children out there, who are less fortunate in various aspects such as econo-

mics, education, and family matters, remain strong in facing these challenges. As we know, children under the age of maturity require psychological guidance, which is highly influential in helping them recognize and manage their emotions, overcome traumatic experiences, and develop social skills. Furthermore, psychological guidance enhances self-confidence, prevents behavioral issues, and supports academic performance. Through early intervention, children can learn to manage stress and develop effective learning strategies, preparing them to face challenges and grow emotionally and socially. We can see how the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine has had a tremendous impact on children, who are often innocent victims in the war. Children living in conflict zones face deep trauma, including fear, the loss of loved ones, and a constant sense of insecurity. In this context, psychological guidance plays a crucial role in helping them survive and build psychological resilience in such a difficult situation. Through psychological support, these children can be assisted in processing and overcoming the trauma they have experienced. They are taught to channel their negative emotions constructively, so their id can be more controlled and not become a source of unresolved fear or aggression.

In this writing, Seita symbolizes the millions of children who have become victims of war, losing their families and their basic human rights. His tragic story reminds us of the importance of peace in protecting the younger generation from the destructive impacts of war. Global peace is an urgent necessity to prevent tragedies like Seita’s from happening again and to uphold the rights of victims, especially children, in every situation.

Psychologists also help encourage the ego by teaching children with instruments

to manage tough events logically, helping them to keep a sense of safety and hope in their lives, even in frightening conditions. Lastly, this guidance plays a role in developing the super-ego by instilling values of peace and empathy, which are essential in maintaining their humanity amid violence. With psychological support, it is hoped that children exposed to conflict can build strong emotional and mental resilience. This not only allows them to survive mentally in the midst of war but also provides them with hope and guidance to create a better, peaceful future.

*“We are the world  
We are the children  
We are the ones who make a brighter day  
So, let’s start giving  
There’s a chance we’re taking  
We’re taking our own lives  
It’s true we’ll make a brighter day  
Just you and me”* (Michael Jackson, 1985).

Similar to the ideas presented here, the lyrics of the song “*We Are the World*” by Michael Jackson emphasize the importance of unity and shared responsibility in creating a peaceful world. Each individual plays a vital role in building a brighter future. By prioritizing compassion, taking action, and working collaboratively, we can overcome challenges and foster a world free of conflict. Together, we are reminded that peace begins with the choices we make today.

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