

A Psychological Study of the Main Character in the *Seher* Movie: Sigmund Freud Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines Burhan's psychological transformation in the movie "The Vengeance of Seher" using the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud's Id, Ego, and Superego. Qualitative descriptive research was applied with the information gathered from dialogue or sentences regarding the movie's main figure. The results of the study showed that the psychological pressure and rejection that the main figure received made the Id's urge more dominant, causing him to take a shortcut by using black magic. His inability to control his inner conflict pushed him towards destructive actions, ultimately negatively impacting him and those around him. The film *Seher* not only presents horror elements, but also depicts how psychological disorders can affect a person's behavior. Furthermore, this investigation provides insight into the importance of balance between the Id, Ego, and Superego in managing emotional stress. This study suggests that by comprehending fictional characters' psychological aspects, audiences could become more aware of mental health concerns and emotional control. This study suggests that by comprehending the psychological aspects of fictional characters, the audience could grow more aware of mental health concerns and emotional control. Moreover, this research recommends additional studies employing different psychological techniques in addition to audience reaction analysis.

Keywords: Psychological Study; *Seher* Movie; Sigmund Freud Perspective.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Film is one of the most popular entertainment media and influences contemporary society (Anggraeni et al., 2019). Film also serves as a medium to convey messages touching various aspects of human life, such as socio-culture, morals, and emotions (Rhosid & Sumarlan, 2023). It also can draw the attention of the audience through fascinating video visuals, strong narratives, and in-depth character roles (Goodwin et al., 2021). Therefore, a movie can also be an educational tool in addition to being an entertainment medium (Huda et al., 2023), which effectively communicates life values such as moral and ethical values. In this context, films also often present something relevant to human life, including films with the theme of *Seher*, which is related to supernatural beliefs, mystical practices, and the moral dilemmas surrounding the use of magical powers.

In many cultures, belief in the supernatural is an essential part of identity and tradition, shaping the way human interprets unexplained phenomena, which will always be present in people's lives (Afandi, 2018). The

traditional society, namely the Sasak Tribe, depicted in the film of *Seher* has become an identity that has become one with cultural identity, whether accepted or rejected. *Seher* or shamanism in traditional society is related to magical, supernatural, hidden powers, so that it is difficult to prove and cannot be accepted rationally (Silooy, 2023).

In line with that, Afandi (2018) explained that the practice of *Seher* in the Sasak tribe is closely related to the process of adapting people's beliefs, which acknowledge that there are spirits with supernatural abilities, and are still believed nowadays. In the era of modern society, some still know and believe in *Seher* or shamanic practices, which for some people are important traditions that are difficult to separate. This continuing belief demonstrates that the *Seher* is inseparable for many people and has become an aspect of cultural identity still relevant for the Sasak tribe. Liu (2023) stated that shamanism serves as a bridge between the supernatural and the secular, providing for the group's needs through practices like healing illnesses, reading fortunes, and pleading for Heaven's blessings.

The practice of *Seher* in modern society today illustrates the way of thinking and human behavior patterns from the results of cultural adjustments, which are obtained from the education of parents, teachers, and society (Silooy, 2023). The birth of the practice of *seher* or shamanism, both known as black and white magic, comes from human curiosity that is never satisfied in all aspects of life. In this modern era, the practice of *seher* or shamanism still has a place in the memory of traditions that bind the Sasak people in a simple way close to their customs (Wahyudin, 2018).

A *Seher*-themed movie that addresses the themes of revenge and the misuse of supernatural powers is the *Vengeance of Seher*. According to Amora (2025), This movie tells the story of Burhan, a man born into a low-income family who wants to propose to a beautiful girl named Salbiah. However, Salbiah's mother did not approve of their relationship. Burhan did various things, even asking for help from a shaman to get the blessing of Salbiah's parents, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Finally, a new conflict arose when his future mother-in-law wanted another man to accompany Salbiah's life. Knowing this, Burhan became furious. The shaman who was initially asked to melt the heart of his future mother-in-law turned into a deadly terror. He begged the shaman to make Salbiah insane and finally demanded that the shaman kill Salbiah, as her life is happy with another man.

This research aims to apply Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories of the Id, Ego, and Superego to examine the psychological transformation of the character Burhan in the movie *The Vengeance of Seher*. By examining how Burhan's decisions are influenced by internal conflict and emotional pressure, the study emphasizes the adverse impacts of an imbalanced mentality driven by primordial desire.

This study fills the knowledge gap by examining the lack of psychological analysis in previous studies on movies with supernatural themes. Previous research investigated films related to the supernatural or black magic was conducted by Yusof et al. (2021). They discussed the folkloric and gothic elements of the supernatural characters. Another study related to supernatural films was carried out by Humairah and Abdullah (2022) who examined supernatural events through a comparative literature approach. Additionally, Corbita and Saministrado (2019) explored the supernatural entities and their role in plot development. The latest research related to this is Halimah (2021) that focused on the religious and cultural implications of supernatural practices. The novelty of this study lies in its psychoanalytic approach to analyzing a supernatural-themed film, which differs from the previous research that primarily focused on supernatural figures, events, or cultural representations in horror and mystical films. Meanwhile, this research provides a psychological analysis of the main character in the *Seher* movie using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

By introducing a psychoanalytic lens to examine the psychological dynamics of characters in mystical and horror films, this study contributes to a better understanding of how emotional upheaval and unconscious impulses show up as destructive behavior. This work thereby closes the gap between psychological theory and film analysis, offering a new viewpoint for psychological research and film studies. Examining this movie from the perspective of Sigmund Freud's psychology is crucial. It allows us to understand Burhan's psychological actions, especially through the intersection of Id, Ego, and Superego. According to Freud's theory of personality, human behavior is driven by unconscious desires and internal conflicts between these three components. The Id is a primitive instinct which seeks immediate gratification, the Ego acts as a logical mediator between desire and reality, and the Superego

symbolizes the moral principle and societal norm (Feist & Feist, 2008). Therefore, this study attempts to respond to how the interaction between Id, Ego, and Superego shapes Burhan's personality and behavior in *Seher*'s film based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to examine Burhan's psychological transformation in the *Seher* movie. The qualitative descriptive method is highly appropriate for examining the film *Seher*, since this approach provides a holistic synopsis of an event or experience (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024). Furthermore, it allows for a detailed presentation of the study object and a thorough understanding of its characteristics, nature, and model (Furidha, 2023). In this study, the *Seher* movie represents the emotional and psychological experiences of its main character, which can be explained in detail through descriptions of events, expressions, and interactions between characters. Additionally, this study attempted to uncover the subconscious forces that drive Burhan's internal conflict and behavioral changes through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory by focusing on the Id, Ego, and Superego (Sheryl Norifly Loway & Nurochman, 2023).

This study used the techniques seen in Figure 1 to collect the data:

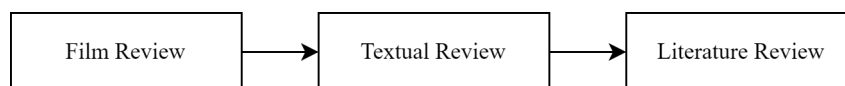


Figure 1. Adapted from Subagiyo and Sumayah (2025)

The first technique was a film review, which involved watching the *Seher* film repeatedly. Then, scenes related to Sigmund Freud's theory, such as the characters of the Id, ego, and superego in Burhan, were captured using screenshots. The next was a textual review that carefully focused on transcribing and reviewing dialogues, monologues, and expressions by the study center of this film. This transcription procedure verified that certain data matched the study's theoretical framework. The last is a literature review. This process entailed examining secondary sources to set the research in the context of previous Sigmund Freud theory studies and the *Seher* Movie.

After collecting the data, this study was analyzed employing Hamid Darmadi as cited in Kamma et al. (2023) with the following procedures: the first was classifying the personality based upon psychoanalysis in the film's main figure. In this phase, the researcher iteratively read the dialogue in the script to discern the change of Burhan's personality as the main character. The next step was examining the information that clarified the main character's personality traits in terms of psychoanalysis, known as the id, ego, and superego, which was used to identify every sentence that Burhan, the main figure, said. Following the data analysis, the researcher concluded and evaluated the findings to ensure that they adequately addressed the study objectives.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Sigmund Freud divided three main aspects of human personality into psychoanalytic theory: Id, Ego, and Superego. These three elements form individual behavior and decisions that interact dynamically. In this study, the researcher attempts to examine how the three aspects of personality affect the *Seher* movie's main character, Burhan, and how his psychological conflict develops throughout the storyline. The findings of this study are supported by scenes that have been selected and presented in the form of descriptive analysis. The analysis indicated that Burhan's personality is driven by the dynamic interaction of Id, Ego, and Superego, which shaped his emotions, thoughts, and actions throughout the storyline.

3.1. The Id of the Main Figure

Id is a personality that does not consider moral and social consequences, and is only oriented towards instant and primitive fulfillment of desires. In the *Seher* movie, we can find the Id aspect that is highly dominant in Burhan during the following emotional crisis:

A. Asking help to the shaman to get Salbiah's mother approval

- Shaman : "*Bagaimana dengan ibunya Salbiah*"? ("What about Salbiah's mother?")
Burhan : "*Sama saja tidak ada perubahan. Soalnya lagi ada masalah, terlambat saya datang*" ("It is still the same, no change. Because there was a problem, so, I came late")
Sapoan : "*Pantesan*" ("no wonder")
Shaman : "*Ya sudah, nanti setelah magrib kita lakukan ritual*" ("Okay, after the sunset prayer, we will do the ritual")



Figure 2. Burhan is asking for help to a shaman

The first Id traits in Burhan began when he was scolded by Salbiah's mother and rejected. Feeling hurt by her mother's attitude, he returned to the shaman for the second time to make Salbiah's mother's heart melt towards him. Burhan's instant way of asking for help from the shaman to get Salbiah's mother's approval indicated the Id attitude in Burhan. This behavior is a manifestation of the Id, as he does not consider the moral and social consequences of his actions. He also does not use his rationality to think whether the help from the shaman is the right thing to do or has bad consequences in the future (see Figure 2).

B. Using black magic to make Salbiah insane

- Burhan : "*Kalau bisa, buat dia gila*" ("if possible, make her insane")
Shaman : "*Bukannya kamu cinta? kenapa kamu meinta seperti itu*" ("don't you love her? Why do you ask so")
Burhan : "*dari pada dia bersma orang yang lain, lebih baik gak ada yang dapat*" ("Rather than she is with someone else, it is better that no one can get her Love")



Figure 3. Using black magic to make Salbiah insane

As seen in Figure 3, Burhan clearly shows the id aspect of his personality in this scene. When he found out that Salbiah would be with someone else, he could not accept the fact. Jealousy, possessiveness, and the desire to

have Salbiah are strong emotional drives that dominate his mind. He does not think about the impact of his actions and only ensures that if he cannot have Salbiah's love, no one else can either. Furthermore, Burhan's statement to the shaman, "*if possible, make her insane*," is a manifestation of the dominant Id attitude that works instinctively and does not take into account social norms or morality. The shaman who heard Burhan's statement also questioned his bad intentions. This indicates that his actions cannot be justified morally and rationally. However, he cannot think clearly due to this strong Id attitude. In addition, His statement "*Rather than she is with someone else, it is better that no one can get her Love*" is an egoistic and destructive attitude that characterizes the Id aspect.

C. Burhan's Desire to kill Salbiah

- Burhan : "*Bunuh saja, saya sudah muak*" ("just kill her, I am fed up")
Shaman : "*kalau sampai membunuh, Mbah tidak bisa*" ("if it comes to killing, I can't do it")
Burhan : "*saya minta tolong mbah, selama dia masih hidup saya akan selalu sakit hati*" ("I ask for help, as long as he is still alive, I will always be hurt")



Figure 4. Using black magic to make Salbiah insane

The peak of the uncontrolled Id drive in Burhan's personality can be seen in this scene, displayed in Figure 4, when he gets deeply hurt because he rejects reality and no longer thinks rationally. In this movie, the Id in Burhan peaks because he sees Salbiah, the person he loves so much, dating another man. She had an extraordinarily happy relationship with another man. Hence, this left a very deep wound to Burhan which caused him to decide to ask for help from a shaman to kill Salbiah. Instead of accepting it with an open heart or looking for a better solution, he chose to ask the shaman to kill Salbiah, which is an extreme action. When Burhan says, "*Just kill her, I am fed up*", it shows how he can no longer control his emotions. His anger has reached a point where he does not care about the moral or social consequences of his actions. The shaman, Mbah, responds more rationally, saying, "*If it comes to killing, I can't do it*". This answer indicates that even a shaman involved in black magic practices still has moral boundaries.

However, Burhan does not back down. He instead emphasizes his determination by saying, "*I ask for help, as long as he is still alive, I will always be hurt*". This statement shows that the Id completely controls Burhan; he only focused on himself, without considering Salbiah's rights, life, or feelings. In the end, he still kills Salbiah through his mother, who he does not know is a very powerful shaman. Throughout this scene, there is no sign that the Superego (moral awareness) or Ego (balance between desire and reality) is working in him. He does not think about whether killing is wrong or what the legal consequences will be. All that is on his mind is how to make his headache disappear as quickly as possible, even if it means sacrificing someone else's life.

3.2. The Ego of the Main Figure

In Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the Ego is a part of the human personality that connects the Id, an instinctive drive aimed at pleasure, and the Superego, which is a part of the human personality based on moral values and social norms. The Ego works based on the principle of reality, trying to fulfill the desires of the Id in a way that is acceptable in real life.

In the *Seher* movie, the main character Burhan faces various conflicts that weaken his Ego and finally loses to his id's urges. In the film, the ego of the character Burhan is still able to work well, but the emotional pressure, jealousy, and pain felt are what ultimately weaken Burhan's ego and make Burhan lose control. Burhan decided to use black magic not only because he had lost a realistic solution, but also because his emotions were overflowing. He also lost control because he saw Salbiah with someone else. The following is the journey of Burhan's ego.

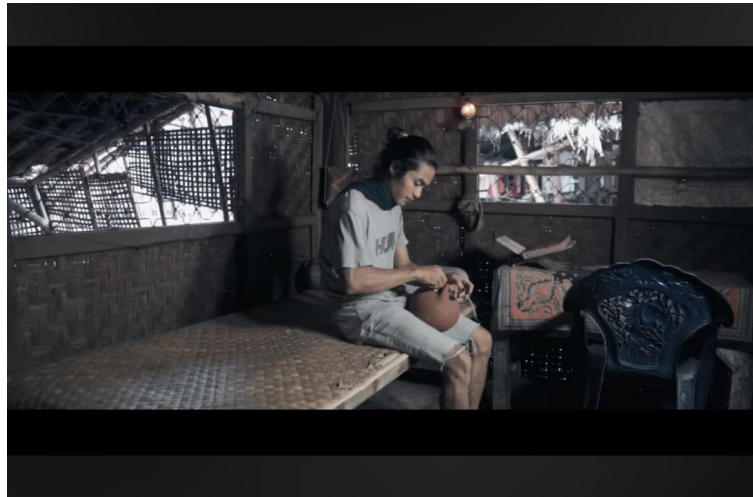


Figure 5. Burhan is saving his money to marry Salbiah

According to the Figure 5, Burhan still has a healthy ego at the story's beginning. He is aware of his economic shortcomings and is still looking for a rational solution to realize his desire to immediately marry Salbiah, his lover, by working hard and saving. Although Salbiah's mother refuses, He still tries to convince her in a socially acceptable way. At this point, Burhan's Ego is still working well and can balance the Id's urges (the desire to marry Salbiah) and the demands of the Superego (social and moral values that lead him to find the right way). The Ego in Burhan realizes that he must work hard, save, and try to get Salbiah's mother's blessing. Therefore, the ego is still working well because it can still find a rational solution that is acceptable in society.

Many pressures faced by Burhan have an impact on Burhan's Ego, which is increasingly weakening. Several factors influence it, such as Salbiah, who continues to ask for certainty, Salbiah's mother, who still does not like him, and Karyadi, a rich man, who becomes Burhan's rival in getting Salbiah. Therefore, Burhan's Ego has difficulty finding a realistic way out, and he then begins to follow his friend's advice to use the help of a shaman to make Salbiah's mother like him. This decision shows that Burhan's Ego is starting to crumble because he has begun to choose in an irrational way that is not based on moral norms. At this stage, Burhan's Ego is still functioning, but it is starting to weaken and lean towards the Id because of the pressure Burhan is receiving.

Eventually, when Burhan gets a job delivering fish to a restaurant, he finds Salbiah on a date with Karyadi, his rival. At this point, Burhan's emotions peak, hurt feelings and jealousy destroy his Ego, he has lost control and acts without considering social norms and moral values. In the end, the Id completely takes over his consciousness. He takes an irrational way, namely, Burhan no longer asks the shaman to make Salbiah crazy, and instead, he asks the shaman to kill Salbiah. At this moment, Burhan's Ego completely collapses, and the Id completely controls him. Hence, the Ego no longer functions as a mediator. He is completely subject to the Id's desires without considering the moral consequences.

A. Super Ego of the Main Figure

In the movie *Seher*, Burhan's personality shows a strong inner conflict between the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. However, the Superego appears to be very weak among these three psychological aspects and ultimately takes over by the Id. The superego controls Burhan's fundamental desires, ultimately leading to actions that violate human values (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Burhan's refusal to get the shaman's help

Sapoan : *"Ikut aku ke orang pintar"* ("follow me to the enchanter")

Burhan : *"Dukun Maksudmu? Tidak mungkin saja mengerjakan hal seperti itu. Tuhan Maha Melihat"*
("Shaman, you mean? It is impossible to do such a thing. God Sees all that we do")

At first, Burhan's Superego continued to suppress the Id's impulses. When Sapoan, Burhan's friend, invited him to a shaman to find a way to get Salbiah's mother's blessing, Burhan refused, as can be seen from the conversation. This refusal shows that his moral awareness is still powerful, and he believes that black magic is not the right way. He thinks he should obtain blessings through effort and hard work, not in ways that conflict with religious customs and beliefs. This indicates that Burhan's superego is still strong, although not powerful enough to maintain his morality for long.

Moreover, Burhan's superego begins to lose strength when he faces constant rejection from Salbiah's mother and competes with Karyadi, a rich man whom Salbiah's family prefers. Because his struggle was unsuccessful, Burhan became increasingly helpless and disappointed. Thus, the Id in him became stronger, forcing him to find a quick way to get Salbiah. Sapoan's influence drove Burhan's emotional urges, which eventually managed to trick him into going to the shaman. Burhan decided to give in to black magic as proof that his Superego was not strong enough to withstand the emotional pressure and desires of the Id.

When he decided to kill Salbiah with black magic, the destruction of Burhan's Superego peaked. At this point, his Superego no longer functioned. If he had been slightly aware of the ethics that had made him reject black magic previously, hatred and revenge had taken over him. Burhan no longer thought about the moral or social consequences of his actions. He thought of nothing but satisfying his pain and anger, even if it meant killing the woman he loved so much.

Burhan's decision to go down the path of murder showed that his morality and ethics had completely collapsed. If his Superego had remained, he would have faced a moral dilemma before committing such a heinous act. However, Burhan did not experience any guilt, regret, or hesitation before continuing with his plan. He willingly performs the black magic ritual his mother performed by sacrificing a black chicken, and follows the entire process of black magic without going against his conscience.

In Freud's theory, when the Superego fails to fulfill its function, the Id can drive a person's destructive desires. This happened to Burhan. If he had a stronger Superego, he might have been able to control his heartache and find another way to deal with his emotions without taking the dark and evil path. However, because his Superego was weak and unable to fight the urges of the Id, Burhan drowned in his destructive desires

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that the Id in Burhan dominated him so that it defeated his Ego and Superego. This drives him to do things that go beyond the limits, such as asking for help from a sorcerer to make Salbiah crazy and eventually kill her, even though he loves her very much. The deep hurt weakens the ego and superego in him. This study's results align with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes that impulsive and destructive behavior is caused by an imbalance of the Id, Ego, and superego (Ayar & Demir, 2022).

Previous studies have also found that the dominance of the Id leads to obsessive and destructive behavior (Olivia Ihueze & Chidimma Blessing, 2024). Furthermore, the use of black magic, in the film *Seher*, symbolizes Burhan's uncontrollable desire to have Salbiah immediately. This shows that he cannot manage the balance of emotions and his obsessions, which causes destruction in Salbiah's life. This phenomenon was also found by Arda and Kanten (2023), who state that an unbalanced personality structure can lead to self-destruction and negative impacts on the individual's social environment. Therefore, this film not only presents a supernatural horror story, but also becomes a psychological portrait of individuals who fail to balance aspects of their personality, as explained in various studies on personality psychology.

This finding is also in line with previous studies conducted by Bronkhorst (2022). He showed that deep inner conflict due to the inability to face reality is often depicted by characters involved in mystical practices, such as shamanism or the use of the supernatural. In line with that, black magic or *Seher* is often symbolized as uncontrollable desires and escape from social pressures (Sulaiman & Sule, 2023). In the context of *Seher*, Burhan's use of black magic represents his inability to manage his frustration and obsession with Salbiah. Thus, the supernatural elements in this film function as horror elements and reflect the psychological dynamics of individuals trapped in their internal conflicts.

These interpretations are echoed in the work of Maisari et al. (2024) who emphasize that characters resorting to the supernatural often reflect unresolved trauma and the repression of painful emotional experiences. Ahmad et al. 2023 also supernatural motifs in films often externalize characters' internal psychological conflicts, especially when those conflicts involve societal expectations or moral dilemmas. Similarly, James et al. (2024) found that mystical elements frequently serve as metaphors for suppressed emotions and failures in psychological regulation. Further reinforcing this, traditional beliefs such as shamanism are often depicted in modern films as symbolic expressions of cultural tension and unresolved psychological struggles (Humpal, 2023). In such narratives, black magic is commonly used as a metaphor for the loss of self-control and moral clarity under extreme psychological pressure (Salmanuddin & Munir, 2023).

Additionally, a study conducted found that mystical beings in cinema are often catalysts for character change (Junika et al., 2025), especially in situations where characters experience complex moral dilemmas. In the film *Seher*, the character of Burhan undergoes a sharp psychological transformation when he begins to rely on dark powers. His inner struggle between moral awareness and obsessive urges reflects how the dominance of the Id without control from the Ego and Superego can bring someone to the brink of destruction. His inner struggle between moral awareness and obsessive urges reflects how the dominance of the Id without control from the Ego and Superego can bring someone to the brink of destruction. Furthermore, research carried out by Sparkes (2014) on the cultural implications of supernatural practices shows that a person's involvement in black magic is often rooted in deep disappointment with life. Burhan, who feels he has no other choice to gain Salbiah, finally takes a mystical path contrary to moral and religious values. Thus, this film also critiques individuals who ignore ethical aspects in achieving their personal ambitions.

This study makes a significant contribution to the study of supernatural films, especially by adopting a psychoanalytic perspective to understand the main characters' motivations. While previous studies have focused on horror's cultural, mythological, and aesthetic aspects, the psychological approach in this analysis opens up new insights into how personality dynamics can shape the storyline in supernatural films. The analysis of Burhan's character shows that films like *Seher* present narratives of fear and mysticism and depict the psychological reality of humans in dealing with inner conflicts. By understanding how the Id, Ego, and Superego work in a person's personality, viewers can see that extreme actions in supernatural films often have strong roots in psychological imbalances, not just the effects of mystical elements alone. Therefore, films like *Seher* can be interesting study materials in understanding the relationship between mythology, psychology, and human behavior.

4. CONCLUSION

The psychological actions of Burhan as the main character in the film *Seher*, seen from the psychoanalytic perspective of Sigmund Freud, indicate the psychological conflict of the id, Ego, and Superego. These three elements of personality shape the individual behavior and decisions of the main character in the film *Seher*. The impulsive and destructive character of the main character is obtained from the dominance of the Id or primitive instinct to seek satisfaction, so that it defeats the Ego or rationality and the superego as morality.

At first, Burhan made an effort to approach his issues more logically, but he eventually lost control due to the escalating psychological pressure and rejection he experienced from Salbiah's mother. Over time, the urge from the Id that controlled his mind became stronger, causing him to choose a shortcut using black magic or *seher*. This shows how Burhan's inability to control his inner conflict can drive him to act beyond moral boundaries, including attempts to harm Salbiah.

The film *Seher* not only presents horror elements as its main attraction, but also illustrates how psychological pressure that is not managed properly can lead someone to destructive actions. The story presented in this film can reflect on the importance of the balance between the Id, Ego, and Superego in shaping human behavior. Therefore, this study suggests further studies using other psychological approaches, as well as analysis of audience reactions, so that the impact of this film on the audience can be understood more broadly.

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