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The Personality Typology of the Main Character in the Short Story “*Syaikh Balbis*” by Taufiq al-Hakim (A Literary Psychology Study)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the personality types of the main character in the short story *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method using the Hippocrates-Gallenus literary psychology personality type theory as its theoretical framework. The data consist of written texts found in Taufiq al-Hakim's short story *Syaikh Balbis*, which demonstrate the compatibility of the main character's personality traits from the Hippocrates-Gallenus perspective. The data collection methods include reading and note-taking techniques, library research, close reading, and manual coding, followed by data analysis procedures involving identification, analysis, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the main character exhibits four personality types according to Hippocrates: sanguine (friendly and self-confident), choleric (aggressive), melancholic (pessimistic) and phlegmatic (a strong sense of humor). This study contributes to broadening scholarly insight and may serve as a reference for future research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Personality in literary works can be understood as the expression of psychological dimensions that simultaneously provide deeper insight into the narrative (Firjatul et al., 2021). Personality offers multiple perspectives on characters, as each character in a literary text possesses distinct traits, which in turn constitute one of the central sources of a work's aesthetic appeal. By understanding a character's personality, readers are better equipped to comprehend the behavioral patterns and actions that unfold throughout the story (Noriska & Chalis, 2025).

Personality has long been regarded as a highly compelling subject of study, as reflected in the extensive interest of scholars in developing research and theoretical frameworks to facilitate a deeper understanding of human personality (Setiawan, 2018). Personality shapes differences in perception among individuals and is not a static construct; rather, it evolves and changes over time under the influence of various factors, including cultural elements such as societal values and norms (Malinda et al., 2024). According to Krech and Crutchfield (in Vohs & Baumeister, 2011) personality is the integration of all individual characteristics into a unique whole that determines, and is continually modified by, one's efforts to adapt to an ever-changing environment. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, personality is rooted in the dominance of the unconscious mental processes that lie outside conscious awareness yet strongly color emotional and cognitive structures (Minderop, 2018, p. 8). Hence, understanding personality essentially means understanding the self in its entirety, including one's identity, inner being, and psychological totality (Alwisol, 2018). For this reason, the study of personality becomes fundamentally important in examining human behavior.

The short story is one of the most prominent genres of literary expression and serves as a valuable object of scholarly investigation. Its distinctive characteristics concise narrative structure, focus on a single central conflict, and the ability to present a complete and coherent resolution constitute the aesthetic strength and appeal of the genre (Septriani & Mulyasih, 2022). Within a short story, personality can be understood as the means through which the author portrays a character's traits, dispositions, and psychological states using various narrative elements. A character's personality is revealed not only through dialogue but also through actions, thoughts, emotions, and the perceptions of other characters within the narrative (Lubis, 2023).

Literary psychology primarily focuses on the personality aspects of characters in literary works, making it an appropriate approach for the present study (Emilda et al., 2022). Literary psychology is employed to examine the extent to which an author's psychological involvement influences the creation of fictional characters and how effectively the author portrays characters who engage with psychological conflicts (Minderop, 2018). Endraswara (2022) emphasizes that literary psychology plays a significant role in the interpretation of literary works, particularly due to its capacity to uncover the deep psychological dimensions of characters. From the author's perspective, literary psychology serves as a comprehensive analytical alternative for examining character construction, complementing analyses that traditionally rely solely on intrinsic literary elements.

One of the most influential figures in the study of human personality is Hippocrates-Galenus, who developed a typology of human temperament consisting of four categories (Roedelein, 2006). The sanguine type refers to individuals born with a dominance of blood, which is associated with a warm disposition. The phlegmatic type describes individuals born with a dominance of phlegm, resulting in a calm and cool temperament. The choleric type

refers to individuals born with a dominance of yellow bile, which is associated with a dry and intense disposition. Meanwhile, individuals with a melancholic temperament are believed to be born with a dominance of black bile in their bodies (Rustam, 2016).

Hippocrates further explained that these four bodily fluids exist within individuals in proportions that vary from one person to another, and the dominance of any one fluid gives rise to distinct personality traits. Gallenus agreed with Hippocrates on the presence of these four fluids in the human body and later asserted that each fluid exists in the body in specific proportions, which ultimately shape individual differences (Musek, 2024).

This phenomenon can be observed in the main character of the short story *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim. The character of Syaikh Balbis, as the protagonist, explicitly demonstrates various behaviors and attitudes in responding to his surroundings, as narrated by the author. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the personality of the main character in *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim based on the Hippocrates-Gallenus typological theory. This analysis is grounded in the understanding that each individual possesses a unique personality that cannot be replicated by others. Likewise, the personality of literary characters may encompass diverse traits such as optimism, friendliness, perseverance, cheerfulness, and other distinctive characteristics. In the case of *Syaikh Balbis*, the protagonist's personality is examined through the lens of literary psychology. The researcher is particularly interested in conducting this study because the main character exhibits personality traits that closely correspond to the typologies proposed by Hippocrates-Gallenus, making the short story a relevant and compelling object of literary psychological analysis.

Several previous studies have examined *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim as a research object. Hadi (2015) employing Paul Ricoeur's literary hermeneutic approach, found that the short story presents a critique of image construction and duplicity, in which the protagonist displays a public persona that contradicts his true nature. This conclusion was drawn through symbolic and philosophical interpretation. Meanwhile, Mukarromah (2021) analyzed the same short story using Carl Gustav Jung's literary psychology. Her study revealed that Syaikh Balbis exhibits both conscious and unconscious aspects of personality, including the personal unconscious, persona, shadow, anima, and self. These studies demonstrate that *Syaikh Balbis* has been approached from different theoretical perspectives, namely literary hermeneutics and Jungian psychological analysis. Distinct from these earlier works, the present study examines the protagonist's personality types using the Hippocrates-Gallenus typology within a literary psychology framework. Additionally, while previous studies primarily focused on the meaning and general psychological portrayal of the protagonist, this research offers a clear novelty by specifically analyzing the typology of Syaikh Balbis as the main character. Analyzing personality psychology in literature allows us to understand how literary works influence readers' personality development and how authors project their lived experiences into fictional narratives. This highlights that literature is not merely a textual artifact but also a reflection of the intricate dimensions of the human psyche. Therefore, the present study holds both relevance and urgency for further scholarly inquiry.

This study aims to analyze the personality typology of the character *Syaikh Balbis* in the short story. The urgency of this research lies in its attempt to uncover the psychological dimensions embedded within Taufiq al-Hakim's *Syaikh Balbis*. Through this analysis, it is expected that readers will be encouraged to broaden their insights by deepening their understanding of literary works. This study may also serve as a reference or consideration for future literary researchers who wish to examine short stories from alternative theoretical perspectives. Observations indicate that the personality types portrayed in the story are

grounded in the principle that every work of fiction explicitly or implicitly reflects psychological tensions manifested through its characters, as shaped by the author's intent and narrative construction (Pasha et al., 2025).

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design using literary psychology as the analytical framework (Siska Anita et al., 2023). The data sources in this research consist of two types: primary data derived from the short story *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim, and secondary data in the form of books and e-journals relevant to the research theme (Noriska & Chalis, 2025).

The primary approach employed in this study is literary psychology, with a particular focus on analyzing the protagonist's personality through the Hippocrates-Gallenus typological framework. This theory serves as the analytical foundation for identifying and describing the four personality types sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic as reflected in the character's behaviors, dialogues, and emotional responses (Nasir et al., 2023). The selection of the Hippocrates-Gallenus theory is based on the strong alignment between the personality traits of the character Syaikh Balbis and the typological model, thereby enabling a more systematic and comprehensive examination of the psychological dynamics portrayed in the narrative. Through this approach, the study seeks to reveal how each personality type contributes to shaping the character's actions and internal conflicts throughout the storyline.

The data collection process begins with a reading and note taking technique to identify concrete and factual data, which are then selected and rewritten in an identification table (Semi, 2021). This step is followed by a literature study, during which the researcher examines and records textual elements related to characters, symbols, internal narratives, and significant events. The process continues with close reading to capture symbolic meanings and the psychological structure of the protagonist, accompanied by manual coding to mark textual segments that represent personality typology. Data analysis is conducted descriptively by explaining the character's traits, the storyline and relevant events in a narrative form (Endraswara, 2023). This is then followed by psychological interpretation using the Hippocrates-Gallenus typology to identify indicators of the sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic types. In the final stage, meaning construction is carried out by interpreting how the events and behaviors depicted in the story reflect the personality of Syaikh Balbis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1) The Short Story *Syaikh Balbis* by Taufiq al-Hakim

The short story *Syaikh Balbis*, included in Taufiq al-Hakim's anthology *Laylatuzzafaf*, narrates the life of a respected and highly regarded Syaikh whose personality and character differ markedly from the manner in which he presents himself publicly or is perceived by society. This discrepancy becomes evident through the narrative when the first-person narrator encounters the Syaikh and is profoundly shocked by his behavior, which contrasts sharply with the accounts of others who had previously met him. In that moment, the narrator witnesses the Syaikh transforming into a ferocious dog:

"He pulled his hand away and opened his mouth with a terrifying growl ... He reached out his hand toward me as if it were a claw ... as though he were about to attack ... and I knew nothing except fear as I ran swiftly toward the door" (Al-Hakim, 2023).

In *Syaikh Balbis*, the protagonist exhibits distinctive behavioral patterns that illuminate the nature of his personality. His true disposition contrasts sharply with the

character he presents in public. The narrative constructed by the author reveals an ongoing internal conflict that the protagonist must navigate. The analysis clearly shows that the Syaikh does not possess a singular personality type. In public settings, he appears warm, confident, and dignified traits characteristic of the sanguine temperament. However, in certain situations, he displays sudden, intense aggression resembling that of a fierce dog, which aligns with the choleric type. This psychological duality makes the character a compelling subject of study. Within the framework of the Hippocrates-Gallenus personality typology, these contrasting traits provide a basis for identifying and analyzing the various personality dimensions embodied by the Syaikh in the narrative.

2) Personality Typology of the Main Character in the Short Story *Syaikh Balbis*

In this section, the analysis reveals several findings related to the personality typology of the main character in *Syaikh Balbis*, based on the Hippocrates-Gallenus framework, which encompasses four personality types: sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic. The explanations of the data identified in the short story are presented as follows.

A. Sanguine

According to Hippocrates (as cited in Musek, 2024) people with a sanguine temperament typically possess qualities such as humility, sociability, friendliness, an easy smile, warmth, enthusiasm, optimism, intelligence, sincerity, cheerfulness, and a generally pleasant disposition, as well as a lack of vindictiveness. In Taufiq al-Hakim's short story *Syaikh Balbis*, there is a narrative excerpt that illustrates the sanguine traits of the main character, as shown in the following quotation:

فسحبها مني برفق وأفسح لي مكاناً إلى جواره، وهو يقول بصوته الوقور: أستغفر الله يا بني، أستغفر الله ... على مَنْ أخذت العلم في الأزهر الشريف؟! (Al-Hakīm, 2023)

[*"He gently pulled my hand and made room for me to sit beside him, saying in his calm and dignified voice: "I seek Allah's forgiveness, my son, I seek Allah's forgiveness... From whom did you receive your knowledge at Al-Azhar?"*]

The Syaikh's actions toward the narrator demonstrate the warmth and friendliness inherent in his character. Rather than maintaining distance, as is commonly expected from a respected religious figure, he instead offers the narrator a place beside him an act that eases the narrator's nervousness and discomfort upon meeting him. Furthermore, the Syaikh initiates the conversation by using the affectionate address "يا بني" (*my son*) which reinforces his welcoming and gentle demeanor. This display of friendliness reflects traits associated with the sanguine personality type, aligning with Hippocrates' typology, which characterizes sanguine individuals as warm and approachable toward others (Rustam, 2016).

Another characteristic of individuals with a sanguine personality is their sense of self-confidence. This trait is reflected in the behavior of the Syaikh, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

فقال لي بنبرة وقورة هامسا: لا ... يا بني هذا ليس ببرد... إني ما تعودت الكذب.... إنما هو مرض آخر. - ليس خطيراً على كل حال.

- أرجو أن يرثني الله منه (Al-Hakīm, 2023)

[*"He said to me in a solemn tone, whispering: "No, my son... this is not from the cold. I am not accustomed to lying... it is another kind of illness"*

- *What matters is that it is not dangerous*

- *I pray that Allah grants me recovery"*]

The excerpt above indicates that the Syaikh reassures the narrator that the congenital illness he suffers from poses no danger to anyone. His response reflects a strong sense of self-

confidence regarding his own condition, as he openly explains the nature of his illness to the narrator with clarity and certainty. This confidence stems from his knowledge of his health situation and his experience in managing the illness over time. Such self-assured behavior is one of the defining characteristics of the sanguine personality type. Therefore, the confidence demonstrated by the Syaikh suggests a clear tendency toward sanguine traits.

B. Choleric

The choleric personality type is typically characterized by decisiveness, high levels of enthusiasm, strong will, irritability, and a tendency toward aggressive behavior (Rustam, 2016). The researcher identified several narrative excerpts that illustrate choleric traits in the character of the Syaikh, as presented below:

فقد جحظت عيناه ... وتغير وجهه وأرغى وأزبد ... وكشر عن أنيابه، وانقلب - في لحظة - ذلك الشيخ الوقور، إلى كلب خطر عقور ... وترك كفه وفغر فاه ومد يديه نحوي كأنهما مخالب ... وهَمَّ بالهجوم علي ... (Al-Hakīm, 2023)
[“His eyes bulged... his face transformed... he foamed and growled... baring his teeth. In an instant, that dignified Syaikh turned into a dangerous, rabid dog. He slipped his sleeve free, opened his mouth wide, and stretched his hands toward me as though they were claws... poised to launch an attack upon me...”]

Syaikh displays highly aggressive behavior, evident in the sudden change in his facial expression and bodily movements. His bulging eyes, drastic shift in facial features, growling mouth, bared teeth, and the way he extends his hands as if preparing to strike all occur as a result of his illness suddenly recurring, causing him to react with animal like ferocity. Nonetheless, these actions can be interpreted as manifestations of intense aggressive impulses within him. The abrupt transformation from a previously calm and dignified figure into a fierce and threatening presence demonstrates a strong tendency toward aggression, which is a defining characteristic of the choleric personality type. Thus, it can be concluded that the Syaikh exhibits choleric traits in his personality.

C. Melancholic

Individuals with a melancholic personality type typically exhibit distinctive psychological traits, including a tendency toward disappointment, low endurance, self-sacrifice, giftedness, perfectionism, introversion, reluctance to stand out, gloominess, pessimism, fearfulness, rigidity and heightened emotional sensitivity (Musek, 2024). The melancholic trait of pessimism is reflected in the following excerpt:

العلاج بيد الله ... وأخشى أن يكون قد فات أوانه كل ما أرجوه ألا يكون دائي خطرا على الناس ... كفى ما حدث لذلك الخادم المسكين (Al-Hakīm, 2023) ..
[“Healing is in the hands of Allah... and I fear that it may already be too late. All I hope for is that my illness does not endanger others... what happened to that poor servant is more than enough”]

The excerpt “العلاج بيد الله ... وأخشى أن يكون قد فات أوانه” (“Healing is in the hands of Allah... and I fear that it may already be too late”) reveals the psychological dimension of the Syaikh, particularly his tendency toward negative thinking. Within personality typology especially the melancholic type pessimism often emerges through an individual’s evaluation of their own condition. The Syaikh does not view the possibility of recovery with optimism; instead, he

fears that healing is no longer attainable. Thus, his pessimistic attitude reflects traits characteristic of the melancholic personality type.

D. Phlegmatic

Individuals with a phlegmatic personality type typically possess a strong sense of humor, shyness, quietness, calmness, high social awareness, an inclination to avoid conflict, a relaxed disposition, strong observational tendencies, and an appreciation for peace and harmony (Sutrisno, 2020). The following excerpt illustrates the phlegmatic traits exhibited by the character of the Syaikh:

فلما انكشفت لي الحقيقة وأبدت احتجاجي ... قال لي المدير باسمًا: ألا تعرف الشيخ البلبيسي ونوادره ودعاباته؟! ... هذا هو الشيخ البلبيسي ... هل تعرفه الآن؟ (Al-Hakīm, 2023)

[When the truth was finally revealed to me and I expressed my frustration, the director said to me with a smile: "Do you not know Syaikh Balbis and his jokes and playful antics?! ... This is Syaikh Balbis... Do you recognize him now?"]

The dialogue "ألا تعرف الشيخ البلبيسي ونوادره ودعاباته؟" ("Do you not know Syaikh Balbis and his jokes?"), emphasizes that Syaikh Balbis is widely known for his humorous remarks and playful behavior. The director's statement reveals an aspect of the Syaikh's character that the narrator had not previously recognized namely, his strong sense of humor. In this context, the Syaikh's humor is evident in the way he turns his own illness into a source of amusement. As a result, all of the guests present join in the laughter, indicating that such humor is a distinctive feature of his personality. Therefore, the Syaikh's humorous behavior aligns with the characteristic traits of the phlegmatic personality type, as previously described (Suharsono & Amriani, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the main character in the short story *Syaikh Balbis* embodies four distinct personality types sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. The protagonist demonstrates sanguine traits through his friendliness and self-confidence, choleric traits through his aggressive behavior, melancholic traits through his pessimistic tendencies, and phlegmatic traits through his pronounced sense of humor. These personality typologies form the underlying basis of the character's behavioral patterns throughout the narrative. The findings indicate that the character's actions are not random; rather, they are shaped by specific psychological factors, particularly the dominant personality traits he possesses. Among the four typologies, the sanguine personality emerges as the most prominent in Syaikh Balbis, giving rise to distinctive characteristics that set him apart from other characters in the story. Thus, literature and psychology together offer significant contributions to deepening our understanding of the complexity of human behavior. This conclusion affirms that literary works serve as an effective medium for exploring, interpreting, and reflecting upon human actions through diverse perspectives and dimensions. Through the application of the Hippocrates-Galenus literary psychology framework to the short story *Syaikh Bilbis*, this study successfully uncovers the personality typologies that shape the protagonist's character in a nuanced and comprehensive manner.

This study is expected to serve as a foundation for future research that is more in-depth and critically oriented. The short story *Syaikh Balbis* remains highly relevant for further investigation through the application of semiotic theory, which may offer symbolic interpretations of the textual elements within the narrative. In addition, the text provides opportunities for analysis using other literary psychology frameworks, such as Sigmund

Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which can reveal deeper psychological layers embedded in the plot and character construction.

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