

(Re)Structuring the Personality in *Gone Girl*: A Psychoanalytical Study

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Abstract

This research investigates the (Re) Structuring of personality in *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. The study aims to explore the complexity of the Characters –Amy and Nick Dunne by exploring the relationship between conscious and unconscious motivations, impact of trauma, deception, and manipulation on their identities through the lens of psychoanalytical theory. Using the Iceberg model of mind by Freud which deals with conscious, preconscious and unconscious level of mind. It also explores the id, ego and superego which helps in creating the characters' behaviour and personalities and Lacanian psychoanalytical perspective which focuses on the triad Imaginary, Symbolic and Real of psyche development. This qualitative research employs extensive textual analysis to unveil and clarify the characters' psychological complexities, finally finding that the novel's narrative tension stems from the intricate interaction of conscious and unconscious impulses. Moreover, this research uncovers the protagonists' psychological perspectives which are shaped by repressed desires, past experiences, and societal expectations. It further argues that the novel's narrative structure, characterized by its dual perspectives and unreliable narrators, mirrors the fractured and multifaceted nature of human personality. Through a detailed exploration of themes such as identity formation, relational dynamics, and the blurring of reality and illusion, the study formulates a deeper understanding of the psychological reinforcements in contemporary literature. By highlighting the transformative and often destructive forces at play within the psyche, the research offers insights into the complexities of human behaviour and the relentless pursuit of self-coherence amidst chaos.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Conscious and Unconscious Motivations, Societal Norm, Manipulation, Relational Dynamics, Deception, Psychological Complexities, Identity Formation

Introduction

Background of the Study

Psychoanalytic theory provides a unique understanding of both the dynamics of personality and the layers of meaning within literary texts. It focuses on unconscious processes and symbolic representations and allows a deeper exploration of the human psyche, whether in the context of clinical therapy or literary analysis. By uncovering hidden motives, desires and conflicts, psychoanalytic interpretation enriches our understanding of characters, themes and narratives in literature, making it a valuable tool for literary criticism and appreciation. Freud examines the functioning of human mind and proposes that conscious mind is controlled by the unconscious. According to Freud's model (see Appendix 1), the mind has three distinctive layers conscious, preconscious and the unconscious – additionally Freud asserts that the three components such as id, ego and superego are the apparatuses of the mind, functioning in any individual (Sibi, 2020, p.

75). According to Lapsley & Stey (2011), the id is the most ancient part of the mind, which is the storage of primal instincts, especially sexual drives, pushing the individual toward pleasure. The ego, stemming from the id's adaptation to the external world, acts as the executive, managing instinctual drives to align with reality. The ego operates as the hub of reason, reality-testing and practicality, equipped with defenses against unrealistic desires. The superego is an extension of the ego, embodying ideals and moral standards, urging the psyche to pursue perfection and ethical goals (p. 1). When there is no accountability and monitoring by the society the inner evil of man becomes conscious which distorts the balance between id, ego and superego (Rahman et al., 2023, p. 2295). According to Barry (1995), Freud argues that the mind is made up of conscious and unconscious elements. The unconscious mind operates silently but its impact is evident on conscious mind (pp. 24-25). Freud's psychoanalysis predicts the influence of conscious and unconscious thinking which determines the problem of a person's psychology in the form of anxiety that further leads to the formulation of a model in terms of id, ego and superego, the personality structure (see Appendix 1) – in 1923 (Virayuda & Kasprabowo, 2021, p.2). Freud's ultimate legacy is his investigation of the complex interplay between unconscious impulses and societal influences, which sheds light on how people manage the tensions between innate drives and societal conventions in developing their personalities and behaviours. Lacan's framework of the imaginative, symbolic and real provides a thorough grasp of how language and social recognition influence human consciousness. The imagined stage represents a watershed point in which self-awareness emerges through acknowledgment from others, but the symbolic stage emphasizes the function of language in organizing subjectivity. The concept of the real, which goes beyond symbolic representations, expresses Lacan's view of an elusive, fundamental reality that both the mind and the external world attempt to grasp. These interrelated parts provide insight into the intricate dynamics of human identity formation and psychological experience. According to Nasir & Martina (2023) Lacan emphasizes how crucial language is to the functioning of the human mind. The unconscious mind functions similarly to metonymy and metaphor in speech. They serve as a substitute for a loss that is experienced. Lacan asserts that the human mind consist of three elements which are interconnected the imaginary, symbolic and real (Benazir, 2023, p. 80). The imaginary stage also called as the mirror stage – when a child first recognizes himself as a distinct individual with physical boundaries. Prior to this, newborns are unaware of their limitations. During this phase, recognition from others not only enhances the child's self-awareness but also fosters a sense of belongingness (p. 84). The symbolic stage involves the constitution of signifiers and language which plays a significant role in shaping the order of the subject. In this, the whole system of both conscious and the unconscious appears as an intricate network of the signs and associations (p. 83). Whereas the real lies beyond the symbolic process and is found in the mind and external world (Bowie, 1991, p. 94). Qazi (2011) referred the mirror image in psychoanalytic language as the ideal ego, representing a flawless and complete 'self' without any shortcomings. As this "ideal ego" is embodied, our sense of "self" or "identity". It is constructed through a process of misidentifying with the idealized version. This imaginative act creates an image of self in the mind that feels perfect, like exactly as it should be, without any flaws. This image helps make up for the feeling of losing that deep connection one's had with the mother's body as a new born baby. It's like that the mind is trying to fill in the gap left by that primal bond by creating this idealized version of self (p. 6). A study showed that Lacan's notion of the imaginary reveals that it is a stage which corresponds to the initial integration of the child into social life. During this phase, the child gradually understands its difference from the mother, which forms the foundation of its individual identity (p. 7). Mellard (2006) concluded this concept of Lacan, that 'I' begins with the Imaginary and then I chew on the story of the symbolic... And I is finished by putting out for the real (p. 163). Lacan's paradigm beautifully demonstrates how language and societal constructs profoundly influence our sense of self and reality, emphasizing the importance of symbolic interaction in human consciousness and identity formation.

Author's Life and Work/s

Gillian S. Flynn (1971-), the American author, screenwriter and journalist is the author of well-known books such as *Sharp Objects* (2006), *Dark Places* (2009), *Gone Girl* (2012), *Ejmi ja nema* (2013), *The Grownup* (2015), *Hamlet* (2021). In her works she explores various themes and characters. Typically, Flynn's narratives revolve around murder stories intertwined with mysteries and enigmas (Tyas & Mustofa, 2022, p. 38). Flynn's *Gone Girl* achieved remarkable success, with over 15 million copies sold worldwide (Tyas & Mustofa, 2022, p. 38) and is theatrically released in 2014. Flynn in *Gone Girl*, has presented many characters, with a unique and captivating backstories. The story of *Gone Girl* surrounds the marriage of Amy and Nick Dunne (Nurjanah, 2018, p. 4). Amy and Nick had opposite views about life, they respond differently to various situations which often resulted in conflicts and disagreements (Aditya, 2016, p. 79). The protagonist of *Gone Girl*, Amy Elliot, is a New York's native. The narrative delves into Amy's life, with a particular focus on her relationship with her spouse. From a young age, she gathered attention, largely due to her parent's – Rand Elliot (father) and Mary Elliot (mother) – meticulous documentation of her life in the 'Amazing Amy' series. Her parents authored a collection of books called 'Amazing Amy' portraying an idealized version of Amy's life from her childhood to a flawless marriage, pressuring her to emulate this perfection at the expense of her own happiness (Situmorang & Evyanto, 2020, p. 7). Nick Dunne, a successful newspaper columnist, emerges from a troubled childhood marked by an abusive father and a passive mother. After the separation of his parents, Nick leaves Missouri for New York, to go after a career. In the New York City, he meets Amy at a party and the two fall in love immediately, sensing a strong connection. Their marriage goes well initially, but Nick faces a turning point when he loses his job due to the decline in newspaper readership because of social media. This event marks a significant shift in Nick's character (Nurjanah, 2018, p. 4). The story takes a shift when Nick discovers about his mother's chronic illness (p. 5). From his twin sister Margo. She informs him that their mother is dying of cancer (Aditya, 2016, p. 85). Nick presented the idea of shifting to Missouri to his wife. The couple did not have enough money therefore they shifted back to Nick's hometown (Nurjanah, 2018, p. 5). Their relationship gets complicated when Amy found out that Nick is having an extramarital affair with his student, Andie. She sets up a series of actions, as though she had been abducted and killed by her own husband. However, as she was away for an extended period, Nick eventually discovered about her plan and manipulated the media by showing that he is remorseful for his mistakes and sincerely hoped for her return. Simultaneously he planned to kill Amy, if she dared to comeback. After few days, Amy returned, as she felt that it would be unjust for her to die or live alone as a runaway, while Nick is being exalted as a mourning husband. They decided that, with some adjustments, they could still find a way to coexist as husband and wife, as per Amy's terms (pp. 5-6). Amy and Nick's tumultuous marriage highlights the significant influence of past trauma and manipulation on their identities and interpersonal dynamics. In the *Gone Girl*, Freudian and Lacanian ideas are used to uncover the depth of the characters' psychological intricacies as well as the underlying motivations driving their actions. This perspective not only enables to see beyond the surface narrative, revealing the deeper, often darker, aspects of human behaviour and relationships, but also confirms psychoanalytic theory's long-term relevance and usefulness in contemporary literary studies.

Research Objectives

Following are the main objectives of this research:

1. To analyze the protagonist and antagonist in *Gone Girl* and their actions to determine how they align with the Freudian and Lacanian's psychoanalytical concepts.
2. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of the text, incorporating psychoanalytical theory and providing a refined understanding of psychoanalytical concepts intervenes in *Gone Girl*.

3. To provide a critical assessment of how the *Gone Girl* contributes to the broader field of psychoanalytical literary criticism.

Research Questions

The present study aims at finding out answers of the following questions:

1. How do the personalities of the protagonist and antagonist (re)structure in *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn?
2. How does Freud's Iceberg Model shape the inner conflicts and motivations of the main characters in the novel?
3. How does Lacan's psychoanalysis relate to the main characters of the novel?

Literature Review

As defined by Chodorow (1987), psychoanalysis is a theory and technique that aims to understand how unconscious imaginations, which form our psyche and sense of self, arise and are experienced, as well as how we create and reinterpret our perceived past in the present (p.78). It explores the depths of the unconscious mind, providing new insights to the internal mechanisms of the mind. It started with Sigmund Freud and was subsequently developed in various directions, by Jacques Lacan, often referred to as "the French Freud", who also explored the inner workings of a language apart from his study of the unconscious mind (Pun, 2018, p. 48). So, "[in] other words, psychoanalysis exposes the inner self and its system" (p. 48). The psychoanalytic approach to literature is rooted in the theories of Sigmund Freud, which either directly or indirectly explore the workings of the unconscious mind. The unconscious, an integral aspect of the human psyche linked to bodily needs, is a focal point of Freud's theories. Freud proposed an idea that the human mind has three different components, the id, ego and superego. The id, largely unconscious, represents a significant portion of the mind. The ego, identified as the largely conscious aspect, functions to regulate and act against the unconscious. The superego, though seems to be out of the self, engages in moral judgments shaped by teachings from parents, schools, or religious institutions (Pun, 2018, p. 48). In accordance with Sigmund Freud's theory, an individual's personality is similar to an iceberg in the ocean's middle. The portion visible above the ocean represents only a small fraction, referred to as the conscious mind. Meanwhile, the submerged part beneath the ocean, significantly larger and imperceptible to the naked eye, is likened to the unconscious and further divided into two components: the unconscious and the subconscious ((Zahrah & Wijayanti, 2023, p. 47). Sigmund Freud extensively detailed how the super-ego and id must be in balance for the ego to feel a sense of belonging. Disillusionment, disappointment, worry and other negative emotions are suppressed and registered in the id when external influences on the ego increase, causing conflict (Bhattacharya & Pandey, 2023, p. 65).

Lacan transformed psychoanalysis from primarily humanist philosophy or theory to a Post Structuralist one by reinterpreting Freud in the context of Structuralism and Post Structuralism theories (Qazi, 2011, p. 2). Freud's psychoanalysis emphasizes on the author and the characters in the literary work, whereas, Lacan influenced by the structuralism and post-structuralism approaches, emphasizes on the language used in the text, challenging traditional interpretations of Freudian principles. The orthodox Freudian doctrine argues that the unconscious is chaotic, pre-verbal, instinctual and disorganized. In contrast, according to Lacan, unconscious is instead structured like a series or series of signifiers, always in circulation and never anchored (pp. 3-4). Lacan talks about the significance of the pre-oedipal stage in a child's life, characterized by a lack of clear distinction between self and the external world and referred to as the Imaginary, involves the child having lack of sense self and lives harmoniously with the mother's body (Hossain, 2017, p. 43). Lacan adopts the Freudian term "libido", which denotes a variable sexual energy that can be directed toward any number of objects. In narcissism, libido is invested in the ego itself. Lacan views this stage as a cog in the machine-like process of psychological development that strengthens the belief that "Paranoiac Knowledge" is essential to the construction of the self that

emerges to us when we gaze into the mirror (Savita & Kaur, 2020, p. 2921). Similar to Freud, Lacan's concept involves the infant existing in an inseparable connection with its mother, lacks a distinct sense of 'self' or 'individuated identity,' being unconscious of its body as a cohesive whole and struggling to differentiate between itself and the mother. The primary focus for the baby is fulfilling basic needs, particularly feeding, which the mother satisfies. During this phase, the baby perceives itself and the mother as a singular entity, driven primarily by Need – seeking food, comfort, safety and care. An object can fulfill all of these wants because it can give itself a breast or a bottle when it's hungry and a hug when it needs protection (Qazi, 2011, p. 4). Following the phase of fulfilling basic needs, the child switches over to the phase of demands necessitating separation from the mother to establish its own identity, a crucial step for entry into civilization and culture. In essence, when the child recognizes the disparity between its internal needs and the external fulfillment of those needs, it grasps that its immediate world is not the whole world. It discovers that it's not autonomous and instead relies on an external entity – 'other' – who feeds it or upon whom it depends (p. 4).

Flynn crafts a marriage filled with romance, deceit and cruelty, underscored by entries in Amy's diary, delving into love from a contrasting perspective. Nick and Amy have endured a dysfunctional marital bond for years, one lacking in honesty from the outset, ultimately leading to disillusionment compared to their idealized courtship (Tyas & Mustofa, 2022, p. 38). Throughout their marriage, the two have self-caused problems that range from personality changes to lying, infidelity, and secrets they keep to themselves (p. 38). In the first part of the novel, the reader is manipulated into despising Nick, Amy's husband, as he is continually portrayed as the prime suspect in all the problems that arise. However, as the story progresses into the second part, it becomes evident that Nick is not at fault. Rather, he becomes a victim of Amy's deceitful actions. Amy fabricates lies and manipulates situations to pin the blame on Nick, driven by her resentment towards him. Nick's shortcomings, such as his desire for Amy to conform to a certain image and his forgetfulness about their anniversary, are highlighted, fueling the narrative against him (Wahid, 2016, p. 2). As the plot unfolds, it becomes clear in the final part that Amy's true nature is revealed. She emerges as a dangerous individual, willing to go to extreme lengths to manipulate others, including orchestrating the murder of Desi, who assisted her when she was in need. Amy falsely accuses Desi of rape to justify her actions and ultimately returns to live with Nick, perpetuating their toxic relationship (p. 2). Amy's superego is manipulated by her id to achieve its objectives, as demonstrated when she fabricates her disappearance by falsely accusing Desi of kidnapping and assaulting her. Amy displays a lack of concern for the repercussions of shifting all blame onto the deceased man (Rachmadany, 2016, p. 6). Amy's ego gives the id too much control over it, which makes it act unwise. Amy's superego thereby creates a new perception from her ego that permits her to respond in this way (p. 5). Amy's id controls her psychic energy, resulting in impulsive actions. The individual's characteristics and behaviors are determined by the distribution of psychic energy. The imbalance among her id, ego and superego leads to maladjustment. The imbalanced structure of Amy's personality indicates her lack of wisdom, thus exhibiting signs of psychological issues (pp. 6-7). The uneasiness that arises in Amy is that she doesn't get energy by her ego and superego (Virayuda & Kasrabowo, 2021, p.3). Amy bears sole responsibility for her actions, expected to shoulder all the burdens in the relationship, while Nick was free from obligation for not doing his part (Kanjilal, 2016, p. 102). Nurjanah (2018) observed that Amy was overwhelmed by the oppression she experienced, finding it too burdensome to bear. She felt uneasy under the gender roles that imposed specific expectations on her as a wife (p. 6). Within the context, Amy Elliott Dunne's ego can be comprehended through the lens of the mirror phase, wherein the mirror is represented by the children's book series 'Amazing Amy', co-authored by her parents, who are child psychologists. Amy was born to her parents after they experienced a number of miscarriages, naming their dead daughters Hope (Benazir, 2023, p. 81). Amy feels insecure because she is always assessed and compared to the fictitious Amy, who is more

wonderful than she is. Despite being the sole surviving child following the loss of previous Hopes, Amy is acutely aware that her parents hold a deeper affection for their fictional creation, 'Amazing Amy'. (p. 82). Interestingly, throughout the novel, Amy never openly discussed her feelings about having children. However, towards the end of the story, Amy disclosed her intention to take drastic measures to ensure Nick's commitment to their marriage. This measure involved becoming pregnant, not because she genuinely desired a child, but as a strategic move to prevent Nick from divorcing her and to prevent him from the publication of his book, which exposed the truth about her disappearance. Amy viewed pregnancy as a means of safeguarding herself against Nick's potential actions, rather than a reflection of her true desires (Aditya, 2016, p. 86).

For Nick, the prospect of having a child held great significance as it symbolized his ability to love unconditionally and his determination to be a better parent than his own father, who had abandoned his family (Aditya, 2016, p. 86). In order to protect his child from Amy, Nick decides to abandon his plan to expose her secrets. However, the ending reveals that Amy, through her narcissistic traits, ultimately attains everything she desires. Despite her success in maintaining power and control, her victory is ultimately hollow and meaningless (Ancilin, 2019, pp. 840-841). As a result, their marriage becomes veiled in lies and secrets, obscuring their understanding of one another. The real Nick and Amy seem to be buried under their secrets and lies; even Amy's diaries are full of lies (Tyas & Mustofa, 2022, p. 44). Therefore, their marital relationship fails to function properly due to a lack of sincerity and honesty between them. They choose to stick together, defending the falsehood or the lie in their troubled marriage (p. 44). Amy's narrative is not unique to any one nation or culture. Many women like *Amazing Amy* work long hours at work, come home to take care of the family and perform a variety of chores, all while their husbands sit back and watch TV or hang out with friends. Usually, these husbands control their wives' money by keeping their ATM cards, taking out their salaries and deciding how their money is spent, all while the ladies obediently follow their orders (Kanjilal, 2016, p. 103). 'Real Amy' is an encouragement to women in a time when there is an increase in crimes against women. It's because she was brave enough to stand up to those who mistreated, deceived and manipulated her. At some point or another, every woman can identify with Amy's struggles and hardships. Amy had determination, intelligence and creative thinking, all of which contributed to her successful rebellion. She treated her spouse the way that most women would like to be treated (p. 103). Through an analysis of thematic theoretical literature, particularly in the context of Flynn's novel *Gone Girl*, this chapter examines how psychoanalytic theory provides deeper insights into character motivations, internal conflicts and the overarching narrative structure.

Theoretical Framework

Freud's theory of human development and personality formation is rooted in his concept of psychosexual development, where innate drives or instincts shape individuals from birth. This journey begins with the oral stage, during which infants seek bodily pleasure through activities like sucking and biting. The second phase, known as the anal period, marks a child's growing awareness of independence. Pleasure is derived from the control of bodily functions. At this stage, the child develops a fondness for their own image, known as narcissism. Between the ages of four and six, the phallic stage emerges, with libido focused on the genital organs. Masturbation becomes common and the child's desire for their mother becomes evident, often leading to the Oedipus complex (Giri, 2007, p. 20). Freud's one of the most profound contributions is his model of the human mind (1897), which is divided, into three distinct parts. (Appendix A).

1. **Conscious Mind:** This layer encompasses our present thoughts, emotions and where our current focus of perception resides. It encompasses all the mental processes that fall within the scope of our awareness (Freud, 1915, p.119)

2. Preconscious Mind (sometimes referred to as the subconscious): The preconscious is like a holding area in mind, where thoughts linger until they manage to capture the attention of our mind. (Freud, 1924, p.306).
3. Unconscious Mind: The unconscious refers to mental processes that remain beyond the reach of consciousness yet exert an impact on judgments, emotions, or actions (Wilson, 2002, p. 23).

In a subsequent development, Freud introduced a more structured model of the mind (1923) (Appendix B), providing a clear representation of both the conscious and unconscious operations (Gaztambide, 2021, p.46). In this model, the mind consists of three key components: the id, ego and super ego. ID represents an inherent aspect of human nature, solely concerned with desires, whether they are rational or irrational. Some individuals are driven primarily by their id. It expresses emotions such as hatred, love, greed, malevolence, sexual impulses, hedonism, impatience and impulsiveness (Gupta, 1967, p. 6724). On the other hand, those who are guided by the ego make decisions in a rational and logical manner. In accordance with Freud, the ego functions as a rider attempting to control the wild horse of the id. It considers societal norms and factual information when making choices. The ego acts as a negotiator and mediator, managing the id's irrational demands and the superego's idealistic standards. It serves as a trusted advisor to individuals (p. 6724). The superego serves as a refinement within the ego, embodying its "ideal". It develops in response to the oedipal drama, wherein child internalizes the authority and grandeur of parental figures through introjection or identification. While the id operates on pleasure and the ego adheres to the reality principle, whereas the superego directs the psychic apparatus to pursue idealistic goals and perfection. It serves by abiding to moral values (Lapsley & Stey, 2011, p. 1). In accordance to Qazi (2011), Lacan's concepts of Mirror Phase (the Imaginary), Symbolic and the Real infer that an individual's process of individuation cannot solely develop from their 'inner wealth' or 'innate potential' (p. 11). Lacan's ideas were centered on Freudian concept of unconscious, Oedipus Complex, fear of castration, ego and the centrality of language in the construction of self (Gugane, 2022, p. 1597). The Mirror Phase signifies the breakdown of the comforting imaginary state, propelling the child into the Symbolic order —characterized by predefined social roles, gender distinctions, language, subjects and objects. Lacan terms this phase as demanding, encompassing both the mirror stage and Imaginary stage. The image reflected in the mirror stage is, an isolated one, leading the child to misrecognize his real self and find a pleasing unity in the image that he doesn't actually experience in his body. The Imaginary stage, for Lacan, constitutes the realm of images where identifications are made, but it leads to a stage where, individuals tend to misperceive and misrecognize themselves. When the child matures, it continuously engages in such an imaginary identifications with objects, contributing to the construction of its ego (Qazi, 2011, p. 11).

Analysis

The Psychological Restructuring of Protagonists in *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn

In *Gone Girl*, the main characters, Amy and Nick Dunne, experience a complete change in their personality, which is characteristic of the psychological aspect of the story. Their relationship is complex and the novel's plot reveals different stages of their interactions and manipulations. At the beginning of the novel, Nick is depicted as a good-natured and carefree husband while Amy is depicted as a loving and supportive wife. This first portrayal is consistent with the roles they play in society and with their desire to give the world an image of a happy marriage. For example, Nick narrates the first time he saw Amy as a woman of a finely shaped head, intelligent and beautiful, which creates the illusion of the perfect couple. He says, that "When I think of my wife, I always think of her head. The shape of it, to begin with" (Flynn, 2012, p. 3). The novel begins with Nick's point of view, which reveals his appreciation for Amy's intellect and physical appearance, as well as their happy partnership. Recalling their early stages of the relationship, Nick describes Amy as an ideal woman he was happy with. The text of the novel "I'd know her head anywhere. And

what's inside it" (Flynn, 2012, p. 3), provides a deep understanding of how Nick sees Amy. This statement shows that Nick knows Amy intimately, admitting that he knows her not only by face but also by her mind. It shows a complex awareness of Amy's character, her scheming nature and her intelligence, although it is a negative one. By concentrating on her head and what it contains, Nick unconsciously accepts Amy's authority and subjugation in their marriage, as well as his recognition of her ability to plot and manipulate. This line encapsulates the dual nature of Nick's view of Amy: on the one hand, it is associated with love and intimacy with his wife, on the other hand, it points to fear and respect for her cunning. This awareness indicates that Nick is aware of the evil side of Amy and the danger she poses, thus adding psychological elements and power struggle in their marriage. Therefore, this line not only indicates Nick's acquaintance with Amy but also his concern and even reverence for the brilliant and cunning nature of the character. The text lines "I used to be a writer. I was a writer who wrote about TV and movies and books" (Flynn, 2012, p. 4), captures his deep feeling of failure and loss of identity. This statement shows Nick's longing for the past when he had a clear vision of who he was and what he was doing as a young writer. His use of the past tense "used to be" and "was" shows that he is no longer associated with that identity and this underlines a major loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. Perhaps, due to his job as a writer, which required engaging with and interpreting popular culture, Nick received significant cognitive and egoistic benefits. However, the current state of the man is quite different from that past, which depicts a man who is aimless and frustrated. This change from being a useful and innovative individual to a worthless and inconsequential one is a cause of frustration and disappointment to Nick. The sense of failure is compounded by the broader context of his life: His divorce with Amy, his bad financial situation and the fact that he had to go back to his hometown which for him was a downgrade. This line captures the essence of the entire movie: Nick's mid-life crisis and his failure to deal with the feeling of worthlessness and regret. It focuses on the conflict and dissatisfaction that are inherent in his character and define his actions and reactions in the novel. From this point of view, one may consider Nick's narrative as a crisis of identity and a search for redemption or rebirth of the self.

Application of Freud's Iceberg Model on the Characters of Flynn's *Gone Girl*

According to Freud's Iceberg Model, preconscious intentions and emotions have a significant impact on actions. It is a part of the mind that comprises of thoughts, memories and desires that are hidden and cannot be easily retrieved by the conscious mind. These elements are normally involved in influencing the behavior of a particular person without his or her consent. This is a clear example of unconscious motivation because Nick's decision to move home is related to his fear of getting fail or inadequate and a desire to go back to his childhood home. He unconsciously seeks a means of rewinding time in order to avoid getting entangled in a complex marriage. This is a way of attempting to get back some form of function and self-identity that he believes he has lost given his current position. At this deepest level, Nick is acting out of the most primal of all human desires to take back control of one's existence. This demonstrates that his actions are motivated by the psyche that he has repressed feelings and urges. His moving home can also be interpreted as an attempt to regain some kind of normalcy and stability in his life. Maybe it is a sign that a person wants to run away and hide from the difficulties of life. This includes an unconscious desire to regain a part of him that he believes he has lost or is concealed due to marriage and current rank. Moreover, it can be argued that Nick's decision to move home is an attempt to run away from pressure and failure that he experiences. Hence, by returning to the roots, he unconsciously seeks to avoid the present life and its failures and disappointments. It is a decision that reflects a desire to return to the time when life was not so complex and individuals did not have the feeling of insecurity. By applying Freud's Iceberg Model, it is possible to analyze the conscious recognition of Amy's lack of interest in his family and his decision to move back home as well as the preconscious and unconscious factors that underlie them. Nick's belief that "One of us was always angry. Amy, usually" (Flynn, 2012, p. 4), opens the curtain to the complex layers

of his subconscious mind and shows how these latent processes affect his waking self. On the level of the secondary personality, or the level of consciousness that is compared to the tip of the iceberg, Nick seems to be indifferent to the constant fight between him and Amy. This apparent nonchalance indicates that he has grown used to the constant conflict in their relationship and has developed a sort of emotional distance as a way of dealing with it. However, there is another level that is hidden from the view of others, but can be easily accessed by the person themselves – the preconscious and unconscious mind. The preconscious mind, which comprises thoughts and feelings not at the forefront of his consciousness but easily retrievable, may harbor Nick's suppressed anger and bitterness that he is not aware of. This layer is the intermediate layer and it contains memories and feelings that may resurface when certain conditions prevail. Thus, by shifting the blame to Amy, Nick is able to avoid the responsibility for his part in the arguments. This displacement enables him to hide his uncertainties and other feelings that he has not dealt with and instead transfer his anger towards her.

The largest and the most hidden part of the iceberg, which is the unconscious level, probably contains Nick's further concerns, remorse and concerns linked to their connection. This can be explained as the psychological defense mechanism that helps Nick to avoid feeling the pain of such repressed emotions. This could be because of past experiences and internal issues that he has not dealt with and which are evident in his current behavior and attitude such as the constant conflict and his view of Amy as the one who is always angry. Nick's declaration, "I swore I would pay her back, with interest. I would not be a man who borrowed from his wife" (Flynn, 2012, p. 8), reveals a complex interplay between his conscious motivations and deeper, unconscious drives. On the conscious level, or the tip of the iceberg, Nick's statement reflects his overt determination to maintain his sense of pride and independence. He explicitly vows to repay Amy, emphasizing his desire to uphold his self-image as a self-reliant man. This surface-level resolve demonstrates his immediate thoughts and intentions, driven by societal norms and personal principles regarding masculinity and financial independence. Beneath the conscious mind lies the preconscious, where resides the thoughts and emotions which Nick's is not aware of currently but they can be accessed. In this layer, Nick can be regarded as insecure and needy, which may cause him to depend on Amy. His loathsome feeling towards the idea of being financially dependent on his wife shows that he is not in support of women's changing roles in the society and the resultant loss of his manliness. These are not necessarily conscious in his mind but they do influence his determination to put things right as he perceives it in their relationship. Amy's line, "I get frightened now, sometimes, when my husband gets home. A few weeks ago, Nick asked me to go out on the raft with him, float along in the current under a blue sky" (Flynn, 2012, p. 230), can be analyzed through Freud's Iceberg Model of the psyche, which splits the mind into conscious, preconscious and unconscious. At the conscious level, Amy knows that her initial feeling upon Nick's arrival is fear. This is a shallow emotion and is the exact emotion that she feels at the moment and is easily retrievable by her. She does not deny this fear and states that it is present in her life, which means that it is a part of her current experience. This conscious awareness of fear indicates that there is a rational understanding of threat connected to Nick's presence, which is expressed through her nervousness. At first glance, the memory of Nick inviting her to float on the raft under the blue sky does not seem to be a violent or disturbing one. This is part of the working memory which is the part of the conscious mind that contains information that can be easily retrieved. The imagery of a calm and serene environment is juxtaposed with her feelings of fear, thus providing a clear representation of the conflict between her experiences and emotions. This contrast implies there is more to it, which means that her subconscious self is trying to deal with the fear she has, but her rational self cannot understand why she feels this way about the invitation to the raft.

Lacanian Psychoanalysis of Characters in *Gone Girl*

Lacan's Model of three orders of human psyche which includes Imaginary, symbolic and the real, enables to shed light on the nature of human desire, subjectivity and the unconscious through the detailed and rather phantasmagoric dynamics of the relations between Amy and Nick. In the statement "The doctors ordered my parents to stop trying; they refused. They are not quitters. They tried and tried and finally came me" (Flynn, 2012, p. 249), the reader gets to learn that the parents were very determined. In Lacanian terms, this desire is not just a desire for a child, but has a symbolic value and meaning. The parents' disobedience of the doctors' orders symbolizes their rebellion against Symbolic Order, which is the domain of language, culture and social rules. This is due to the fact that their actions are driven by a profound, even existential, desire to get what they want, thus showing the interdependence between personal volition and social norms. The text from *Gone Girl*: "he picked that little whore over me. He killed my soul, which should be a crime. Actually, it is a crime. According to me, at least" (Flynn, 2012, p. 268), can be interpreted from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis to understand the psychological and emotional processes that led to Amy's reaction to Nick's betrayal. Lacanian theory provides a strong foundation to explain Amy's psychological state, including her self-identification, desire and the effects of betrayal. When used in the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the phrase 'little whore' conveys Amy's desire to reduce the other woman and erase her humanity due to jealousy. This abusive term is used by Amy to deal with the threat that the other woman represents to her self-image and position. In Lacanian terms, the Imaginary Order is the realm of self-creation and construction of relational subjectivity. This Imaginary Order is evident in how Amy perceives the other woman as a direct threat to her self-worth and even her marriage. Amy is trying to restore her dominance and reduce the feelings of betrayal by devaluing the other woman. When Amy says, 'He killed my soul,' she captures the essence of loss and grief that is far from the physical violation. In Lacan's terms, the soul can be regarded as a symbol of the subject's essence and value. Amy's identity is highly dependent on her as being a perfect wife and this image has been ruined by Nick's cheating. This can be linked with Lacan's mirror stage where one develops his/her personality through identification with an ideal ego. Nick's decision to be with another woman shatters this image and Amy is left with a crisis of identity, as she believes her very being has been annihilated. The statement "it should be a crime" and "it is a crime, according to me at least" shows Amy's conviction that her suffering is moral and emotional. From a Lacanian perspective this points to the way in which the Symbolic Order has informed her sense of justice and morality. The Symbolic Order includes the rules of the society, laws and language that define our perception of the world and our position in it. Amy believes that Nick's betrayal is not only a personal wrong but a violation of the rules of the Symbolic Order, namely the rules of monogamy. Her statement that it is a crime 'in my own opinion' also highlights the fact that she is speaking from her perspective and she has her own way of interpreting things. Amy's reaction is based on her need to regain power and establish her position within the Symbolic Order. In presenting Nick's cheating as a criminal act, she tries to superimpose a story that conforms to her justice and ethical standards. This act is also an attempt to regain control over herself after her identity has been shattered by Nick's betrayal. In Lacanian terms, Amy has become fragmented and is trying to regain her subjectivity by imposing her own values on the situation. This need to regain control is a typical reaction to the threat of the destruction of one's symbolic order, when people attempt to restore order. In addition, Amy's extreme reaction to the betrayal can be attributed to her internal conflict with her personal and social roles. Here, Lacan's notion of the Other is relevant since Amy's subjectivity and her sense of self-worth depend on how she feels she is viewed by others, especially Nick. The fact that she feels that her soul has been killed means that she has experienced a major shift in how she perceives herself and the world around her. This disruption is further aggravated by her experience of social stigma and assimilation of societal norms of chastity and worth of women.

Conclusion

Through analysis of novel *Gone Girl* from the perspective of psychoanalysis, it is possible to state that the novel provides the audience with a profound understanding of the nature of identity and relationships in the given society furthermore; the internal world of Amy and Nick Dunne represents the subject and relationships in the postmodern society. Thus, the Freud and Lacan theories help to understand the relationships between the characters' motives, which are both conscious and unconscious, the influence of the norms and the stormy processes of the subject's identification and desire. Amy and Nick's character changes are motivated by psychological reasons that depict the couple as cunning and self-asserting, which is a sign of the evil side of the couple. Thus, the present psychoanalytical analysis helps to reveal how the characters exist in the state of the fragmented self and how the outside world influences their actions. Finally, *Gone Girl* is not only a thrilling and suspenseful novel about betrayal and psychological warfare but also a thought-provoking analysis of the human soul and the causes that lead people to change them and create a new self-identity in the struggle with one's self and the world.

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