



**DYNAMICS OF PERSONALITY IN THE CHARACTER OF AMY
DUNNE IN DAVID FINCHER'S MOVIE *GONE GIRL***

A FINAL PROJECT

**In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement for
the Sarjana Degree Majoring American Studies in English Department
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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that this final project is compiled by her without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any universities. In addition, the writer also ascertains that she does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned.

Semarang, Januari 2016

Erie Putri Rachmadany

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

And so I walked on.

Cheryl Strayed

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

Albert Einstein

Never limit yourself into something that you even haven't tried yet.

Unknown

*This final project is dedicated to
my beloved parents and
to everyone who help me accomplish it.*

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The writer realizes that this final project is far from perfection. Thus, she will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendations to make this final project better.

Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about psychoanalysis especially in *id*, *ego*, and *superego*.

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Erie Putri Rachmadany

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ABSTRACT

Gone Girl is a movie about murder directed by David Fincher. The purpose of this essay is to analyze the main character's personality through her behavior by discussing intrinsic and extrinsic aspects in this movie. The focus of this essay is Amy Dunne's dynamics. In order to figure this out, the writer uses psychoanalysis approach by using Sigmund Freud's theory on the dynamics of personality. From this analysis, it can be concluded that Amy Dunne's dynamics is leaning on her *id* which makes her personality unstable.

Keywords: *Dynamics of personality, psychoanalysis.*

1

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

In this globalization era, people's need of entertainment was soaring. People no longer learn from books or lecturers, they lean their curiosity to media. Movie is one of the media that can fulfill people's need of entertainment. Literary works were transformed into motion pictures and become one of the biggest impacts to the world. Most of the literary works reflect social condition that occurs in certain time. According to Wellek and Warren, literature is a representation of life and able to represent social reality (1977:94). Story about love, racism, psychological problems, those are several specimens that can reflect in literary works.

Speaking of psychological problems, it is always related with mental illness. Many people experience mental illness at some point in their lives. In recent decades people are more aware of this illness, mental illness itself is a condition when someone has disability of functioning their normal life because they get emotionally disturbed. Currently, researcher assumes that mental illness was caused by heredity condition interacting with environmental elements. That is why family and society become crucial factors in the development of mental illness.

Character of Amy Dunne in American psychological thriller film *Gone Girl* can be an example of psychological problems case. In this

American psychological thriller film directed by David Fincher, Amy Dunne shows actions related to her mental condition. Set in the Midwestern of America, the story begins with the disappearance of Amy from her house leaving everyone to wonder about what exactly happened to Amy. She organizes the crime scene perfectly to convince everyone that her disappearance is caused by her husband.

In this paper, the writer uses narrative and cinematic aspects in analyzing the movie. The writer also analyzes psychological problems experienced by the character of Amy Dunne in this movie. Therefore, this study entitled **“Dynamics of Personality in the Character of Amy Dunne in David Fincher’s Movie *Gone Girl*”**.

Objective of the Study

There are two objectives in this study. The first objective is to analyze the narrative and cinematic aspects of the movie. The second objective is to analyze psychological problems experienced by the character of Amy Dunne in the movie.

Scope of study

In analyzing this movie, a scope of study is needed in order to limit and avoid ambiguities in the paper. The limitation can help the writer to discuss the objective in focus. In this paper, the writer focuses on psychological problems experienced by the character of Amy Dunne in the movie *Gone Girl*.

Methods of The Study

In this paper, the writer uses method of library research with psychoanalysis approach to analyze the movie. Library research is a research using library material as the source of information in order to study a literary work from a standpoint. Moreover the writer also uses psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud which explains three major systems in the total personality; the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego* to better explain about the character of Amy Dunne through her behavior as the sign of psychological problems.

2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In analyzing the character of Amy Dunne in the movie *Gone Girl*, this essay employs the theories of the narrative and cinematic aspects to reveal psychological problems experienced by the character Amy Dunne.

2.2 Narrative Aspects

Andrew states, “The study of cinema has consequently been bound up with the theories of narrative” (1984:76). A movie must contain a story, so the narrative aspects can also be applied in analyzing a movie. The narrative aspects that this essay discussed are character and conflict.

Characters are one of the main important elements in a movie, they are the key workers of the story. Kennedy states about classification of characters which are flat and round character. A flat character has only one stand out feature or at most a few of traits in a story (Kennedy, 2007: 75). As Kennedy states, flat character has less proportion to the story meanwhile round character is a character that has more characteristics in the story. Round character has more aspects to be presented (Kennedy, 2007: 75). Both are important for the narrative flow in the storyline.

Conflict is a significant element to the plot of story. It involves two opposite characters which strive each other. In his book *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, Mario Klarer stated that, “**The exposition** or presentation of the initial situation is disturbed by a **complication** or

conflict which produces suspense and eventually leads to a *climax*, *crisis*, or *turning point*.” (Klarer, 2005:15). This what makes a story has a purpose. There are two classifications of conflict, external conflict and internal conflict. External conflict applies when the conflict happen beyond the character’s control meanwhile internal conflict happens inside the character’s mind. Therefore, conflict does not only happen between the main character and the other characters or external elements. It can also happen to the main character againts himself.

Cinematic Aspects

Cinematic aspect is substantial matter in analyzing a movie, it also known as cinematography. As Jane Stadler and Kelly McWilliam said in their book *Screen Media: Analysing Film and Television*, “cinematography literally means ‘moving photography’ or the art of ‘graphing’ movement” (2009:32).

Shot size or hot scale is the most important aspect of framing and composition. The distance between camera and subject determines size of the screen image and also affect the implied distance between the audience and the characters (Stadler and McWilliam, 2009:35.) It is clear that shot size determines the essential meaning that the audience will get.

The most frequently used shots are long shot, medium shot, medium close-up shot and close up shot. Long shot is a shot that frames the whole character’s body in their environment background, this shot

gives a wide view of the overall space in which the action takes place. Long shot establishes shot that wide enough to show the characters and surrounding objects that are necessary to the story.



Picture 1.2. uses long shot

Medium shots are the most common types of shots in the movies. It frames a character from the middle half of their body, such as from the waist upwards. Medium shot generally contains all the action of the scene closer than long shot. It provides a clearer and more focus context in a scene.



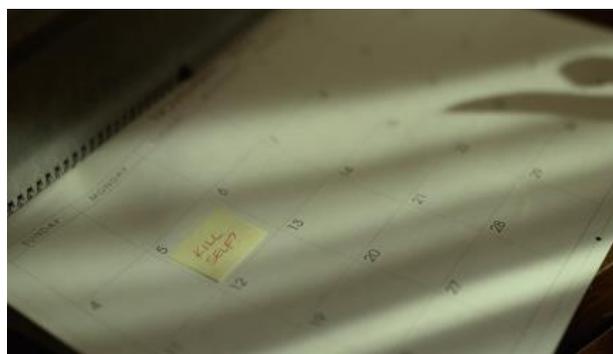
Picture 2.3. uses medium shot

Medium close-up is a shot scale that frames a character's chest and head. This shot is half between medium shot and close up shot. It shows you not only a clearer facial expression but with upper body language appearance which makes a scene stands out.



Picture 5.1. uses medium close-up shot

Close up shot is a shot which frames a character's head and shoulders, an object, or detail that takes up the whole screen. Close up shot can frames any small detail to build the audience's understanding to the scene. It gives a more focus subject to observe.



Picture 2.2 uses close up shot

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis theory was found by Sigmund Freud, the total personality that Freud formulate consist of three major systems; *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. As Hall explained in his book, *A Primer of Freudian Psychology*, by working as a team, they manage an individual to be efficient and able to fulfill one's need with his environment (Hall, 1954:22). The dynamics of personality explains how these three systems operate with one another.

The *id* is driven by one consideration only, to pursuit pleasure without tolerate any tensions such as logic, morality, etc. "It is demanding, impulsive, irrational, asocial, selfish, and pleasure-loving. It is the spoiled child of the personality." (Hall, 1954:27).

On the other hand, the *ego* is regulated by the reality principle. The aim of reality principle is to put off the release of energy until a real object that could satisfy the need has been found or created (Hall, 1954:28). In order to fill a desire one has to find the goal object in external reality and to do that one has to find the way and the suitable goal object to satisfy one's need.

The third system of personality is the *superego*, this system tightly bound with moral. Hall states that, "The superego is the person's moral code." (1954:31). It has those standards like what is good and what is bad, it is the product of socialization and cultural tradition.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to collect and analyze the data of this research, the writer uses library research. Data and theories that are used in this essay are gathered from any library materials related with the object of this research. The sources that the writer uses are books, films, and other supporting references.

The discussion in this essay is separated into two parts which are intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. In intrinsic aspects, this essay will discuss the narrative of the film such as character, and conflict. In extrinsic aspects, the discussion will be more about condition of character in this film.

In order to analyze the character of Amy Dunne, the writer uses psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud about the total personality to explain more concerning on her behavior that indicates psychological problems. The three major systems can describe Amy Dunne's unbalanced mental condition. Focusing on the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*, the writer furthermore analyzes Amy Dunne's dynamics to conclude her personality.

Psychoanalysis theory was also used to treat patients with psychological problems. "Psychoanalysis is also a method of psychotherapy. It consists of techniques for treating emotionally disturbed people." (Hall, 1954:19). It deals with psychological factors and personal characteristic about a person's mental condition.

In this paper, the psychoanalysis is applied to analyze the mental condition of Amy Dunne and the reason of her behavior captured in David Fincher's Movie *Gone Girl*.

4

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer points out examples both on the intrinsic and extrinsic analysis of David Fincher's movie *Gone Girl*. Based on the explanations in the previous chapter about the intrinsic aspects, such as; character and conflict, shot size in cinematic aspects, and the dynamics of personality, the writer applies those theories into the character *Amy Dunne* in the movie *Gone Girl*.

4.1 Analysis of Narrative Aspects in *Gone Girl*

Amy Dunne's behavior in *Gone Girl* is the focus of this paper. Therefore, to understand the story, it is necessary to analyze the character and conflict which exist in this movie. Shot size, one of the cinematic aspects, is also chosen by the writer in analyzing *Gone Girl* because it can be used to understand the movie better.

Amy Dunne who acts as the major character, is a round character in the movie. Amy is a writer and is married to Nick Dunne who is also a writer. With her disappearance in the beginning of the story, she sets everything up so that people assume that she has been murdered by her husband. As shown in picture 1.1, the audience can see that it uses medium close-up shot to show Amy's face clearly while she creates a whole set of new story by writing her own version of diary. In picture 1.2. that uses long shot, the frame catches overall space of the crime scene

when Amy sets it using her blood to convince the police. In picture 1.3. that uses medium shot, the frame shows enough detail when Amy goes away on the day of her disappearance. These prove her manipulative skill.



Picture 1.1. 01:09:32
Amy writes the diary

Picture 1.2. 01:08:37
Amy fakes a crime scene

Picture 1.3. 01:06:03
Amy goes away

In the movie, it is shown that she has planned every detail of her disappearance perfectly. She starts befriend her local neighbor and infuses her with Amy's version of violent tempered husband. She also secretly creates some money troubles, purchases a getaway car, fakes a pregnancy, and even plans to kill herself when she is ready. The usage of medium close-up shot as shown in picture 2.1. is to show Amy's expression when she tries to fake her pregnancy. In picture 2.2. that uses close up shot, the frame can pick up small details as in this case, a mark on Amy's calendar to kill herself. Meanwhile picture 2.3. uses medium shot. The frame shows Amy's body language that she looks convincing enough for the neighbor to fall for her story. Her behavior indicates perfectionism.



Picture 2.1. 01:07:49
Amy fakes her pregnancy



Picture 2.2. 01:15:01
Amy plans to kill herself



Picture 2.3. 01:06:54
Amy deceives her neighbor

The motive of Amy planning her disappearance is her husband's affair with one of his students at the community college. She feels that his husband becomes someone she is not willing to take. The lying, the affair, and the money, pile up and make Amy feel that his husband took her pride, her dignity, her hope, and her money. He takes everything until she does not exist any longer. Therefore, she wants her husband to be punished. As shown in picture 3.1. that uses medium close-up shot, the frame captures Amy's expression when she sees her husband with another girl. In picture 3.2. that also uses medium close-up shot, it shows both Nick and Andie's expressions when they get together outside The Bar. While in picture 3.3. that uses long shot, the frame gives a wide view of the action when Amy catches her husband's affair. These behaviors indicate that she is revengeful.



Picture 3.1. 01:19:02
Amy sees her husband



Picture 3.2. 01:18:41
Nick and Andie together



Picture 3.3. 01:19:05
Amy catches the affair

To sum up, Amy is manipulative, perfectionist, and revengeful. From that explanation it can be inferred that Amy has many characteristics that make her proportion in the story substantial. Her complexity makes her a round character.

As in conflict, in this story we can see the external conflict that triggers Amy's behavior is the infidelity of her husband but if we dig deeper her internal conflict is far more responsible for this. She's not real, Amy Dunne is a figment of cool girl she pretends to be. She corrupts herself to be a girl that her husband wanted to be with.

Growing up, Amy was living under Amazing Amy's shadow, a fictional character that her parents creates based on Amy. Amazing Amy always does anything right, she is perfect. This makes Amy become a perfectionist, competitive, and attention seeker kind of person.

Under these circumstances, Amy evolves into a control freak. She doesn't just want to have everything that she wants, she wants to control people to fulfill her desire. These internal conflicts become the main factor that makes her behave as such.

4.1.2 Psychoanalysis

The total personality consists of three major systems, they are *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. These systems work co-operatively with each other in a person who has healthy mental. In this part, the writer analyzes Amy Dunne's dynamics based on her behavior dealing with conflicts in the movie *Gone Girl*.

Amy and Nick Dunne's marriage is troubled. It starts with money difficulties, the decision to move to Missouri, the responsibility to take care of Nick's mother, and Nick's affair. These courses of actions lead to Amy's personal vengeance. She designs her personal retribution for her beloved husband that turns him into a possible murder suspect.

Driven by her revenge for his infidelity, at that time, her *id* projects his husband as a tension. "The *id* cannot tolerate tension, it wants immediate gratification, its function is to avoid pain. The *id* does not think, it only wishes or acts." (Hall, 1954:27). In this case, Amy is building her vengeful plan in the air as in her *id* way to pursuit the pleasure. Her *ego* controls her perfect plan's process when she tries to make her *id* vision into the external reality, namely setting the crime scene. As shown in picture 5.1, it uses medium close-up shot to show the expression and the detail like the book she holds. In picture 5.2, it uses a long shot to show her movement when she sets the crime scene and writes a diary, as shown in picture 5.3. It uses medium close-up shot giving the audience enough details of what she is doing.



Picture 4.1. 01:06:47

Amy designs her plan

Picture 4.2. 01:08:16

Amy sets the crime scene

Picture 4.3. 01:09:05

Amy writes the diary

Amy's ego surrenders too much on its power to the *id* that makes its function unwise. Thus, Amy's *superego* forms a new perception from her *ego* that allows her to react like such. It should be memorized in mind that the energy is only enough to support one. This means that if the *id* gains energy, the *ego* or the *superego* – or both – have to lose energy. The power of one system of personality means reducing other systems. A person with a strong *id* will have weak *ego* and *superego* (Hall, 1954:48). Finally the first climax is when Nick gets arrested by the police for the murder of Amy Dunne. In this part of the story, Amy's plan goes according to her arrangement.

Everything changes when the stumble of Amy's original plan occurs. Her original plan after setting up her deadfall for Nick is to stay away and lives with a new identity for a while until she is ready to kill herself. After succeed for doing it for couple of days she gets robbed. With no money left she has no choice but to call her ex, Desi, to ask for his help by telling him her own version of the story. Desi, who is obsessed with Amy since they are in high school, undoubtedly believes and accommodates her in his lake house. Days pass by, Desi, who feels that he

has a second change to be reunited again with Amy, makes Amy's movement restrained. The climax is when she kills Desi, as shown in picture 5.1. It uses medium close-up shot to show the face more clearly.



Picture 5.1. 02:05:07
Amy strangles Desi



Picture 5.2. 02:05:07
Amy comes back home



Picture 5.3. 02:07:04
Amy gets interviewed by the police

When Desi is getting attached to her, Amy's *id* sees Desi as a tension that needs to be eliminated. Controlled by her *id*, she does something impulsive as she kills Desi. The impulsive behavior is conducted by *object-cathexes* of the *id* that overwhelmed the *ego* because *anti-cathexis* fails to survive. (Hall, 1954:45). Hall states that, "an object that will satisfy an instinct, is called *object-choice* or *object-cathexis*." (1954:39). Hall then adds, "an anti-cathexis is a charge of energy that opposes a cathexis. The anti-cathexes of the ego are directed against the id-cathexes because these cathexes press for immediate relief from tension." (1954:45). Clearly, her *ego* is consumed by her *id* power, making them to follow the flow to fulfill its wishes. After all that has happened, Amy, goes back to home. With her clothes soaked by Desi's blood, she makes a grand entrance in front of the media to her husband Nick, as shown in picture 5.2. It uses medium close-up shot to show her face more

clearly but still catches the environment around her that fills with people from the media.

Her *superego* is exploited by her *id* for the purpose of its fulfillment. It is shown when Amy pins her disappearance to Desi telling people that he has kidnapped and assaulted her. Amy remains unconcerned about the fact that she puts all the blame to the man he killed, as shown in picture 5.3. that uses long shot to establish an overall view of the room's situation when she gets interviewed by the police.

5

CONCLUSION

David Fincher's *Gone Girl* is a drama movie that was released in 2014 which made some major buzz at the time. One might look at this movie as a mystery or just another thriller movie. One of the ways to understand the movie better is by looking through the main character in this story. Amy Dunne holds an interesting idea of the Freudian psychology's theory about the conduct of one's behavior that is determined by one's dynamics.

After the writer analyzed David Fincher's *Gone Girl* using psychological approach, it is true that there are several aspects of the dynamics of personality represented in this movie. These are represented on the distribution and disposal of psychic energy that is shown through the main character, Amy Dunne, towards the conflicts of her life. Her mass of energy is controlled by her *id*, which causes her actions to be impulsive. What one is and does will depend on the distribution of the psychic energy. The disharmony of her *id*, *ego*, and *superego* is resulting maladjustment. These unbalanced organizations of Amy's personality prove that her dynamics is unwise, therefore she shows signs of psychological problems.

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Manipulation and intelligence go hand in hand. Amy Dunne is mostly a psychopath/functional sociopath to the viewer's eyes (either terms are debatable, I'm not sure), but the most important part of her doings is that she is manipulative. And succes... Amy Dunne is mostly a psychopath/functional sociopath to the viewer's eyes (either terms are debatable, I'm not sure), but the most important part of her doings is that she is manipulative. And successfully so. Such terms are extremely relative, and her character is just as blurred, so it's mostly up to you to decide what to think about her.) 3.4k views · View 7 Upvoters.
srHNpmkvxloSdqnoSlmfxokonrvoexHdRwoeE RObfyJA LZFiCdoBrQguGBeRoURf VRoMwCffWM
DEuVmnurpfKRWnikvraYIZeHysxhaat.