

# The Mental Condition of a Manipulative Personality Reflected in the Main Character in David Fincher's *Gone Girl* (2014)

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## Abstract

*This research aims to analyze Amy Dunne mental condition as a manipulative person in David Fincher's Gone Girl. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the film entitled "Gone Girl" directed by David Fincher's as a research objective. Data collection methods include observing and reading, identifying, classifying, and selecting. The method of analyzing data is by displaying, explaining and interpreting. Data were analyzed using theory from Sigmund Freud. The mental condition of the main character as a manipulative person Amy Dunne in "David Fincher's Gone Girl (2014) when mental condition of Amy knowing her husband's affair, when she trapped her ex-boyfriend, Amy in facing her parents, when facing revenge to her husband, and mental condition of amy when readiness to committing suicide. Then Amy Dunne becomes a manipulative person.*

**Keywords:** *manipulative personality, Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalysis*

## Introduction

According to Dr. Shirley Glass (2004), a psychologist and author of the book 'Not Just Friends', suggests that infidelity often occurs due to emotional dissatisfaction in the relationship, an imbalance of needs and attention between partners, or a lack of open and honest communication. everyone who gets married certainly longs and aspires to be able to live a harmonious married life.

The psychological thriller film "Gone Girl" which was released in 2014 is an adaptation of Gone Girl best-selling novel with the same title in 2012. Directed by David Fincher and starring Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike, this film has complex and relevant themes. real life. Gone Girl addresses themes such as marriage, infidelity, manipulation, and control, all of which are important aspects

of human life. The film features complex characters with strong performances from the lead actors and brilliant screenwriting, *Gone Girl* takes the audience on a tense and confusing emotional journey.

Amy Dunne is a beautiful woman. She is smart, lives well, and likes puzzles. Her life with her husband, Nick Dunne, is filled with love. until one day, Amy suddenly disappeared at the celebration of their five years of marriage, Amy's disappearance then became the spotlight in various media. As time went by, the investigation into Amy's disappearance revealed many secrets in Nick Dunne and Amy's relationship. Researcher is interested in analyzing the film *Gone Girl* (2014) directed by David Fincher because this film explores themes of trust, deception, and the true nature of relationships.

## **Literary Review**

### **Psychology of Literature**

The psychology of literature approach in analyzing the topics in the movie. Heffernan (2016: 1) mention that broadly speaking, psychology is a study of human or a study of the mind. He also explains that psychology is a science in which to study a person's behaviour and mental processes

### **Freud's Psychoanalysis**

Freud's most basic concepts of psychoanalysis are conscious, preconscious dan unconscious. Freud propose his idea that conscious is a small part of mental life, while most of it is unconscious. Freud (as cited in Engler, 2014:46) believe that the human mind is more influence by the unconscious than the conscious mind. According to Freud, personality consists of three systems or aspects, including Das Es (Id), Das Ich (Ego) and Das Uber (Superego). A person's behavior is the result of the interaction between these three components

### **Psychological Manipulation**

Psychological manipulation is a person's way of changing, influencing, or controlling other people to conform to what they want, which aims to change the behaviour or perception of other people through harsh, deceptive, or fraudulent tactics.

According to George K. Simon (2013), successful psychological manipulation primarily involves the manipulator with Concealing aggressive intentions and behaviour, Possessing a degree of cruelty sufficient to lack the qualifications to cause harm to the victim if necessary which could result in the manipulation most likely to be carried out through covert aggressive acts.

### **Definitions of Manipulation**

The act of unfairly or deceptively controlling or influencing someone or something, usually for one's personal benefit or to accomplish a specific goal, is referred to as "manipulation." To accomplish a desired outcome, manipulation might employ a variety of strategies, such as psychological, emotional, or physical ones.

### **Research Methodology**

In this chapter the researcher uses -qualitative method as -the principle instrument of the research. Qualitative method is used by exploring phenomenon which illustrates and explains about the new concept of the common stereotype in order to understand the meaning, According to Creswel (2014) asserted that to investigate the topic he suggested apply the qualitative research. Hence, to explain a research problem in qualitative project, it would be best understood by exploring a phenomenon and concept. The object in this research is film under title *Gone Girl* is a psychological thriller film released in 2014. The film was directed by David Fincher and based on the novel of the same name by *Gone Girl*. The researcher focus on script, word and sentences of subtitle, also focus on picture in the film. In the steps of collecting data from *Gone Girl* movie 2014, the researcher uses observation the method, they are, watching, reading, identifying, classifying, and selecting. This thesis also contains a method of analyzing the data, they are, displaying, explaining, and interpreting.

### **Finding and Discussion**

**The Mental Condition of the Main Character as a Manipulative Person in David Fincher's *Gone Girl***

The main character feels angry because she was cheated on by her husband, so this chapter will describe how the main character becomes a manipulative person by analyzing her mental condition.

### **Mental Condition of Amy Dunne when knowing her husband's affair**

It aims to learn about Nick's (her husband's) extramarital affair. Knowing that her husband is having an affair, Amy believes that Nick does not respect it and tries to respond. Amy attempts to discredit Nick by pretending to be dead, leading people to believe that Nick killed Amy.

In the story of Amy, she becomes aware of rumors suggesting that her husband Nick is involved in an extramarital affair with a younger woman. Fueled by feelings of jealousy, Amy devises a strategic plan to entrap her husband. Amy's scheme involves employing a clever and deceitful tactic, aiming to manipulate the situation to her advantage and potentially expose Nick's alleged affair. Amy formulates a devious plan to ensnare her husband, Nick, employing a cunning scheme. Her strategy involves creating a false crime scene in the kitchen using fake spilled blood. Subsequently, Amy orchestrates her own disappearance, intending to frame Nick for her supposed murder and prompt his arrest by the police. On the other hand, usually every anniversary of marriage, Amy set up of getting a special gift. So it is with this fifth anniversary, Amy also prepared a surprise for Nick. Dear Amy trigger disappeared:

“We weren't ourselves when we fell in love, and when we became ourselves surprise! we were poison. We complete each other in the nastiest, ugliest possible way.”

From the quote above, it explains that the person's behavior can change due to the pressure of the situation and Amy doing things like that. She does not want to again give a gift on her wedding anniversary because she already felt disappointed by the actions of her husband's infidelity.

### **Mental Condition of Amy when she Trapped her Ex-boyfriend**

Before framing Nick, it revealed that Amy Dunne's character also has been done this similar action before to her ex-boyfriend named Tommy O'Hara. Seven years

ago when she had not personally acquainted with Nick, Amy has been dating with Tommy.

Tommy : I meet Amy at this party, you know? We click. She's perfect...I think, "What's the catch?" A few months, it hits me. This is not going to be easy...

Nick Dunne : So, you broke up with her.

Tommy : No, I just backed away. Gave her some space. No big deal, right? So, I thought. Then one night, Amy comes over to my place... with a bottle of bourbon and a bootleg of this band I love. And within two minutes...

Nick Dunne : You had sex?

Tommy : Yeah, consensual. It was rough, but she was screaming for it. Next morning, there's two cops at my door. Amy has wounds that are consistent with rape. Ligature marks on her wrist, and my semen. It looks like I've tied Amy to my bed, and raped her. Me! And then, guess what they find.

*(Gone Girl, 2014, 01:22:05 - 01:24:11)*

From the dialogue between Nick and Tommy, it becomes evident that Amy Dunne has successfully manipulated the situation to portray Tommy as the accused in her rape case. The repercussions of her destructive maneuver are devastating for Tommy, resulting in the loss of employment, the dissolution of his marriage, and even social isolation as neighbors avoid him due to the stigma associated with the case. Amy's actions, which have a severe impact on Tommy's life, suggest a profound lack of concern for the well-being of others.

Amy's revenge actions, as described, indicate a significant influence of the Id, allowing her to commit acts that violate the moral principles of the super-ego. The domination of Amy's Id suggests a lack of restraint and a willingness to prioritize immediate desires and revenge over ethical considerations. In a mentally healthy individual, the ego serves to balance and mediate between the conflicting demands of the Id and super-ego, ensuring that actions align with reality and morality. However, Amy's behavior appears to deviate from this balanced interplay, pointing towards potential psychological complexities.

### **Mental Condition Of Amy in Facing Her Parents**

Amy employs rationalization after her parents release the *Amazing Amy* book. As the main inspiration of this serial book, Amy feels discomfort in throughout her life because in reality, she is not as perfect as the *Amazing Amy* fictional character.

Amy Dunne : This is why I have my brownstone. My trust fund. I know I can't complain.

Nick Dunne : Your parents literally plagiarized your childhood.

Amy Dunne : No, they improved upon it and then peddled it to the masses.

*(Gone Girl, 2014, 00:13:02 - 00:13:13)*

Rationalization is an attempt to distort perceptions of reality and give reasons that seem reasonable, so that a reality that was originally dangerous because it can disturb an individual personality, now becomes more easily accepted. Therefore, Amy's case, she engages in rationalization to unconsciously alter the fact that her parents plagiarized her entire life story for the *Amazing Amy* book series.. This fact is distorted by her ego because it can potentially disrupt Amy's personality structure, so her ego reduces her anxiety by giving logical reasons that are more easily accepted by her to believe that her parents only improve it. Even though Amy deflects the reality, through this method she is able to maintain the balance of her personality structure interaction.

### **Mental Condition of Amy when Facing Revenge to her Husband**

The actions of Amy doing revenge to Nick, is a form of Superego. The Superego is an action of what is already in the plan by the Ego of the source from Id. It began when Amy found out that Nick was having an affair and was planning retaliation against Nick's actions. For example, Amy might not have planned to exact more revenge on Nick if she was unaware of his adultery. Because of his attitude, she believes that this is the last resort for making Nick deterrent. Amy's Id, which operated on the pleasure principle, starts to take control as a result of this romance. The conversation that follows demonstrates how Amy's Id dominates her personality structure.

Amy Dunne : To fake a convincing murder, you have to have discipline. You befriend a local idiot. Harvest the details of her humdrum life. And cram her with stories about your **husband's violent temper**...With the help of the unwitting, bump up your life insurance.

Purchase getaway car. Pay cash. You need to package yourself so that people will truly mourn your loss. And America loves pregnant women. As if it's so hard to spread your legs. You know what's hard? Faking a pregnancy. First, drain your toilet. Invite pregnant idiot into your home and ply her with lemonade. Steal pregnant idiot's urine. Voila A pregnancy is now part of your legal medical record. Happy anniversary.

*(Gone Girl, 2014, 01:06:45 - 01:08:16)*

Amy's statement above shows the results of the Id domination on her personality structure that appears in this film. It is evident that Amy has definitely engaged in a number of behaviors that go against social norms and values, including murder, data manipulation, lying, and slander. Because the power of the Id causes Amy to forget her morality and logic, she feels nothing fear nor guilt when framing her husband.

### **Mental Condition of Amy when Readiness to Committing Suicide**

To succeed in her plan, Amy does not even hesitate to hurt herself or even commit suicide.

Amy Dunne :

“And if I get everything right, the world will hate Nick for killing his beautiful, pregnant wife. And after all the outrage, when I'm ready I'll go out on the water with a handful of pills.. and a pocket full of stones. And when they find my body, they'll know...Nick Dunne dumped his beloved like garbage. And she floated down past all the other...abused, unwanted, inconvenient women. Then, Nick will die, too. **Nick and Amy will be gone**”

*(Gone Girl, 2014, 01:09:51 - 01:10:21)*

The story given above explains Amy's readiness to end her life. In this way, Amy's worry is produced by her ego, which is fed by her id's inability to satisfy its need for a flawless life, much like *Amazing Amy*. Moreover, her concern around this issue is really intense, which prevents her ego from making sense of it. As a result, Amy Dunne's strong id overrides her ego, driving her to take whatever action—even if it means killing herself—in order to appease it. The purpose of this action is to support her fictitious proof suggesting that her

husband is the primary suspect in Amy's death. She doesn't seem to care that what she's doing puts her life in danger.

## Conclusion

The causes and indications of manipulative personality of the main character Amy Dunne represented in David Fincher's *Gone Girl* (2014) movie. The causes of manipulative which consist Inappropriate parenting, Suffering from Personality Disorders, while for the indication manipulative personality the main character which consist manipulating facts and psychopath (uncontrolled desire, highly impulsive, feels little guilt and aggressive). The mental condition of the main character as a manipulative person Amy Dunne in "*David Fincher's Gone Girl* (2014) when mental condition of Amy Dunne when knowing her husband's, when she trapped her ex-boyfriend, Amy in facing her parents, when facing revenge to her husband, and mental condition of Amy when readiness to committing suicide. then Amy Dunne becomes a manipulative person.

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