



A psychoanalytical Study of Dilemma between Love and Honesty in The Great Gatsby.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the critical analysis on Jay Gatsby's psyche regarding the issue of love and honesty. Through examining this psychoanalytical case, we have tried to elucidate the turmoil of Jay Gatsby's mind from the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical method. We attempted to examine in detail the role of Gatsby's mental functions through the Freudian concept of Id, Ego and Superego. Jay Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald the Great Gatsby dwells in between the notion of love and honesty. The inherent tension between these two forces has driven the psyche of Gatsby in the novel. Gatsby is both a passionate lover and a true soldier. In his journey to thrive his love for Daisy, Gatsby stripped off his honesty which was his personality and that's why he dwelled in his psyche. Practically it is the analysis of an individual behavior of Jay Gatsby, according to whom "There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind."

Keywords: *Love, Honesty, Dilemma, Id, Ego, Superego.*

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Introduction

“I knew it was a great
MISTAKE
for a man like me to
FALL IN LOVE”

-Jay Gatsby

The Great Gatsby

Love and honesty are the strong forces that drive a mind to meet its ultimate consequence. Love is the instinct that makes aware oneself of what to do in life. Honesty is the path that shows how to achieve the instinct while remaining true to oneself. Once the path deviates from honest means it loses the core sense of right and wrong and thus one engages in a percussion of the mind. Jay Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* is no exception in this regard. Gatsby is a passionate lover, for whom Daisy was his life, his love and everything. That’s why he said- “There I was, way off my ambition, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I DIDN’T CARE.” So it seems the passion of love sometimes forces people to compromise with moral values to attain it.

2. Objective of the Study:

The general objective of this study is to analyze the psyche of Jay Gatsby to understand his dilemma of love and honesty. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives are set.

- a) Analyze Gatsby’s psyche from Freudian view.
- b) The core factors that influenced Gatsby’s psyche.
- c) The percussion of Gatsby’s personality with his conscience.

3. Methodology:

This research is categorized as a observational study and this research will use psychological analysis theory of Freud to analyze the psychological problems of Jay Gatsby. So, this research is not purely a qualitative type of research. It is an observational research that is textual analysis and discourse analysis. There are two kinds of sources of collecting information; primary source which is the text *The Great Gatsby* for this research and secondary sources are some related journals



regarding this topic. However, Freudian concept is very useful to interpret the text to find out the concept of violating honest means to attain his true love and thus able to describe the dilemma of Gatsby's psyche. As a result, the study has been able to give important information regarding the topic.

4. Literature Review:

Early works in the dilemma of love and morality of Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald shows the destruction of moral ethics on Jay Gatsby (Ronald, 1996) for the hope of being accepted by Daisy whom he loved. Gatsby thought his whole life that he could buy love with wealth and thus chose a moral path. Critics like Carringer and Gunn have worked in this perspective, but no one analyzed the psyche of Gatsby from Freudian point of view and we are working on it. The critics just pointed out that Gatsby earned his wealth by dishonest path, but they did not focus that in which dilemma he was passing through at that time. They did not mention the work of Freud's Id, Ego and Superego which are very important to evaluate the psyche of Gatsby in the perception of love and honesty.

According to Gunn, the extravagant dreams

and illusions of Gatsby about love kills him in the end. He also discussed Gatsby's inability to distinguish between the spiritual ideals from the material conditions. He must have realized them according to Gunn. Gatsby could not be able to realize the conditions because of his mental dilemma. His Superego did not work properly, so he could not distinguish between the spiritual and material conditions. Carringer discussed this notion by exploring the idea that Gatsby is a self-made man who worked hard to get all his wealth that could, although in his imagination, show Daisy that he had been capable to get her hand. With the views of these critics, we found that no one tries to analyze the dilemma of Gatsby's psyche depends on love and morality from a Freudian point of view and that is the thing we are working on this research paper.

In another work a critic Ahmad used Abraham Maslow's theory on hierarchy of need. The critic did not explore the self-actualization need of Gatsby as in the story he could not fulfill his need of love and belongingness. Because when Gatsby confronted Daisy in front of her husband Tom to tell that she never loved her husband, but only Gatsby, Daisy told that she loved Gatsby but she could not live together with him. So the critic, neither used



Freud's path as to why this need of love and belongings could not be carried out nor did he tried to explore this psychological need of Gatsby.

Then another critic Jared Defife gave to view about the protagonist of the novel. The first view is of 'shane' related to the unwillingness of expressing himself as penniless as a soldier before Daisy. Another view is about 'grief' which relates to the loss of his love. The critic did not mention the dilemma that occurred from the loss of his love, but just gave a view point as 'grief'.

Some other critics like David, Elizabeth, Mina and so on worked on Freudian view of id, ego and superego to explain Gatsby's dilemma of love. However, they pointed out that his id was simply his love for which he goes out of his way to do everything in his power to get Daisy back. So he amasses wealth and riches to be used as a tool for capturing Daisy. Also, they described the narrator Nick Carraway as the superego of Gatsby, which was not at all the aim of this paper. Indeed the critics applied Freud's id, ego and superego like in this paper, however, they did not mark the dilemma of love and honesty that rouse from the imbalances of these three forces.

5. Interpretation:

The study that we are conducting is on the psyche of Jay Gatsby, who is the protagonist of The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald. To analyze the psyche of Gatsby the lens of Freud is very much effective that unfold the reason of his dilemma. The three key points of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory are id, ego and superego. These key points are the core factors that have driven Gatsby's psyche in the novel. Id is the primitive force. It is the 'Instinct' that is inherited in the personality. It is the aggressive drive of the psyche. It demands immediate gratification. It is ruled by the pleasure principle, demanding satisfaction now (David, 1998), regardless of circumstances and possible undesirable effects. This act of wish fulfillment satisfies the id's desire for the moment, though obviously it does not reduce the tension of the unfulfilled urge Ego means the 'Reality'. The ego is that part of the Id which has been influenced by external world. The ego often utilizes defense mechanisms to satisfy the urge of id. With the formation of the ego, the individual becomes a self, instead of an amalgamation of urges and rest (David,



1998). The ego seeks pleasure like Id and avoid pain, but concerned with realistic tragedy to obtain pleasure.

Superego uses guilt and self-reproach as its primary means of enforcement of these rules (Elizabeth, 2016). It is the 'Morality'. It is the social morals and values that enable us to behave like human beings. If a person does something which is acceptable to the superego, he experiences pride and self-satisfaction. So it actually controls both Id and Ego. Psyche is the mind or the personality that distinguishes one person from another. We all are different accordingly to our psyche and these three factors make the differences. These three key factors are the system that develops in different stage of our life. For Jay Gatsby, Id is his love for Daisy. As Id is chaotic and conscious regarding Gatsby it is his unbridled love for Daisy for which he thrived throughout the novel till his last breath. To satisfy his Id his Ego worked accordingly. As Ego seeks pleasure through reduction of tension and avoiding pain, Gatsby in reality did something like this. Gatsby was not his real name rather Gats when he first met Daisy. To impress daisy he changed his name and took her in false pretense for which he despised himself. And that's when his psyche first shaken up from honesty and started to work in the other way

for his love of match the standard of Daisy's desire Gatsby rouse as a wealthy man by bootlegging of wine (Qin and Lili, 2015). He threw extravagant parties to draw daisy's attention, but always remained alone amid all. Even though knowing the fact that Daisy is a married woman, having a child, Gatsby approached to her crossing the moral boundaries (Ronald, 1996) that shows the failure of his superego. Gatsby's personality contradicted with his consciences. He has a bombastic personality. He explicitly did whatever he wanted to do. However, he had to wear the mask of an Oxford graduate to pursue Daisy again. Which means his conscience was somewhere pricking him for walking on the path of dishonesty to attain his love.

6. Findings:

The reason behind this research is to find out how Jay Gatsby's mind worked on the novel of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby; especially to focus on the core factors that driven his mind towards the dilemma between love and honesty.

6.1 Conducting a such psychoanalytic study helped us to find out that the key forces that has driven Gatsby's mind is the Id, Ego &



Superego.

enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life” (Fitzgerald, 1925).

- 6.2 Gatsby’s Id was overpowering.
- 6.3 His ego thrived to satisfy the id.
- 6.4 Superego failed to control the Id and Ego and that’s why the dilemma occurred.

Conclusion:

Gatsby was beyond superego as his Id (love) was overpowering that drifted him apart from honesty of his conscience that led him to a moral path of life. That’s the reason behind the dilemma of his psyche because somewhere down the line he is also aware of crossing the boundary of honesty, but his love was more over powering to the social norms and moral values. That’s why he lost the mental peace, moral conscience and dwelled in the dilemma of love and honesty. He did not strive for an ideal self rather strives for a rich self, for a self with Daisy.

According to some critics (Mina and Mojtaba) the Great Gatsby is the representation of Id, Ego and Superego on Fitzgerald’s mind. Thus the dilemma of love and honesty in the psyche of Gatsby reflects in Gatsby’s own words- “I was within and without, simultaneously

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