Quest of Self-Discovery: A Psychoanalytical Study of Christ Gardner's novel- The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

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Abstract

Psychoanalysis is one of the modern theories that can be applied to modern English literature texts. Literature is the product of human thoughts, which talks about human life and their behavior in various circumstances expressed through the author's feelings inspired by reality and imagination. It displays an accurate picture of a society in a fictional form. Literature deals with human behaviors, expressions, thoughts, and motivations. The behavior of human beings is firmly related to psychological aspects such as anxiety, phobia, depression, frustration, etc. However, it's a behavioral pattern; the human mind can be identified seemed to be the father of psychoanalysis because his revolutionary remarks frazzled the established views about childhood, sexuality, and femininity. He disclosed the darkest tunnels and revealed the mysteries of the human mind—Freud divided our consciousness into different parts. The theory is made divisions regarded as a theory of personality organization and personality dynamics that guides psychoanalysis. It is known that the closest connection between literature and psychoanalysis has always been deployed by the academic field of literary criticism or literary theory. Among the critical approaches to literature, psychoanalysis has been one of the most controversial and, for many readers, the least appreciated. The proposed research work titled "Quest of Self-Discovery: A Psychoanalytical Study of Christ Gardner's novel- *The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS"* explores where psychoanalysis has been used and how it has changed his ways of thinking in different directions.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, mental issues, anxiety, depression, motivation, discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalytic theory is the re-narrativization of a person's life. It has given much importance to the significance of the unconscious and thought processes. They believed that an awareness of this is therapeutic and vital to a healthy mind. Psychoanalysis emphasizes motives; it focuses on hidden or disguised motives, which helps clarify literature on two levels, the level of writing itself and the level of character action within the text. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the subject and tries to explain the relationship between meaning and identity to the psychic and cultural forces. Psychoanalysis is essential in contemporary understandings of reading, meaning, and the relation of literature to culture. Psychoanalysis has been seen as a therapy that aims to cure mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the minds. Psychoanalysis examines the articulation of our most private anxieties and meanings to culture and gives us a perspective on them as cultural formations. We live in a post-Freudian age; we cannot escape the fact that we think about human life differently from how people in the past thought about it. Psychoanalytical approaches to literature may not always be rich enough and tend to be reductive, but on the level of theory, psychoanalysis is of great importance. The modern idea that is used in literature has two accepted meanings. Firstly, it means a method of treating mentally disordered people. Secondly, it also goes on to convey the theories on the human mind and its various complexities. Sigmund Freud propounded psychoanalysis theory. Freud was originally a medical man engaged in his clinic's study and treatment of patients. His long devotion to this sector made him realize that he observed the mental disease of his patients. Gradually he became more interested in the study of psychology and, more particularly, the psychology of the unconscious mind. Freud suggested that our mind has three distinct regions. Based on his first discoveries concern the psychology of psychoneurosis, dreams, jokes, and what he called the psychopathology of everyday life, such as a slip of the tongue of the pen. The second is a system of the preconscious, and the third is a system of consciousness. His ideas were first presented in *The interpretation of Dreams* (1990). It is often assumed that the evidential basis for these theories came from his study of dreams.

Sigmund Freud first introduced the theory of Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis of a literary theory piece explores the unconsciousness of the writers and characters and focuses on the structure of personality. Freud developed his ideas regarding the psychological aspects of a human being, and it became a base of psychoanalysis. Freud's theory of psychoanalysis consists of the conception of three levels of personality: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. Freud later revised this notion of three character levels and introduced three basic structures in the anatomy of the personality: the id, the ego, and the superego. His theory explains these three divisions of the human psyche as the origin behind the occurrence of anxiety and depression. The conscious includes all the sensations and experiences we are aware of at any moment. He considered the intention a limited aspect of personality because only a tiny portion of our thoughts, feelings, and memories exists in conscious awareness at any time. The unconscious contains the significant driving power behind all the behaviors and is the repository of forces we cannot see or control. Between these two levels prevails the preconscious. This is the storehouse of memories that we can quickly summon into consciousness. Freud proposed three structures of the psyche or personality.

Another part of the human psyche is the 'ego,' which is developed out of the 'id' when the human becomes conscious of the moral values and standards of the outer world. 'Ego' is directly connected with the outside world, that is, 'reality.' It is found between the needs of the 'Id' and the standard of the outside world. It determines "whether the attempt to obtain satisfaction is to be carried out or postponed or whether it may not be necessary for the demand by the instinct to be suppressed altogether as being dangerous" (Freud, *An Outline*, pg86). 'Ego' opposes the two enemies: First, it must protect itself against the outside world, threatening it with unnecessary demands. Again at the same time, it controls the order of 'id,' which is more vicious because the defense against the inner world is insufficient. Thus, Freud declares that "they persist as threats, even if they can be temporarily held down" (Freud, *An Outline*, pg8).

Another part of the human psyche is the 'superego' which controls with its orders, judgments, and threats. 'Superego' is somewhat similar to a parent who always bears the authority over the 'ego.' There are two features of the 'superego.' One is conscience which punishes and warns 'ego' against 'id.' The other is the 'ego deal,' which "derives from rewards and positive models presented to the child." Both designate themselves to the ego through feelings like "shame, pride, and guilt." Thus, 'the ego' meets various anxieties; "reality anxiety in the face of the external world, normal anxiety in the face of the superego, and neurotic anxiety in the face of the strength of the passions in the id" (Hoffman, 25). Another critical point in Freud's theories was sexuality, which shocked me that most people's repressed wishes are sexual. Therefore, he continued that all "sexual normality and abnormalities spring from the very earliest stages of the human being; that is, infantile sexual life" (Hoffman, 14).

The id, ego, and superego are the three primary triggers in formulating anxiety. According to Freud, anxiety is a feeling of fear and dread without an apparent cause; anxiety is fundamental to developing neurotic and psychotic behavior. When we can't cope with anxiety, when we are in danger of being overwhelmed by it, the anxiety is said to be traumatic. Regardless of age, the person is reduced to a state of helplessness like that experienced in infancy. Freud proposed three types of anxiety: reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety involves a fear of dangers in the real world. It serves the positive purpose of guiding our behavior to escape or protect ourselves from actual threats. Neurotic anxiety has its basis in childhood. It is an unconscious fear of being punished for impulsively displaying id- dominated behavior. Moral anxiety results from a conflict between the id and superego. It is a fear of one's conscience. When a person is motivated to express an instinctual impulse, the superego retaliates by causing him to feel shame or guilt.

Thus, according to Sigmund Freud, every individual has a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family. These experiences construct the behavior patterns of adolescent and adult life. Human beings are motivated by desires, fears, guilt, and unresolved conflicts in the unconscious. We do not want to know about them due to fear of being overwhelmed by them. This continues till we find a way to understand and acknowledge the actual cause of guilty, desires, fears, and unresolved conflicts. Chris Gardner's *The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS* can be read from a psychological perspective. When analyzing *The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS*

psychoanalytically, the novel's main protagonist, Chris Gardner, is a strong character. He fights all the obstacles to get a better life; when he gets the job, he is delighted and calls that happiness.

The publishing world is challenging and becoming more diverse and inclusive, along with the self-love genre. This genre has become much more popular since 2000. While dealing with the books, which include the genre of self-love, the researcher has chosen *The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS* by Chris Gardener. In this novel, we will see how the protagonist struggles physically and mentally to regain the actual existence of his life. The books have their perspective on how the protagonist gained their confidence differently. His ways of expressing self-love are different yet motivating. While studying a literary work, the psychological aspects describe the universal issues closely related to human life and their inner world. Psychology helps literary works successfully present characters, express their moods, and bring the reader into the psychological depth of human reality. Psychology and literature studies focus on phantasies, emotion, and the human soul. So, while analyzing a literary piece, we should remember that an academic work represents the story of a particular society or culture, which depicts the picture of certain characters that are always influenced by the prevailing condition around them. Therefore, we can say that both psychological aspects and literature are always related to each other.

The introduction provides a detailed outline of the research plan, including the problem statement that signifies the present study's importance and relevance. This chapter also included a systematic and elaborate review of the literature. Besides this, the research methodology explains that the investigation is mainly based on Freudian psychoanalytical theory. It also highlights the concept of psychoanalysis in the literature concerning the novel *The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS*. Psychological problems can be seen as a result of all the difficulties and problems that human beings face in their life. People certainly have to face challenges and problems throughout their life. The problems may be social or personal, but it is impossible to run away from a problem.

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