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## The Fragmented Selves and Multiple Personalities in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*

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## DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled: “The Fragmented Selves and Multiple Personalities in Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl*” is our own work and all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature

Date

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## DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this humble work to our teachers and friends for whatever help and knowledge provided along our academic years.

I, **Khadidja BADOUCHE**, dedicate this dissertation to my parents **Ibrahim** and **Merbouha**, to my dear sisters and to my little brother **Housseem**, and to my lovely nephews **Chahine** and **Hommam**.

I, **Imane ZEGHBA**, dedicate this dissertation to my father **Abdelrachid** and my mother **Aisha**, and to my brothers, sister, and special dedication to my aunts and uncles.

## Abstract

Self-concept is a critical issue that can affect individuals' attitudes, behaviors, reactions and views of themselves. Gillian Flynn's novel *Gone Girl*, as a contemporary fiction depicts its characters as unable to carry a stable sense of self. This dissertation, therefore, examines how the shattered characters in the novel do not embody a sense of the traditional unitary self and aims to reveal the importance of the individual's concept of self and their self-image within a contemporary society that no longer corresponds to traditional societies. It further explores the sociological and emotional realities that lie behind triggering the fragmented personalities and the traits of dissociative disorders the characters may have, through a close reading of the dysfunctional behaviors they manifest. To achieve these objectives and to gain a reliable analysis, the study uses Self-categorization theory as well as Freud's theories of "family romance" and "psychology of love". It reveals that self-concept is difficult to assess because it involves personal perceptions and hidden feelings. In addition, it is an important factor for each person and it can change his/her beliefs, attitudes, and reactions toward personal and social life.

**Key Words:** Flynn, Freud, MPD, self-concept, Fragmented selves, trauma, psychoanalysis.

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## Introduction

Throughout history, literature and humanity have been connected in some way or another. Literature is a reflection of human life, feelings, and experiences. Therefore, literature cannot be separated from society. Literary productions are not born from emptiness; the writer does not create his/her material in the literal sense of the world, but he/she is simply reincarnating the accumulation of human experiences throughout the endless ages. Thus, literature is the product of the writer's representations of real-life problems.

The existence of conflicts and problems within human's life is inevitable. Among the problems that humans may undergo is living an unstable life during his/her early years. Trauma, abuse, frustration, anxiety and many others are serious issues the child often experience in his childhood that eventually will affect the child's psyche growth to be abnormal. This often causes a sense of chaos, guilt, rejection and depression, etc. In this way, there is also a relationship between trauma, sense of self, identity and fragmentation. In other words, trauma can disrupt and shatter the identity through altering an individual's way of perceiving the event. Thereby, the individual is psychologically broken into tiny pieces. Michelle Balaev mentions the impact of traumatic experience on the sense of self in his article named "Trends in Literary Trauma" as follows, "The idea that traumatic experiences pathologically divides identity is employed by the literary scholar as a metaphor to describe the degree of damage done to the individual's coherent sense of self" (151). Because of traumatic experience, the individual frequently feels fragmented, shattered, agitated, and anxious.

Since a child's self-concept is the cornerstone to his overall development (Woods 8), it is affected and conditioned by the surroundings, inner experiences and traumatic events. Along

with a shattering of the sense of self, a person experiencing trauma has difficulty in constructing ties with the people close to him/her. In this regard, Judith Herman explores the causes, which combine to shatter the self in her book *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence- from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. She states that “Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of self that is formed and sustained in relation to others (51).

Such unwanted experiences lead the person to do everything to overcome and cope with his/her bad feelings. The way most people go through hardships and challenges to avoid the overwhelming and frustrating emotions is splitting their personalities into two or more. Splitting the personality is often known as multiple personality disorder. Multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity disorder is a condition in which the person’s personality splits into two or more personalities. In milder cases, they often adopt contrasting behaviors and traits of splitting in order to cope up with different situations. In other words, they are going to develop different identities and switch their character often, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Usually, this psychological condition appears due to childhood traumatic events.

Since Literature is the representation of human experiences, and Psychology is the study of human behavior, a correlation between the two is easily perceptible. Aras in a journal entitled “Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences”, states that “There is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology for the fact that both of them deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations” (251). Therefore, many researchers show their interest in finding a psychological concern reflected in a particular literary work. That is why; applying psychoanalysis within literary criticism has proven to be a fertile ground for research time and time again. By the same token, most writers have been interested in portraying psychological and behavioral issues in their works. In Contemporary fiction, the quest for an identity is

becoming more and more crucial. The character's sense of self is often portrayed as unstable and rather broken. For this, it is interesting to explore how some writers represent the character's self concept and fragmented identities.

Gillian Flynn is one of the most widely recognized authors who tackled psychological issues in her well-known contemporary fictions. She has been interested in knowing more about the person's psychology (Nuraeni et.al 46). She is known for her works *Sharp Objects* (2006), *Dark Places* (2009), and *Gone Girl* (2012). This last, is Flynn's highly acclaimed and most controversial novel that caused a media frenzy by its publication, which, two years after, turned into a popular film adaptation directed by David Fincher (2014). The movie created a new interest in female-led thrillers (Stratton 19).

This novel tells a story of Amy Elliot Dunne and her husband Nick, who is going to be framed for the murder of his wife. The story follows Amy's life and her relationship with her husband. She goes missing the day of her fifth wedding anniversary leaving behind a series of diary entries serving as red herrings to misdirect the audiences' attention in order to frame her husband for murder. Although Amy was an icon from her childhood, as her mother meticulously documented her life through the "*Amazing Amy Series*," she proves to be a much-complicated character displaying dysfunctional behaviors hovering on psychopathy. Flynn creates her characters with dual-layer contradictory personalities and pushes them beyond the limits in order to satisfy personal desires and fulfilment. Her work offers a disturbing portrait of the darker parts of our ever-changing humanity.

Despite its controversial nature and vague content, *Gone Girl* is an outstanding example of contemporary fiction that reflects the concept of self more in line with today's times. In this work, the characters encompass difficult ways to perceive, think and evaluate their own personalities due to the surroundings they live in. In addition to the fact that a person's beliefs

about himself/herself influences all aspects of their behavior, Flynn's characters manifest a kind of dysfunctional behaviors in order to cope with their unstable sense of self.

Accordingly, this research entitled "Multiple personalities and Fragmented Selves in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* examines how the shattered characters in the novel do not embody a sense of the traditional unitary self. Furthermore, it explores the sociological and emotional realities that lie behind triggering the fragmented personality. Then, it investigates the traits of dissociative disorders the characters may have, through observing their dysfunctional behaviors throughout the novel. Thus, this research aims to reveal the importance of the individual's concept of self and their self-image within a contemporary society that no longer corresponds to traditional societies. Moreover, it attempts to identify what traits the characters show and dissociative behaviors they adopt in order to cope with their frustration and anxiety, and challenges using concepts from Psychoanalysis.

Many researchers have shown interest in Gillian Flynn's works as a corpus for their investigations. After the publication of *Gone Girl*, it received some criticism mainly from feminists. Yet, the book itself is still very popular and under discussion. Other critics have praised Flynn's works and her portrayal of the different psychological issues in her well-known contemporary fictions. Therefore, in order to understand the current topic and to highlight the significance of the selected corpus of study, it is necessary to refer to some previous studies that tackled *Gone Girl*. These following studies are useful for the researcher and can be used as additional guidelines to set the boundaries of this study.

Among the researchers and scholars who have attempted to investigate Flynn's portrayal of Amy Dunne (character) is Rajlakshmi Kanjilal. In her, article "In Search of "The Real Amy": An Analysis of *Gone Girl* "(2016), she explains the negative effects of gender stereotype on women in society. She also articulates that Amy's treatment towards her husband

is because she needed to confront her feelings and thoughts for being a victim (101-104). Moreover, she adds that according to gender role, women should sacrifice anything for their husbands, and this is what Amy does to Nick, but she ends up being betrayed. Starting from this reason, Amy decides to teach her husband a lesson to not disrespect women. Kanjilal also states that Amy's behaviors are a source of inspiration to women, so then women should not feel invisible and conform to gender stereotype (103). Nevertheless, this study does not acknowledge the fact that Amy's general behavior is disturbing and dysfunctional regardless of who the person is. Nick's infidelity is not the main trigger behind her behavior. What she does is a symptom of a deep-rooted issue that goes back in time to when she was young.

Another researcher who has shown interest in Flynn's novel is Patrick Osborne in his article "I'm The Bitch That Makes You a Man: Conditional Love as Female Vengeance in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*" (2017). The article has a general focus on the issue of violence against women. He argues that the consumer culture of the society is a vital reason for the violence against women. In Gillian Flynn's "*Gone Girl*", Amy's revenge is a response to a patriarchal consumer culture (9), which is a clear example for Osborne's claim. Then, he goes forward by picturing the concept of revenge versus violence. Revenge is Amy's answer to her violence-infested-society.

From A psychoanalysis study of the psychopathic character of Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, Dewi Candra Arum (2013) focuses in her undergraduate thesis on Amy Elliot Dunne's character. She maintains that Amy has the symptoms of a psychopathic person including manipulative, narcissistic, lack of empathy, and shallow emotion. Arum uses in her thesis the Theory of Psychosexual development. Psychosexual development is the theory that studies how the personality is developed during childhood period. Freud believed that human pass through a sequence of psychosexual stages, through which the id's focus in on particular erogenous zone, areas of the body that can generate sexual pleasure.

Despite the fact that the novel has been well-received, the published literature is limited to feminist criticism focusing on the character of Amy. They study the character of Amy in isolation from the other characters in the story and they don't seem to have shed light on psychological and sociological context of the characters' behaviors. Accordingly, an understanding of the contemporary depiction of human self can be achieved through tracing the perception of the self in literature, how people view themselves and how others see them as well as evaluating the unstable family background that would affect their psyche. Since the research that is going to be conducted is an analytical assessment of *Gone Girl's* characters, the study employs theoretical concepts pertaining mainly to psychoanalysis. These concepts will help investigate the realities that lie behind the characters' shattered selves and how they manifest the dissociative disorders. Among these concepts, Self-categorization theory and Freud's theories of "family romance" as well as "psychology of love" will be used.

In terms of structure, the work is divided along two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to psycho-historical and theoretical foundations that are essential in order to set the base of this study. It is under the heading "The Self in Literature: A Psycho-historical and Theoretical Background." It presents Freudian concepts and principles as well as his theories of "Family Romance" and "Psychology of Love." Moreover, it provides a deep explanation about multiple personality disorder, its diagnostic criteria, causes and factors. Then, it conceptualizes the self and reflects its image in literature. The second chapter is entitled: "The Fragmented Selves and Personality Disorders in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*". It is related to the analysis of the novel from psychoanalytical point of view. It begins by an examination of the disintegrating self in the novel. Furthermore, it focuses on family romances and lovers, and how the characters' self shatter leaving them with fragmented personalities. Then, the chapter investigates the characters' dissociative disorders based on their dysfunctional behaviors

mainly Amy and Nick. In the end, it seeks to provide an answer to the problems formulation of the current study.

## **Chapter One:**

### **The Self in Literature: A psycho-historical and Theoretical Background**

#### **1. Introduction**

The wide-ranging interest from researchers and scholars in explaining and clarifying psychoanalysis in general and Freud's structural model of personality, family romance and the psychology of love, in particular marks a multitude of arguments across a large spectrum of disciplines. A rich body of studies and findings are provided concerning Freudian concepts, principles as well as his achievements, particularly pertaining to the psychoanalysis theory and the division of the mind in the different genres of literature.

First, Literature is an art that tells a story by displaying expressions, emotions, experiences and situations. In other words, literature is the reflection of human feeling towards his life. According to Roberts and Jacobs, literature is a composition that tells a story, dramatizes, and advocates ideas (20). Richard Taylor also states, "Literature is essentially an imaginative act. That is an act of the writer's imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experience" (1). Moreover, we can say that the literary work is born from the expression of experience deposits that have long existed in the soul, and have undergone deep processing of the soul through the imagination process. In this regard, psychology and literature relate to one another because both use human experience as a material of study (Wellek & Warren n.p). They attempt to present how the person behaves in dealing with his/her problems, his mental health as well as his family issues and society. Meanwhile, Eagleton Terry states that the relationship between literature and psychology is quite close as both have the same source of the problem, human, as the material of the studies (135).

In the same sphere, Psychology is an applied science and academic discipline, which looks to study behaviors and mental processes, primarily among humans, by establishing general principles and researching specific cases. Human behaviors and mental processes are nothing less than the substance of our lives, actions, thoughts, attitudes, moods, even hope and dreams. Therefore, literature is a representation of life in the form of language while psychology is the study of human behavior, which generally aims to understand the psychological aspects contained in literary works.

Wellek and Warren state in their book *Theory of Literature*, that “Psychology can enter to literature by studying the psychology of the writer, psychology of the character, and also psychology of the reader” (139). That is to say, Psychology can enter literature through the author’s use of his feeling and emotion in creating a literary work. That is one reason why the two are often difficult to separate.

In order to get more knowledge and better understanding of the psychological, cultural, and sociological motives behind characters’ fragmented selves and their multiple personalities, this chapter will provide an overview of the psychological principles required in the study by highlighting a set of Freudian concepts used to support the analysis in this research. This chapter will also explain Multiple Personality Disorder, its diagnostic criteria as well as its causes and effects. Furthermore, it will provide a review and historical background about Self-Concept and its use in contemporary literature.

## **2. Psychoanalysis: Selected Freudian Concepts and Principles.**

In order to understand why humans behave as they do, it is very important to identify the establishment and structure of the human personality. The work of Sigmund Freud in the files of psychoanalysis is bemused as he answered questions about the human psyche in a way that cannot be understood and have never been owned by any other person before (Rohman

12). Therefore, Psychoanalysis can be defined as a term that refers to the theory whose focus is the dynamic relationship between the body, mind, and social order. It was first developed in the work of Sigmund Freud (293). Although Freud was a doctor who always thought scientifically, the world of literature was not stranger to him because during his youth he obtained literary education and examined it seriously (Minderop 11). Psychoanalysis became established in America between World War one and World War two, when Americans traveled to Europe to take advantage of psychoanalytic training opportunities. This perspective of psychoanalysis was dominant in America for approximately a 50-year span until the 1970s.

### **2.1. Freud's Structural Model of Personality:**

Psychoanalysis has been identified as a discipline that is concerned with the study of human psyche. This last is known as the human soul, mind, or essence. Sujanto et al suggest that personality is a dynamic organization in an individual as a system that determines the typical way adjusting to the surroundings. That personality always develops and changes (95). Thus, the idea that human psyche (personality) has more than one aspect is perhaps Freud's most enduring and essential idea. Human personality is divided into three systems; they are Id, Ego, and Superego. These three systems become a harmonic structure, they are mutually related and the corporation between them creates an individual who behaves balance within society. This division is actually not a separation of the mind into functions; rather it is a separation of the aspects of the mind (Freud, *A General intro* n.p).

The id can be defined as a part of the mind that is irrational, lawless, asocial, amoral, selfish, and pleasure loving (Abrams 250). It imagines and invents things to get the person what he/ she wants. The id behaves like an absolute ruler, must be respected, spoiled, and it is arbitrary. Its function that gravity our instincts for pleasure without regard for social conventions, legal ethics, or moral restraint. Moreover, the id is the source of all aggressions

and desires. In other words, it is a psychic energy and instinct, which push human to supply his needs. As Koeswara explains, “Id is the most basic personality system in which there are innate instincts” (32). In addition, id is the human desires that influence both emotional and physical needs, its main goal is to rid the person of tension, or to reduce the level of tension. It has no contact with reality, as Feist says, “The id has no contact with the reality, yet it strives constantly to reduce tension by satisfying basic desires” (27).

The next structural modal of personality is the Ego. The ego develops from the id, it begins developing since childhood and it is what Freud interpreted as the self. It is the rational, pragmatic part of our personality and it is less primitive than the id. Its main function is to balance the demands of the id and superego. The ego operates according to reality principle (Alwisol 15), that attempts to help the id get what it wants by judging the difference between reality and imagination and help people to handle such reality. The principle of reality is done through a secondary process (realistic thinking), arranging a plan then carrying out an action in accordance with a plan that has been realistically thought (Feist and Feist 27). The ego has no idea of right and wrong; everything is fine if it accomplishes its goal of satisfaction without harming itself or the id according to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory (1923).

Meanwhile, according to the same theory, the superego is the personality structure that refers to above ego, it develops from it, and both do not have their own energy. Moreover, the superego is the judicial branch of the personality. It is made up of societal ideals and morals that one learns from one’s family, society, and culture. In other words, it deals with human psyche in a highly moralistic way, because it is concerned with the social rules and the morals that are close to what many people call their conscience or their moral compass. Alwisol explains that, “The superego is a moral force and personality ethics that operates using idealistic principles as opposed to the principle of satisfaction and the realistic principle of the ego” (17). The superego tends to oppose the ego and the id and make the world according to

the ideal conception of the society and relies on societal characterization of the surrounding events (Bougherara and Bellakhdar 33-34). Thus, the working system of superego is at odds with the id, because the superego is trying to act in ways that fit within the social realm. It is the demands of the superego that are conflicted with the demands of the id, the ego must mediate between both (qtd.in Rohman 14-15).

Furthermore, a form of energy, called the psychic energy, operates all of the three system above. In addition to their specification with their own characteristics. They may even reflect their aspect on the human soul not only mind. However, they are usually interacting in relations with one another in a dynamic way, and each system derives from a specific source the id derives from the instincts, while the ego is based on reality and the superego on morality.

## **2.2. The Unconscious Mind**

Psychoanalysis is an approach that seek to understand the behavior of a person, because sometimes people's actions and behaviors are unconscious, unfamiliar and unreasonable, thus hard to predict. According to Freud's theory of the psyche, the human mind is subdivided into three components that are the conscious, the pre-conscious, and the unconscious (159). Freud compares the human mind to an iceberg, and the consciousness is in the tip of that iceberg. The conscious mind is a small part of the mind that consists of all mental processes, feelings, and thoughts, which people are aware of at any particular moment. In other words, the conscious is the aspect of mental process that help humans to think and talk rationally. In this regard, it is said,

Consciousness [...] is a transitory mental state since what is conscious one moment may not be conscious the next moment. That which exist on the fringe of the conscious Freud called the *preconscious*. The preconscious consists of what was earlier verbalized ideas and can again, with relative ease, be

verbalized. [...] Freud regarded them as only a small portion of the total mental life of the portion. (William 322)

Secondly, the pre-conscious, which exists just below the level of conscious is referred to as the bridge between conscious and unconscious. It consists of what is called the “available memory”, which contains ideas, memories, thoughts, and feelings that a person is not currently aware of, but they could be easily retrieved and at any time brought to consciousness. Freud has described the pre-conscious as a “mental waiting room” in which thoughts remain until they succeed in attracting the eye of the conscious (Freud and Riviere 306). Moreover, the pre-conscious may consist of human mild emotion, but traumatic, negative feelings, motives and decisions which are powerfully influenced by human past experience, and commonly accrue during childhood are not available on this level. Thus, this kind of memory is hard to remember because the unconscious took the decision to delete it from the conscious mind.

Since the time of Freud, the psychological unconscious has been the most important provocative aspect in the human psyche and it is one of the most problematic and controversial level. This level of the brain includes unethical and dark desires, guilty secrets, and hidden drives that ignite bad behaviors that should not reach the conscious mind (Wade and Travis 16-17). The unconscious has a significant role in determining a person’s behavior and experience. While on the level of awareness, which is responsible for storing all of these unacceptable and unpleasant thoughts as a kind of repression in order to protect the person’s mental health.

### **2.3. Sigmund Freud’s “Family Romance”**

Freud’s theory of psychosexual stages of development plays a crucial role in examining and investigating human daily life issues particularly family relations. According to the theory of ‘Family Theories’ presented by Klein and White, “Family is more than a social organization; it is a social institution, because it includes all the beliefs and practices of and about all of the

families on a particular society and geopolitical context, the ways it is connected with other families and other social institutions” (Klein and White n.p).

The theory analyzes how the family develops into new stage that can influence the family itself. In addition to that, the family serves a variety of functions such as providing care and protection, socializing children and creating a social status for them. In 1909, Freud has presented an interesting short paper entitled “Family Romance”, in which he describes neurotic symptoms that he observed in many of his child patients. Nevertheless, this concept has remained very important in working with both adult and child patients. In *The Freud Encyclopedia: Theory, Therapy, and Culture*, edited by Edward Erwin, the family romance concept is defined as,

A deep-seated wish, which begins in early childhood, to become a member of a highly idealized family, such as a royal family, in preference to being a member of one’s own biological family. As childhood unfolds, young boys and girls discover many different mechanisms, both creative and defensive, to avoid psychic pain, and the use of the family romance idea becomes one way of dealing with some of the unhappiness in one’s own family home. By becoming the long lost son or daughter of a rich, famous, loving king or queen, one can temporarily escape from the unpleasantness or drudgery of one’s actual mother and father (Brett Kahr 187).

In this regard, Freud explains and discusses the stages of child growth, which is considered as both “painful” yet essential development. At first, for a small child his parents are the only authority and the main source of power, confidence and all beliefs. During these early years the child’s most intense desire is to be like his parents. As he grows and learns of other parents, the idea of comparison occurs where the child then realizes that his/ her parents

are not unique, as they once seemed which eventually will lead him/her to doubt their parents (Kennedy 413).

Later on, the feeling of being neglected and abandoned by the parents starts to arise as the child grows up; he begins to develop a negative feeling towards his/her parents because at this phase he confronts the fact that the parents are not wholly emotionally available. Typically, the child in order to escape from such feeling and to avenge his pain against the frustrating parents and to eliminate the brothers and sisters for competitive or incestuous purposes he/she begins to think of freedom from their actual parents through the imagination (a conscious fantasy) of belonging to wealthy parents from a higher social standing. Thus, it is believed that “family romances” is nothing other than fiction. Such fantasies often become forgotten in later life (414).

More broadly, this theory will open the doors for a new concept, which is “Oedipus Complex”. According to Freud, the child passes through various stages of oedipal development, and her/his jealousies will become overtly sexual. Freud first introduces this term in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). The term Oedipus has been derived from the name of the king Oedipus of Thebes, who fulfills a prophecy that he will marry his mother and had children by her, and he intended to kill his father. Therefore, Freud believes that that this term explains the manifestation of infantile sexuality in the relation of the child to its parents, and the king Oedipus mirrors the innately human competitions between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. Thus, this myth illustrates family relations and societal taboos (Chourasia 6-9).

Furthermore, according to Freud the Oedipus complex depicts the unconscious desires where the child shows excessive affection for the parent opposite in sex to him or herself, and a corresponding distant for his/her other parent. Moreover, Freud has presented an

interpretation to his viewpoint of childhood, saying that the child had desperate attempt to return to the happier times when parent's status was omnipotent. Therefore, it is truly interesting to see how the child rebels against his parents; to see how the new generation always make a revolution against the ideals inherited from their predecessors (Coleman and Ganong 587).

The child is in need for a stable relationship with his parents, and any influence on this relation may harm the child's psyche. Anna Freud, who has contributed much in the analysis of the child's psyche, and in the understanding of the human development, believes that the parents have an authority over their child when his ego is immature and his superego still dependent on the parents (Ebgcmbe 67). Thus, the child will not be able to take the responsibility for his future development unless he becomes aware of his id impulses and his conflict about them.

Alex Holder also explains that the parents are an essential tool for the development of the child's superego; they are responsible for the repressions that the child undertakes during the course of his/her development, which may lead him/her to face neurotic manifestation (32). In the other hand, Anna Freud provides a variety of techniques to work with children who suffer from developmental deficiencies. She offers new ways to manage children's difficult behavior in order to protect them from being violent, murderous, delinquent, or promiscuous, or turn to substance abuse. This type of children are under threat of suffering from difficulties in their sexual partnership, due to their anxieties, inadequacies or immaturities (Yahi and Amroune 26).

#### **2.4. Freud's Psychology of Love**

The concept of love has been an entirely elusive subject. It received a big attention throughout the ages by poets, playwrights, philosophers, and psychologists. Moreover, love

has continued to be a difficult concept to define due to its polysemous nature. In order to conceive and define love, several research articles were consulted and numerous studies were conducted. Among them, the psychoanalysis perspective is the most relevant to this research. Psychology is very important in facilitating the understanding and analyzing the concept of love, despite the fact that love can seem like an extremely abstract concept yet it is essential and concrete enough for psychologists to study (Chapman 14). Thereafter, this paved the way to several theories about love to evolve.

One cannot discuss the psychology of love without discussing one of psychology's ancestors, Sigmund Freud. In this regard, Freud believes that love and sexuality are extremely intertwined. At a very young age, one experiences this type of feelings and emotions, although they are often misguided. This will lead us again to the phase of "Oedipus complex" and "Electra complex". Based on Freud's scientific opinion, young boys are sexually attracted to their mothers, and have the desire to kill their fathers. In the other side, young girls want to eliminate their mothers because they desire their fathers and want to be with them. Starting from this view, we can conclude that adults are constantly searching for that partner that reminds them of their mother or father. In this regard, Pincott states that,

Women's tendency to marry men, who resemble Dad, if Dad is loving, adds to the increasing evidence that women lean toward the familiar and the positive for long-term relationship. We may be modeling our marriage on Mom's, or unconsciously deciding that since Dad is good parent, than a man who looks like him will be too. (21)

Thus, the belief that the relationship between childhood associations of love, and how we pick a mate, whether it is true or not, is still up for debate. Therefore, from the Freudian perspective, one can examine how this love transfers to adult behavior. Freud concludes that,

the lovers may sometimes act irrationally, which reflects their regressing to the needs, insecurities, and obsessions of childhood (Ackerman 134). That is to say, some events of human childhood have a great influence on his/her adult life, and play a crucial role in shaping his/her personality.

Sternberg proposed “Triangular Theory of Love” (1986/1997), which holds that love, can be conceptualized as being comprised of three components: intimacy, passion, and decision or commitment. According to Sternberg, intimacy implies “feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in relationships” (119). Intimacy can also be defined as sharing one’s true self with another person (Pickering n.p). While, passion refers to physical, romantic and sexual attraction. It may include self-esteem, succorance, nurturance, affiliation, dominance, submission, and self-actualization (Sternberg 315). The last component is decision and commitment, which refers specifically the decision that one, loves certain other, and generally the one’s commitment to maintain that love (315). More broadly, it refers to the cognitive choice to be and stay in the relationship. It is worth to note that, it is possible for a person to experience only one component in his/her relationship. He/she may engage in a relationship without loving the other person, and it is even possible that he/she completes the decision to love their partner without ever committing to the relationship (Talmadge 18).

### **3. Multiple Personality Disorder**

Recently, with the rising of psychological and philosophical interest, the theme of mental illnesses in general and split personalities or what is now known as multiple personality disorder in particular gained a big concern both in popular culture and the literary productions. Despite its difficulty to be portrayed as a literary topic, yet the contemporary writers are still trying to depict their characters with such disorders in order to reflect the sociological and

emotional realities behind the manifestation of such issue basically in the contemporary environment. Split personality has been under discussion for ages from Plato to present time. It is also known as Dissociative Identity Disorder, or as Multiple Personality Disorder. The term “DID” was first coined by Pierre Janet in scientific usage in 1880, and replaced the “lay” term by “split personality” (Ertin 1).

Moreover, the theme of split personality appeared in literature in the form of the “double”, projection of the dual personality (Ellenberger 62). In the sixteenth century, the idea of the double was used in the *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604), a play by Christopher Marlowe; the play tells a story of man who sells his soul to the devil for power and knowledge. In the twentieth century, new dimensions were added to the study of split personality; the emphasis on the many facets of human personality, the interplay among them, and the “polypsychic structure of the human mind” gained more significance (Ellenberger 167). David Cooper includes more social aspects in his view of recent psychiatric research and states that people suffering from split personality do not actually go mad, but are “driven mad by others who are driven into the position of driving them mad by a peculiar convergence of social pressures” (Hawthorn vii). Thus, the origin of split personality lies not only in personal factors but also in the pressurizing social circumstances.

American Psychiatric Association’s theory that appears in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition* or also called DSM-IV-TR (1994, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed) about dissociative identity disorder, explains that:

Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly Multiple Personality Disorder) is characterized by the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states that recurrently take control of the individual’s behavior accompanied by an inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be

explained by ordinary forgetfulness. This disorder characterized by identity fragmentation rather than a proliferation of separate personalities. (DSM-IV-TR 528)

Thus, Multiple Personality Disorder is used to describe a psychiatric condition, a mental disturbance. This latter, can be clearly seen in the separation of two or more identities that alternately control a person's patterns, memories and consciousness through the break-off of the dominant identity into sub-personalities or alternate personalities, which later on begin to develop with separate and distinct sets of memories, behavioral patterns as well as with historical and familial backgrounds (Comer and Thomas 208). Moreover, the transference from one identity to the next is referred to a "Switching" commonly triggered by a negative or stressful event or experience (Comer and Thomas 208).

From the psychodynamic perspective, Multiple Personality Disorder is generally recognized as a developmental disorder that emerges due to early childhood abuse or trauma as Tom Schmidt cited in his research paper under the title "Dissociative Identity Disorder." Yet, it is important to note that the dissociation from one's true self is essentially a coping mechanism to protect the individual from fearful emotions or situations. As Haddock (2001) demonstrates, "if an individual is traumatized in early childhood and the experience is so overwhelming that he is unable to process it the child may dissociate to survive" (28). For that reason, the child, desperate to preserve sanity in the face of extreme maltreatment at the hands of those who probably have to protect him/her, dissociates to survive, which eventually results in the development of the most dramatic, controversial, and serious type of the dissociative disorders, Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD).

Moreover, some people do not manifest literal dissociation even if they have dissociative disorders. Instead, they present a number of mild traits as a safe way to get through

traumatic events and to cope with the extreme stress. Thus, not all people who dissociate should show signs and symptoms that are hard to be understood. While dissociation is a way people handle situations, some people tend to show traits of dissociation to satisfy their personal needs and to fit their conditions. By purposefully dissociating, they could develop unhealthy patterns.

### **3.1. Diagnostic Criteria for Dissociative Identity Disorder (MPD)**

The American Psychiatric Association has specified various criteria and different symptoms on their criteria called DSM-IV-TR (1994, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed), which facilitates the indication of the person who might suffer from multiple personality disorder. For instance, there should be a presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self), these signs may be observed by others or reported by the individual.

Additionally, at least two of these identities or personality states recurrently take control of the person's behavior. The inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetting. It can be also specified through acknowledging that the disturbance is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts or chaotic behavior during Alcohol Intoxication) or a general medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures) (292).

### **3.2. Causes and Factors of Multiple Personality Disorder**

Richard Kluft (1984) offered a theory of the development of dissociative identity disorder based on four factors. First, he mentions the internal capacity to separate from someone environment that can be derived from genetics. The second one is trauma, such as physical or sexual abuse perpetrated by parents encouraging the use of dissociation of defense mechanisms. Third factor is mainly about the development of a personality like a phenomenon that prevents the personality of a cohesive self. The last factor is the failure on the part of

significant others to protect the child against further overwhelming situations, and to provide positive and nurturing interactions to allow trauma to be “metabolized” and early or incipient dividedness to be abandoned (51-55).

Kluft is not the only theorist who proposed trauma as a factor in causing MPD. Among others, Gleaves (1996) hypothesizes that multiple personality disorder is a post-traumatic condition in which dissociation functions as a coping strategy in response to overwhelming psychological pain brought about by childhood maltreatment (42-59). He asserts that the high rates of self-reported physical and sexual abuse or post-traumatic stress disorder among those diagnosed with MPD support this theory.

Traumatic events or traumatic experiences can be determined as psychological blows, wounds to the spirit. Severe trauma in the early life of an individual may irrevocably damage the development of a child. The word has become a metaphor for almost anything unpleasant. In other words, a trauma in fact, deals with the immediate effects of accidents. It tries to stanch the flow of blood, attend to smashed bones or brains; its hope is to patch people up and put them together again (BR. Purba 15). Nevertheless, few of us, in everyday conversation, even think of trauma in that sense. Thus, trauma is, “the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless and vulnerable in a dangerous world. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety. Experiences involving betrayal, verbal abuse, or any major loss” (Smith 1).

Based on this statement, trauma can be interpreted as a very bad event, which can destroy a sense of security in a person, causing a sense of vulnerability and helplessness like living in a threatening world. Such traumatic experience can also arise because of betrayal, verbal abuse or a deep loss of something. Therefore, childhood trauma results from anything that disrupts a child’s sense of safety and security, including an unstable or unsafe environment,

separation from an arrogant parent and feel of neglect, sexual, physical, or verbal abuse and domestic violence. As a result, trauma causes a person to try to cope it by creating another personality in their self.

### **3.3. The Effects of Multiple Personality Disorder**

Giller (1995) explains in his article “The Effects of DID on Children of Trauma Survivor” that people with dissociative identity disorder may experience some effects. These effects include but are not limited to depression, mood swings, suicidal tendencies, sleep disorders (insomnia , night terrors, and sleep walking), panic attacks and phobias (flashback, reactions to stimuli or “triggers”), alcohol and drug abuse, compulsions and rituals, psychotic (visual hallucinations), schizophrenia, and eating disorder (bulimia ). In addition, individuals with DID or MPD can experience headaches, amnesias, time loss, trances, and “out of body experiences” (n.p).

One of the major effects or symptoms of MPD is depression. Clinical depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, and poor concentration for extended periods of time that can span throughout years. Moreover, depression often comes with symptoms of anxiety (BR.Purba 17-18). Although everybody can have mood swings, and they are a natural part of most people's lives. Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) is the best example of a disorder that is characterized by severe mood swings - from manic to highly depressive. Moreover, most people with dissociative disorders report an emotional instability resulting in frequent crying, self-soothing and out of control behaviors that eventually make them numbed-out sense of depression and blankness (PODS 5). In other words, dissociative individuals may experience prolonged sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, and they lose interest in things that they once liked or even they may experience

failure and losses. Consequently, depression can affect their way of thinking and behaving. Furthermore, depression has been identified as a major factor leading to suicide (Wanyoike 58).

Therefore, self-harm and suicidal tendencies are among the fluctuating symptoms of dissociative disorders (PODS 6). That is to say, stressful life events that occur in an individual's life have a role in the development of depression. In addition, they may lead to an individual committing suicide. Suicide is the intentional will to die (Wanyoike 59). Extreme distress and despair feelings make the dissociative individual unable to control emotions. When these feelings become continuous and uncontrolled, it becomes hard for them to associate with others. Most victims of depression tend to become increasingly irritated and choose to seclude themselves from society or from life.

#### **4. The Concept of the “Self”**

The idea of “self” becomes a great emerging force in contemporary culture. This rising interest in self-phenomena is due to the “cognitive revolution in psychology” (Manis 66). Thus, self-concept is rapidly becoming the dominant concern in social psychology. Sociologists made efforts to examine the relationship between social organization and the content and organization of self-concept. Psychologists contributed in the emergence of a number of specific self-theories and cognitive and behavioral theories into self-theories. Self-concept is among the essential factors within individuals, and it can be considered as a critical issue that might influence individual's attitude towards their life and society. It can change the way they behave, their relationships within their societies or cultures.

In psychology, self-concept is given various definitions, however, they more or less hover around the idea that your self-concept is your perception of your own self and your own abilities (Ayu Nani 8). In this respect, Hammer defines self-concept as “a collection of beliefs about one's own nature, unique qualities, and typical behavior” (qtd.in Ayu Nani 9). In other

words, the self-concept is our mental image, thoughts, feelings and imagination about who we are (Rosenberg n.p). That is to say, one's self-evaluation depends on how someone perceives and evaluates himself. Overall, knowing self by each and developing it correctly can be valuable and necessary for humanity.

Although most of what we know about ourselves is derived from others, as Cooley states in his book entitled *Human Nature and Social Order* (1902), some of our self-views are gained by direct experience with our environment, based on the reflected appraisal process, that is centered on the "looking glass self" (152). This process is significant, where others share their appraisals of us and this will eventually influence the way we see ourselves. Tanti writes about the self,

People experience their selves in two senses. The first is as an active agent who acts on the world as well as being influenced by that world. This type of self is usually referred to as the I, and focuses on how people experience themselves as doers. The second is as an object of reflection and evaluation. In this type of self, people turn their attention to their physical and psychological attributes to contemplate the constellation of skills, traits, attitudes, opinions, and feelings that they may have. This type of self is referred to as me, and focuses on how people observe themselves from the outside looking in, much like people monitor and contemplate the competence and character of other people. (360-379)

According to the theory of self-categorization proposed by the British social psychologist John Charles Turner, self-concept consists of two key parts: "personal identity" and "social identity." Social identity includes the groups we belong to such as community, college, and religion. Individuals begin incorporating social identity into their self-concept

during their childhood and youths. They receive an influence from their parents, family, society and even from their culture, which finally will affect their behavior and their academic success. However, the personal identity includes personality traits and other characteristics that make each person unique (187-204).

Bracken suggested six specific domains related to self-concept (23):

- a. The ability to interact with others.
- b. The ability to meet basic needs.
- c. Awareness of emotional states.
- d. Feelings about looks, health, physical condition, and overall appearance.
- e. Success or familiar in school.
- f. How well one functions within the family.

Humanist psychologist Carl Rogers suggests in his theory of therapy that self-concept has three components. The first component is self-image, which means our self-view and how we see ourselves. It is important to realize that self-image does not necessarily coincide with reality because people might have inflated self-image and believe that they are better at things than they are in reality. That is to say, it is the sum total subjective perception of oneself, including an image of one's body, impressions of one's personality capabilities, desires and emotions, as well as his physical appearance (n.p).

The second component is self-esteem or the value of an individual upon himself. It involves a degree of evaluation; it may have either a positive or a negative view upon oneself. Those evaluations incorporate their personal comparisons to others as well as other's responses to others (Permatasari 36). The last component is "the ideal self," which is mainly about how individuals wish they could be. It may not be consistent with what actually happens in life and experiences of the person. Yet, the difference that may exist between a person's ideal self and actual experience called congruence. Roger believed that for a person to achieve self-

actualization they must be in a state of congruence (37). Thus, self-concept is useful to understand human behavior, due to its various aspects that help in which each form an integral part of self-concept.

## 5. The Use of “Self” in Contemporary Literature

The self has been a topic of discussion for a long time; the debate is quite old. Its origins can be dated back to John Lock’s question “how can I be the same I was in my past?” in his essay “Concerning Human Understanding” (Salgado and Hermans 3). Starting from a pure philosophical question, psychologists and even novelists began posing questions related to selfhood and started dealing with this matter in their works. Moreover, one can read Kant, Descartes, and even the ancient thinkers as if they were grappling with all these same issues of selfhood; however, the concern with problems of selfhood is essentially a modern phenomenon.

For instance, *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky is a good example that reflects the double in the human self. The story goes when Ivan Karamazov got mad, the devil appears to him and acknowledges himself as his double. When Ivan Karamazov comes home later one evening, a gentleman appears and tells him things Ivan himself had thought of when he was young. Ivan says to the man: “You are a lie, a disease, a phantom. I only don’t know by what means I can destroy you. You are my hallucination [...] You are I myself, but only in ugly caricature; you say just what I am thinking” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 826). Ivan is well aware of the fact that the man is one side of his personality, but he cannot cope with it.

In our Contemporary world, the self is considered as multiple, varied, changeable, [...] sometimes as a double-faced Janus with opposite sides, but always as a differentiated and complex entity (Salgado and Hermans 3). Earlier intimation of selfhood gives way to the idea

of self, which becomes a force within public life and even within a variety of literary works. Thus, contemporary literature has shown considerable interest in understanding the self and tried to depict it differently. Since the beginning of contemporary era, literature becomes a mirror of ideological agendas and political, social, and personal disillusionment. The idea of self eventually was understood as a socially constructed self, a self-constituted with intersections of ideology, social practices, and power. It is a kind of hybrid sum of institutions and discursive practices bearing on family, class, gender, race, generation and locale (M. Glass 9). What matters is that the self is splitting as the society does, the globalization and the developmental changes reflect the fragmentation in our sense of ourselves.

Roy Baumeister has presented a general scheme of historical eras, according to which the self has evolved. He states that,

The late medieval period, from about the 11th through the 15th century, gradually developed a crystallized concept of the unity of the single human life. The early modern period (roughly 1500-1800) came to stress the distinction between the inner self and the outer self, to value individuality, and increasingly to recognize human development and change. During that era, Puritanism increased self-consciousness and recognized the possibility of self-deception. In the Romantic era (late 18th and early 19th centuries), persons began to seek and emphasize secular forms of fulfillment, and they acutely sensed a deep conflict between the individual and society. During the Victorian era (roughly 1830-1900), there were crises with regard to each of the four problems of selfhood. [...] Early in the 20th century, themes of alienation and of devaluation of selfhood indicated concern over the individual's helpless dependency on society. Since World War II, individuals have accommodated to the changed

social realities but have continued to grope for ideals and means of self-definition and fulfillment. (163)

The general scheme and developments are outlined in Figure 1:

Historical era	Self-knowledge, self-conception	Self-definition	Fulfillment	Relation of individual to society
Late medieval	Unproblematic Increased sense of unity of single life	Morality & virtue Honor, glory, reputation (fixed criteria) Otherwise, society defined identity: rank, kin, etc.	Christian salvation (in heaven) (Possible) public acclaim	"Great Chain of Being"—fixed, stable order Self equated with social, public self
Early modern (16th to 18th century)	Unproblematic for own self; for others, question of inner <i>true</i> self vs. outer <i>apparent</i> self Increased interest in individuality, uniqueness of self	Concept of personal change, development Sincerity; equivalence of inner and outer selves, as a virtue Loss of identity through family lineage	Christian salvation Incipient secular fulfillment, as in creativity	Unstable (social mobility) Some separation (privacy)
Puritan	Self-consciousness Concern with self-deception (henceforth, self-knowledge uncertain)	In principle, none! (predestination)	Christian salvation: but individual is helpless Inner struggle to overcome sin and weakness	Work: Success means salvation
Romantic (late 18th, early 19th centuries)	Need to discover own destiny and fulfill it (duty) Imperial, <i>hypertrophied</i> self	Individual exists prior to particular social roles Quest for fulfillment as self-definition Personality as identity	Creativity Passion ("romantic" love) Thus, grope for secularized concept of fulfillment	Individual vs. society: struggle for freedom Individual inseparable from society, but can change roles
Victorian (mid & late 19th century)	Repression, hypocrisy Involuntary self-disclosure Imperial, "hypertrophied" self	Self-reliance, rugged individualism Adolescence as crisis in self-definition	Seek fulfillment alone (transcendentalism) Private, family life is paramount	Peaceful coexistence (transcendentalism) Change society (Progressivism, Utopianism)
Early 20th century	Devaluation of self Impossibility of complete self-knowledge (Freud)	Socioeconomic status Existential concerns, authenticity Personality, social skills Radical choice	Society prevents fulfillment (alienation) Emotional fulfillment in family Work as unfulfilling	Hostile, critical, muckraking Alienation
Recent 20th century	Belief in personal uniqueness Values of self-exploration	Personality Socioeconomic status	Quest for celebrity Quest for means of self-actualization	Accommodation Myth-making

(Roy F. Baumeister 164)

Most contemporary and postmodern works portrayed the human self in their characters as being paranoid, schizoid, and fragmented etc. Thomas Pynchon's novel *The Crying of Lot 49* is a good example of postmodern novels in which he truly delves into the topic of self and identity, through dismantling the idea of a unified self and instead presenting a more postmodern version of the self. He does so through a multitude of characters, actions, thoughts, and events. The story of the novel is mainly a satire about Oedipa Maas, a woman who finds herself enmeshed in a worldwide conspiracy, meets some extremely interesting characters, and attains inconsiderable amount of self-knowledge (Pynchon *Lot 49*). Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* is another example where it is difficult to understand the characters who, on the surface

appear to be comical, but deep down reflect the dilemmas of the postmodern's search for a uniform and meaningful sense of self.

In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, is a story about a boy whose mother has passed away and who lives with his father and their housekeeper. The boy constantly tries to see whether his father cares for him, yet he cannot find out any sign of love and care. In addition to this, the girl he loves is going to marry someone else, who apparently seem to be a better choice for her. Consequently, he could not face all these bitter facts in his life and tried to take a refuge in the future. He received an invitation from his aunt and uncle, who live in Philadelphia, to the USA to work and live with them, which, seems the only shelter to end his desperate loneliness and disillusionments. To this end, he moved to live in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, the only person he can really talk to and communicate with is his double, the personification of his alter ego.

The contemporary crime fictions provide a deeper view on the representation of human sense of self in American society, especially when it comes to the darker side of the human psyche. These representations offer an opportunity to understand how individuals perceive themselves and how others perceive them. Among these, Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955) tells a story of Tom Ripley a charming, young con man and serial killer with troubled and unhappy back history (he was an orphan, raised by cruel aunt). He later escapes to New York, where he meets the rich shipping magnate, Herbert Greenleaf, who pays him to go to bring back his son Dickie from Italy. Ripley finds Dickie, befriends him and wants to emulate and poses his easy and glamorous playboy lifestyle, and this soon tips over into wanting to be him and take over his identity. When he is rejected by Dickie, Ripley murders him and then goes on to steal his life, forging his signature and keeping his death a secret as well as stealing and spending his inheritance.

Highsmith portrays Tom Ripley as someone who is trying to escape his own identity because he is afraid of his true self. This fear of facing his own nature is depicted through his passion for imitation and identity fraud. Tom believes that it is better to be a fake somebody than a real nobody. He strives to disguise his deep-rooted insecurities about his identity. He seems to feel completely at-ease within his impersonation of Dickie, reveling in how good he is at it. Being able to convince people of his false identity gives him a feeling of satisfaction and security. Thus, the story mirrors the way that boundaries of identity and the human sense of self in the late modern era as less fixed and ambiguous. Since people of that time are unable to accept themselves and lack the sense of satisfaction about their past and their nature, they resort to hide their true identities in order to build up a protective wall and stop others from unmasking their true 'self'.

Ken Kesey's most successful novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) is no exception of those literary works that represent the construction of human self-image. The novel is full of illustrations of various issues of the late twentieth century in America. Among these issues, the unstable sense of human self. The novel is in its core a story about the fight between individuality and a system requiring complete conformity. The story takes a place in a mental asylum in Oregon during the late 1950s. The asylum is clearly a microcosm of American society during that time. Its daily routine and strict rules closely imitate the new American focus on conformity and order. The patients of the mental institution are illustrated as helpless and vulnerable, with no power against the staff that tries to eliminate their individual differences.

Many of the patients are staying voluntarily due to the overwhelming pressure radiating from society outside the asylum. This external pressure from their inability to adjust to society took a toll on their self-perception, convincing themselves that treatment was required. For instance, Chief Bromden the narrator of the story, is a half native American who muted himself

as a deaf and dumb because of the authoritative power. Bromden sees his life as an illusion. This illusion is rooted in his skewed self-perception, which has developed over time from influential, but incorrect, judgment from others. Nurse Ratched's character, who depicts the authorities with absolute power, plays a crucial role in creating Bromden's distorted beliefs about himself. She led him to believe he is something he is not. Thus, those who are perceived as being a leader have a strong influence on others and can alter the self-perception of many individuals. Hence, Kesey shows the patients using this new self-perception to seek social conformity, and depicts how powerful the government is. Its decisions can affect millions of people who have no option to disagree.

## **6. Conclusion**

Literature is indeed a tool for reflecting human differently and based on reality. Yet the depictions of human selves and personalities vary greatly from one person to another based mainly on their early year's experiences as well as their family backgrounds. The human psyche undergoes many stages throughout its development, and it is very essential to each individual to be surrounded by healthy environment to avoid any kind of influence that would harm his self or his personality. In order to gain a convincing understanding for the representation of human self and personality in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, the viewpoints of the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and Self-Categorization theory play a significant role in analyzing the representation of the human self and personality in the upcoming chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### **The Fragmented Selves and Dysfunctional Behaviors in Gillian Flynn's**

#### ***Gone Girl.***

This chapter analyzes Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, with the help of insights and concepts from Self-categorization theory, and Freud's theories of "family romance" as well as "psychology of love". First, it starts with an explanatory section about the author and the novel. In the second part, the writer attempts to analyze the general sense of self, the characters' self-perception and how they are perceived by others as presented by the author. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the emotional and social conflicts that trigger the fragmented personality, through investigating the characters' family background. In the last part, it explores the most prominent traits of the personality disorders the characters may have and dysfunctional behaviors they display, especially Amy Dunne.

#### **1. The Author**

Gillian Flynn is an awarded-winning novelist and one of the most influential writers in contemporary American fiction. She had great success in world fiction with her gritty mysteries that challenge the conventions of the genre, and have proved massively popular (Wall St 1). Flynn was born on February 24, 1971 in Kansas City, Missouri, United States. Her parents were both professors. Gillian's mother is a reading-comprehension professor and her father is a film professor. Despite the dark plots of her works and their bleak, sad and chaotic mood, Flynn had a happy childhood. She was a shy kid, but a fierce reader. She spent an inordinate amount of her youth nosing through books and watching movies. Her father introduced her to horror movies when she was still a little girl (Pallardy).

Gillian graduated in English and Journalism from the University of Kansas and after writing about human resources for a Trade Magazine in California for two years, Flynn moved to Chicago to attend North-Western University for a master's degree in Journalism during which she discovered that she was way "too wimpy" to make it as a crime reporter. Her next career was at Entertainment Weekly Magazine, where she worked as a feature writer and later as a television critic (Pallardy).

Gillian Flynn is known for her masterpieces such as *Sharp Objects* (2006), *Dark Places* (2009), and *Gone Girl* (2012). Emma Brockes describes Flynn's writings as, "sharp, acute, with social observations and convincing relationships that outweigh symbolism" (Brockes), which is where she thinks the critical success of Flynn's novels lie on. In all of her works, we find recurrences of themes such as human depravity, sexism and gender roles, secrets, and mysteries, in addition to the dark and twisted human side.

Her debut novel *Sharp Objects* was an Edgar Award finalist and it won two of Britain's Dagger Awards. The book is mainly about a journalist who returns to her Missouri hometown to investigate a series of murders of young girls. This work has been turned into a television series (Wall St 1). Moreover, Flynn's second novel, the 2009 New York Times bestseller *Dark Places* got several prestigious awards such as New Yorker Reviewers' Favorite, Weekend Today Top Summer Read, Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2009, and Chicago Tribune Favorite Fiction choice (Tamir and Tyahaya .n.p). In 2015, the movie adaption starring Charlize Theron was released. *Dark Places* story centers on a young woman who is trapped in a mission to free her brother as wrong-accused killer of their family. Flynn depicts her protagonist as a wasteful human being with no purpose in life. She is portrayed as being cynical, kleptomaniac, cold blooded, and idler. Unsurprisingly, there must be certain reason behind Flynn's achievements in these novels, things that make readers wonder in awe, through her literary devices such as characterization, plot building, or the hidden themes.

*Gone Girl* is Flynn's third masterpiece. It is a thriller mystery novel published on June 2012. Upon its release, it became an international sensation and a runaway hit that has spent more than one hundred weeks on the New York Times best seller lists (Wall St 1). David Fincher, a famous film director, made a film from this novel under the same name in 2014, and Flynn is the one who wrote the movie's screenplay. The film was the best-selling David movie because it was well received by the critics and made a profit of \$368 million (Situmorang and Evyanto .n.p).

In this novel, Flynn has retained the bizarre devices that are similar with *Dark Places* in terms of characterization. She manages to write convincingly flawed characters and relatable situations. Her career also served to shape the characters of *Gone Girl* story: both Nick and Amy are former journalists, and Nick has a Midwestern background comparable to Flynn's and moves to New York city to work as a writer, much like Flynn did. Furthermore, Flynn intends to show the uniqueness of her writing through original characterization, problematic plot, and dilemmatic moral value.

In *Gone Girl*, Flynn challenges her readers through a series of plot-twists, which arranges implicitly in the plot. This can be fairly seen as the story progresses. At the beginning of the story, Flynn leads the readers to sympathize with poor Amy as a victim of her abusive and ignorant husband. While in the middle, she effectively deprives the reader's sympathy toward Amy after revealing that Amy falsified her suffering for the sake of personal ambition. At the end, Flynn totally swipes away reader's sympathy when the novel unmask the real face of both sides, Amy and Nick. In this term, Flynn manipulates the reader's sympathy and sentiment through the falsehood of the two main characters. According to Gillian Flynn, what makes a great thriller is the sense of unease, a queasiness that comes with knowing something is not quite right. She often likes to use the unreliable narrators, because she thinks that there

is something wonderfully unnerving about realizing mid-way through a book you have put yourself in the hands of someone who is not to be trusted (Skinner 8).

## **2. *Gone Girl* Synopsis.**

The novel tells the story of Amy and Nick Dunne, middle class journalists. They first met at a writers' party where they both find interest in each other's personality. Nick Dunne, with his charming personality and humorous yet sarcastic jokes, succeeds in making the smart and lovely Amy fall in love with him. Eight months later, they decide to get married. Unfortunately, their happiness does not last long (Indrasakti 7).

The couple find themselves in a wrong marriage. Unemployment, money problems, increasing estrangement from each other, a move from chic Brooklyn to the sleepy confining Midwestern town, North Carthage in Missouri, of Nick's family in order to take care of his sick mother, have contributed much in the worn down of what seemed to be a perfect relationship. Nick's loss of his job as a journalist made things worse. The husband loses ambition and starts working as a lowly adjunct professor of creative writing at a local college, and also works at a bar with his twin sister Margo. Instead of addressing the deterioration of their marriage and finding solutions for his wife's increasing discontent, he grows more distant and escapes into adultery with his own adoring student (Iannone 2). On one snowy night, Amy discovered her husband's affair with his student. Thus, she feels that she has the right to teach Nick a lesson and she decides on revenge.

Amy has carefully arranged her disappearance from the house, with meticulously and cleverly constructed, odd clues left behind that eventually will frame Nick for her "murder." On the day of their fifth wedding anniversary, Amy is reported to be missing (Indrasakti 7). Nick undergoes several interrogations, and the result is not on his favor. His stoic and cold behavior brings him under the scrutiny from the police and even from his friends and family.

Now, he is the prime suspect and Amy strives to make both the police and the public believe that Nick is guilty. The widespread media attention comes in part from Amy's fame, as the inspiration for the fictional character in the "Amazing Amy book series" which her wealthy popular parents, Rand and Marybeth Elliot, wrote. The series is part of an educational program that supposedly most American children read while growing up. In the weeks preceding the incident, she carefully contrives fake accounts of Nick's growing abuse and her fear of him. She does this through a diary she makes sure will be discovered as evidence and through lies she continuously tells her neighbor.

Nick then starts following the clues that Amy left for him, which were in the form of their traditional anniversary treasure hunt. Through mind-games, Nick finally realizes Amy's deeds. In a television interview, he tries to convince her that he is sorry and he feels repentant. Consequently, he succeeded to make Amy changes her plan. Amy in the other side finds that there is a possibility of getting her husband back. Thus, she decides to return back and save him from prison and death sentence. During her time on the road, her stash of money was stolen and eventually an old admirer, Desi Collings, was ready to rescue her. Unfortunately for Amy, Desi was becoming more possessive and controlling over her every move. When she realizes that Desi is not going to let her go, she tricks him into believing that she is in love with him. He ends up being killed in grisly fashion in the very act of intercourse. This was Amy's second plan to justify her absence in framing her friend with kidnap and rape case.

Amy eventually returns home looking like a kidnapping and rape survivor with blood stains all over. The scene of her return is well captured by the reporters who were eagerly keeping up with the case and waiting for Nick to receive a criminal verdict. Amy comes back as the perfect loving wife who is ready to forgive her husband for his betrayal, and acts as if the separation between them has been one of the most painful events in her life. Only Nick, Margo, the lawyer, and Officer Boney are aware of the truth that she has committed murder

and that everything has been staged. At the end of the novel, Amy uses Nick's semen to make herself pregnant and manipulate Nick into staying with her. As a result, Nick is forced to stay with Amy yet their marriage would never be the same after her disappearance. Nick gives up any hope of getting rid of Amy and accepts that the two of them are stuck with each other. The ending makes it clear that Amy's psychopathic need for power, and Nick's disgust with her, will never go away.

### **3. The Disintegrating Self: Fragmented Selves in *Gone Girl***

The conceptualizations of the self are never static (Clark 40). They are under revision throughout history. Lately, globalization has brought about the most fundamental and dramatic social changes in how individuals perceive, construct and represent the human self. Thus, the essential self is suffering and breaking down. This explains the ever-growing emergence of new terms related to psychological issues and mental disorders.

In the contemporary age, individuals are exposed to division, tension and discord. These individuals who lack integration, wholeness, and alignment are at a consistent war with themselves. They suffer as the environment around them does. This is entirely different with the traditional notion of the self, which was considered as 'unitary.' This concept proposed that the core self is utterly harmonious, unique, fixed, coherent, and authentic unified self, and it is unitary because it is highly individualistic (Weedon 32). However, this view has changed with the rise of the postmodernists' idea of the "non-unitary self", in which there is no single; core self that exists separate and unaffected by its sociocultural context. They suggest that the self is "characterized by fragmentation, lack much self-awareness and makes no claim of self-consciousness" (Rosenau 54). Douglas defines the self as, "The individual's typification of himself, and the source of those typifications are not limited to the individual, but they also involve the relationships of individuals with the society" (190). The self develops only after

some personal experiences with other individuals in addition to the influence received from the family, friends, and society.

In the same vein, *Gone Girl* is a literary work from the perspective of modern-day characters. Flynn as a contemporary writer has succeeded in showing her readers the self-concept that reflects individual's self of today's time. Most of *Gone Girl* characters do not embody a sense of traditional unitary self. They confront an interesting dilemma, they think about themselves as having a core identity, a distinct self that interacts with the world around them, an internal sense of one sense. Yet, they also experience themselves as multiple, as many selves, a complex reality of often-conflicting inner experiences of who they are.

For instance, Amy Dunne, a charming and intelligent woman and the main character in the novel, is an American girl who was born and raised in New York and she is the only child in her family. Amy struggles with the different versions of herself. The first one is the "Amazing Amy" character. Being the real-life version of a beloved fictional character really damages Amy's sense of adequacy. She tends to overwhelm herself to be the perfect one. She feels exhausted, living in a world, which her parents unconsciously presented in "Amazing Amy".

In one instance, Amy explains that she always had to be as perfect as "Amazing Amy," especially when she fails to live up to the fictional "Amy"; "I can't fail to notice that whenever I screw something up", Amy says. (*Gone Girl* 10). Amy was always paying attention to everything she does and fixes any mistakes to appear as perfect as her parents want, and make them proud. Those expectations compromised Amy's self-perception. She says "I'd never felt like a person, because I was always a product. Amazing Amy had to be brilliant, creative, kind, thoughtful, witty, and happy" (302). The parents unconsciously owned Amy's life as a child.

They have shaped her character. Anything Amy Elliot did, Amazing Amy did better. They made it the idealized-self version of their little girl. In consequence, she feels anxious and sad.

Moreover, as Amy grows up, she likes the way people see her as ‘perfect’, and she wants everyone to believe that. Hillary Handy, Amy’s friend in high school, narrates how Amy wanted to get rid of her because she becomes more popular than her. She knows that Amy is not perfect and actually Amy just wants admiration and attention, and wants to get rid of Hillary because she is starting to receive other people’s attention. She tells Nick during a phone call:

I feel like Amy wanted people to believe she really was perfect, and as we got to be friends, I got to know her. And she wasn’t perfect. You know? She was brilliant and charming and all that, but she was also controlling and OCD and drama Queen and a bit of a liar. Which was fine by me. It just wasn’t by her. She got rid of me because I knew she wasn’t perfect. (*Gone Girl* 326)

Amy likes her ‘actual-self’, and the way people perceive her as the perfect and brilliant person. She wants to be noticed by everyone but when her best friend, Hilary Handy, is more liked by their friends than Amy, she tried to hurt her and made her look like a stalker and creepy student.

This did not change a lot with the “Amazing Amy” as Nick Dunne’s wife. At first, she was the smart, lovely and elegant wife. She constantly wants to be better than others are. She tries to learn many things, to feel better and to stay superior to others. In this regard, Nick says,

My wife had a brilliant, popping brain, a greedy curiosity. But her obsessions tended to be fueled by completion: She needed to dazzle men and jealous-iffy women: Of course Amy can cook French cuisine and speak fluent Spanish and garden and knit and run marathons and day-trade stocks and fly a plane and look like a runway model doing it. She needed to be Amazing Amy, all the time. (41)

So, Amy became obsessed with the idea of perfection. She maintained the image of the perfect cool wife until the day of her move to Missouri with her husband. They lost their jobs and fell in a bad economic breakdown. And even then, she still acted as the understanding self-sacrificial wife.

Amy used to love her husband as he is, since she could quickly perceive what type of person he really is, but he loves the “cool Amy”. Therefore, when Amy becomes the real Amy, Nick becomes disinterested and he distances himself from her.

[c]ommitting to Nick, feeling safe with Nick, being happy with Nick, made me realize that there was a Real Amy in there, and she was so much better, more interesting and complicated and challenging, than Cool Amy. Nick wanted Cool Amy anyway. Can you imagine, finally showing your true self to your spouse, your soul mate, and having him not like you? So that’s how the hating first begin. I’ve thought about this a lot, and that’s where it started, I think. (254)

Nick wants the cool girl, and Amy wants to be herself. Furthermore, Flynn creates Amy’s character as being caught between different versions of herself. Her parents, her husband, and even the public want an ‘ought-self’ of Amy (this character is someone that others feel he “ought to be more like”), the ideal-version of her. Their influence unfortunately, affects her self-perception and her self-image.

Nick himself was influenced by his wife. At one point, he confesses that loving Amy made him superhuman, and then, he learns that she is actually framing him. He eventually becomes Nick Dunne, “Amazing” Amy’s husband, the charismatic handsome man. That is to say, his character’s wife as an “Amazing Amy” affects the way people perceive him as a person too. They see them as husband and wife not as separate individuals. In fact, Nick’s relationship with his father seriously shaped the way he perceives himself, which eventually shapes the way

people see him. His father's unpredictable behavior and anger issues, as well as the pressure of his expectations, have turned Nick into a chronic people-pleaser. Nick ends up showing his ideal-self as perfect, good guy persona and avoids any kind of confrontation. He is mindful to show negative emotions and draw bad attention; he tried to give the appearance of not caring, and being cold and distant.

Maureen, Nick's mother also has suffered in defining herself because of her bad-tempered husband, Nick's father. During her Marriage, she was always self-doubting and self-negating. She was passive, and accommodating to her husband's moods. In this regard, Nick says,

My father, a mid-level phone-company manager who treated my mother at best like an incompetent employee. He never beat her, but [...] Throwing things near her but not exactly at her [...] So my father went away and my thin, pained mother got fat and happy\_ fairly fat and extremely happy [...] Within a year, she'd morphed into busy, warm, cheerful lady, she'd be till she died, and her sister said things like 'Thank God the old Maureen is back', as if the woman who raised us was an imposter. (69-70)

From the quote above, Nick associated his mom's sickness with his father's behaviors. She is sick; it means she is unable to be happy with her husband in their toxic relationship where she cannot be herself. When she finally gets a divorce, she becomes healthy making everyone surprised with changes in her mood. She is now warm and kind enjoying her life. Knowing her self-value helped her to get rid of who she was before divorce. Some years later, she gets ill and dies in peace.

To sum up, Flynn has reflected the constant fragmentation of human-self within her characters in the contemporary time. The main characters constantly affect each other's self-

perception, and they are always preoccupied with how others perceive them. They have adapted the 'ought to self' with ease to varying degrees, yet there is a downside as will be discussed in the following sections.

#### **4. Family Romances and Lovers: When did the Self Shatter?**

People may undergo different types of trauma, hard life condition or conflict during their childhood, during which their identity, including their personality and emotions go through a process of fragmentation. Moreover, trauma may refer to any significantly disturbing experience the person may have been exposed to as child. He may not necessarily experience a clear form of abuse, yet he may not grow up in a safe form and stable environment. At the end, we all experience life differently, what may be traumatic for you may not be traumatic for someone else. What really matters is how you perceive the situation and which matter makes you feel overwhelmed? Thus, no matter what traumatic event or circumstances a person endures, it is natural for the experience to affect the person's personality and his relationship with others. In other words, the disruption to people's lives from such events may cause disruption in their feelings for and connections to others. In fact, they may end up with shattered selves.

Likewise, an examination of the family background of the main characters in *Gone Girl* can help us figure out the root of their dysfunction. Beside the background of the character, the writer tends to analyze the several conflicts between the characters, which served a vital role in triggering the fragmented personality. In this part, the sociological and emotional realities that causes and triggers them to dissociate are going to be tackled. Personality disorder can be caused by some factors, which are unstable or chaotic family life during childhood, memories or past event that had a great role in the character's development.

#### **4.1. Amy and her Parents:**

Amy Elliot Dunne is the one and only child of Rand and Marybeth Elliot. Amy is the only child who has made it to the world. Unlike the previous seven miscarriages, which Amy's parents referred to as 'Hope', she has managed to be born in the world. Consequently, she always senses the need of being the perfect one as mentioned in the quotation below,

I've always been better than the Hopes. I was the one who made it. But I've always been jealous too, always – seven dead dancing princesses. They get to be perfect without even trying, without even facing one moment of existence, while I am stuck here on earth, and every day I must try, and every day is chance to be less than perfect. (299).

In addition to that, Amy's parents had created a children' series and named the main character as "Amazing Amy". The story of this series revolves mainly about a perfect, kind, pretty, smart girl named Amy, just like their daughter. Thus, they wanted to raise their daughter with every advantage and drive her to be the absolute best. The parents continued to lavish attention on her through this fictional surrogate. As a result, she feels like they cared more about the book character than about her. She feels immense pressure to live up to impossible standards. She saw "Amazing Amy" as a fictional ghost that was following her for her entire life, mocking her when she fails, doing everything perfectly, competing for her parent's love and always winning. Amy strived to be the perfect girl since her childhood. She becomes the smartest, prettiest, popular, loved by everyone, but she never had the chance to be herself.

Despite the fact that her parents were loving and caring, yet they were clueless about how they were affecting her emotionally. The series became their major income throughout the years, so Amy's life became indirectly a business that kept growing with every major event that happened to her. Amy does not feel sorry for her parent's sadness after her disappearance

because she considers them responsible for her frustration. She says, “My parents are worried, of course, but how can I feel sorry for them, since they made me this way and then deserted me? They never, ever fully appreciated the fact that they were earning money from existence, that I should have been getting royalties” (232).

The storybook made Amy stuck between herself and the fantasy version; due to the feeling of being humiliated, she did much to be the “Amazing Amy” of the book.

My parents have always worried that I’d take Amy too personally – they always tell me not to read too much into her. And, yet I can’t fail to notice that whenever I screw something up, Amy does it right: When I finally quit violin at age twelve, Amy was revealed as a prodigy in the next book. (‘Sheesh, violin can be hard work, but hard work is the only way to get better!’) When I blew off the junior tennis championship at age sixteen to do a beach weekend with friends, Amy recommitted to the game. (Sheesh, I know it’s fun to spend time with friends, but I’d be letting myself and everyone else down if I didn’t show up for the tournament. (30)

From this, it is clear that the way Amy’s parents have raised her was the essential trigger of her dissociation. She constantly feels inadequate and fragmented that is why she struggles for perfection. She wants to show people that she is as perfect as Amy is in the book. As discussed about Freud’s theory of “family romance” in the previous chapter, the child desperately needs a stable relationship with his/her parents, and any influence would harm his/her psychological development. Exactly like what happens with Amy, where her parents played a vital role in her personality disturbance.

#### 4.2. Nick and his Father:

After knowing the prominent trigger of Amy's fragmented personality, which can be traced back to her family uprising. The Dunne family, Nick's family, is no exception. Nick comes from a poor working-class family with an emotionally distant father who is verbally and emotionally abusive. Nick and the other family members were suffering because of the bad-tempered father. Bill Dunne, Nick's father, hates women and his misogynistic attitude towards his wife is unbearable. In fact, what is hard to understand about Bill, is that despite his hatred towards women, he still got married. Nick narrates that his father thinks women are stupid and are not worthy of any consideration, for that reason he is afraid about his sister's future relations, "I doubt that my sister will ever marry", "If she is sad or upset, she needs to be alone – she fears a man dismissing her womanly tears" (*Gone Girl* 9-32).

Nick's relationship with his father damaged him. After a childhood filled with emotional and mental abuse, it is not surprising that Nick ended up repressing many of his emotions. He did his best to avoid any kind of negative attention. Thus, he goes to great lengths, including lying, to keep up the good personality. He needs to be the cold person who is always in control, because he fears to be the copy of his father. This can be clearly seen in his relation with his wife, Amy. While Amy makes many threats about what she will do if he leaves her, Nick ultimately stays because of his fear of becoming his dad, especially after she told him about her pregnancy. He sees the child as a chance for him to fix the damage his father did and this obliges him to stay for his child; he says at the end of the narrative,

I was a prisoner after all. Amy had me forever, or as long as she wanted, because I needed to save my son, to try to unhook, unlatch, debarb, undo everything that Amy did. I would literally lay down my life for my child, and do it happily. I would raise my son to be a good man. (400)

He wanted to see how he would love a person unconditionally, and that he could be a different kind of father than his father was.

At a certain point in their marriage, Nick was trying to convince Amy to have a child, and she kept rejecting. Yet, she tells people that Nick is refusing to have a child. He tells Amy that, “I needed a child. I had to know I could love a person unconditionally, that I could make a little creature feel constantly welcome and wanted no matter what. That I could be a different kind of father than my dad was. That I could raise a boy who wasn’t like me” (288). At the end of the book, Nick says, “A baby, you can’t be upset about a baby. You can hate a situation, but you can’t hate a child” (401). This indicates that Nick’s broken relationship with his father has greatly damaged his perception of himself. On the positive side, this gives him the ability to become a good father for his child. On the downside, he will have to sacrifice himself to Amy and be in a toxic relationship in order to save the child because he has to be different from his own father.

Nick never, ever speaks his father’s name, which is a clear indication that he wishes he could just erase his negative memories and influence on their family. In fact, the only way the readers knew his name is through Amy’s diary entries. Another scene, which reflects Nick’s source of despair, is during the initial press conference about the disappearance of Amy. He is haunted by his father’s axiom that “Men don’t cry”, to the extent he gets so obsessed with trying not to show emotions. So instead of crying, a very appropriate response to someone whose wife went missing, Nick gives a cold smile and comes across as uncaring in front of the cameras. While he is not a child anymore, yet his childhood and his father in particular is still capable of majorly messing things up for him. Being raised in such conditions can justify the way Nick behave. Nick had always tried to block out his father, to ignore his words and fury because he was afraid to end up like him. He then realizes that his personal hatred for Amy wasn’t the same as his father’s hatred for ‘all women. Nick realizes that his hatred towards

Amy is based on facts and things she has done to him, whereas his father's hatred towards women was baseless and misogynistic. He says,

I stopped trying to block my father's voice for once and let it throb in my ears. I was not that man: I didn't hate and fear all women. I was a one-woman misogynist. If I despised only Amy, focused all my fury and rage and venom on the one woman who deserved it, that didn't make me my father. That made me sane. (349)

### **4.3. Amy and Nick**

Amy's desire to perfection did not stop in being a perfect woman living perfect life, yet it continued to her desire to have a perfect marriage; one that would be long lasting just like her parents' marriage. At first, Amy strives to provide the best for her husband, and always tries to be perfect. As the following quote explains, she was "A woman who did a little of everything, all the time" whether it was learning French culinary techniques, becoming fluent in Spanish, gardening, or knitting. "She needed to be Amazing Amy, all the time." (46).

In her household, Amy did much effort to provide the best for Nick; she studied all things such as cooking, knitting and others, because she wants to stay perfect in the eyes of her husband. Nevertheless, after their economical breakdown and their move to Nick's hometown Amy suddenly knows her husband's infidelity with the other girl. Consequently, Amy became depressed and uncontrolled, and her perfect desired marriage caused her disappointment and led her to do things beyond the natural. Although Amy had issues with her self concept and relationships with others ever since she was young, Nick's infidelity takes a big part in making Amy go the extra mile to execute her own divine judgment. She becomes mad that she is no longer the one for him and that she is no longer "Amazing" Amy.

The problem is that Nick's initial love for Amy does not come from a healthy place. According to Amy, "Nick didn't love me, me. Nick loved a girl who doesn't exist. When she fell for Nick, Amy was Masquerading as the girl she thought he wanted to be with. a figment of men's imaginations known as amazing girl". (22). It is clear, then, that Nick was influenced by Amy's perfectionistic attitude, and the idea of "cool Amy." He did not love the real version of Amy, and he was vaguely convinced that Amy is just a persona, which pushed him to adultery. In this term Amy says, "We weren't ourselves when we fell in love, and when we became ourselves surprise! we are poison, we complete each other in the nastiest, ugliest possible way, back at Amy land, kindness in reply with kindness too, and so in contrast with malice." (25-31). By the time Amy disappears and Nick starts looking for clues as to where she might be intending to do, it is revealed that he knows many of her real traits such as being obsessed with being in control, not being as kind as she pretends, and how she has a sense of justice that she must carry herself.

The couple indeed cause harm to each other whether naturally or intentionally. After her husband's infidelity, Amy slowly reveals how twisted she has been and how much of a villain she is. She is eventually revealed as a psychopath fragmented into many pieces and seeking revenge from the person she loved. On the other side, Nick's relationship with Amy is the most critical factor in his journey as a character. He initially fell in love with her, because she was funny and lovely, Nick says, "...how lovely my wife was" (40). When things changed the laughter stopped, she got distant and moody. She was no more able to keep up an act as being the "Cool girl". In this regard Nick says, "My old Amy, damn, she was fun. She was funny. She made me laugh" (51). However, he then figures out that she is actually framing him. He is damaged due to the awful and crazy life with Amy. At the end of the book, he even describes himself as rising up to Amy's level of madness. At one morning, Nick wakes up next

to his wife and thinks, “For once I didn’t feel like I was staring into the sun. I’m rising to my wife’s level of madness. Because I can see her changing me again...” (402).

Throughout the novel, one realizes that each character hides his/her true personality. The news reporter, Sharon Schieber, who sits down with Nick for an exclusive interview to fix Nick’s public image, at first spoke against Nick until the public opinion supported him. The lawyer supported Nick on the television interview, saying that there is another part of the story, but when they met, the lawyer did not believe him. The couple who robbed Amy make her think they were her friends. Amy’s parents were more focused on the image of their book than their daughter was and finally Nick and Amy obviously were hiding what they really were. That means the environment and the existing circumstances forces peoples to be somebody they are not. In other words, they manifest multiple personalities and behave in specific ways as the result of everyone surrounding them.

## **5. Fragmented Characters and Personality Disorders in *Gone Girl*.**

At this point, it is safe to claim that many characters have easily noticeable personality disorders, and the most complicated and dysfunctional of all would be Amy’s personality. To describe the dysfunctional behaviors the characters with personality disorders might manifest, the researcher aims to observe the characters behaviors as well as the dialogues between them. Among these socially destructive behaviors manipulation, lack of remorse and regret, cheating and lying are going to be discussed.

### **a) Manipulation:**

This behavior involves not being aware of other people’s feelings and using them to one’s own advantage. The manipulators constantly repeat their evil deeds, which they always

feel are the right thing to do. They are very receptive to praise, but when something goes wrong, they do not hesitate to seek defense to deflect and blame others. They can do various tricks to get what they want (Awaliyah 19), including when they want to hurt other people as victims.

In the novel, Amy was manipulated by her parents since childhood through their children series of “Amazing Amy”. Moreover, this sense of manipulating others has grown with Amy to her adult and marriage times. The reader learns that Amy manipulated many people in her life especially Nick. For instance, Hilary Handy, Amy’s high school friend, and later stalker, tells Nick that first she was an errand girl for Amy, then people started thinking she is her stalker,

... [p]retty soon she was showing an interest in me, like, taking me under her wing or whatever. She had this joke that she was Amazing Amy, so I was her sidekick Suzy, and she started calling me Suzy, and pretty soon everyone else did, too. Which was fine by me. I mean, I was a little toadie: Get Amy a drink if she was thirsty, throw in a load of laundry if she needed clean underwear.  
(*Gone Girl* 283)

When one of the boys at school met Amy and Hilary at a dance and called Hilary the next day instead of Amy, she felt jealous and mad about appearing to be second fiddle to “Suzy.” She started planning for something to ‘punish’ her. Amy manipulated her twisted ankle, fractured arm, and cracked ribs by throwing herself down a flight of stairs. After that, all Hilary’s friends started avoiding her until she dropped out of school and decided to go back to her town. Amy finally succeeded in framing her friend and led her parents to see her as a stalker, Amy’s mother says,

She was obsessed with Amy. Well, with *Amazing Amy*. Her name was Hilary Handy- she modeled herself after Amy’s best friend in the books, Suzy. At first

it was cute, I guess. And then it was like that wasn't good enough anymore- she wanted to be Amazing Amy, not Suzy the sidekick. So she began imitating *our* Amy. She dressed like Amy, she colored her hair blond, she'd linger outside our house in New York. One time I was walking down the street and she came running up to me, this strange girl, and she looped her arm through mine and said, "I'm going to be your daughter now. I'm going to kill Amy and be your new Amy." (83)

Amy's father continues what happens and tells Nick: "We finally got a restraining order because she threw Amy down a flight of stairs at school" (83). But little did the others know that Hilary did those things because Amy asked her to in order to prepare her framing narrative.

Another one of Amy's victims is Tommy O'Hara. She accused him of raping her when they were in college. Tommy and Amy were good together and they were dating until one day Tommy realizes that Amy is not the one for him and that she is faking her persona. He starts to give excuses to not hang out with her and starts dating another girl. Then, Amy knows about that and decides to punish him through a raping case. Tommy tells Nick about this fact,

The next thing I know, two cops are at my door, and they've done a rape kit on Amy, and she has "wounds consistent with forcible rape". And she has ligature marks on her wrists, and when they search my apartment, there on the headboard of my bed are two ties –like, neckties –tucked down near the mattress, and the ties are, quote, "consistent with ligature marks". (311-312)

When Nick cheats on her, she wanted to teach him a lesson, which ends up becoming Amy's biggest act of manipulation. She fabricates her loss and creates false stories and evidence to make everyone believe that Nick has murdered her. The quote below reflects the manipulated actions done by Amy,

I ended up cutting into the inside of my upper arm, gnawing on a rag so I wouldn't scream. One long, deep good one. I sat cross-legged on my kitchen floor for ten minutes, letting the blood drizzle steadily until I'd made a nice thick puddle. Then I cleaned it up as poorly as Nick would have done after he bashed my head in. I want the house to tell a story conflict between true and false. *The living room looks staged, yet the blood has been cleaned up: It can't be Amy!* (248)

Amy tries to make the police think that there must be an accident that happened in the house. When the police check the kitchen and there is some blood, which is already cleaned, they will think that there was a fight before and this would naturally make the police suspect Nick.

In order to make Nick the first suspect she also manipulated her pregnancy. She invites her pregnant neighbor called Noelle for lemonades, a lot of lemonades. She makes Noelle pee in Amy's drain. Then she steals her urine to have a medical record on her pregnancy. She also tells Noelle how Nick treats her badly and he does not want a baby. Therefore, Noelle at an interview on Amy's disappearance, says that Nick might kill Amy and she vehemently defends Amy since she was her only friend. In one of the chapters narrated by Amy after her disappearance, she explains how she faked the news of her pregnancy:

I knew I needed a pliant friend for my plan, someone I could load up with awful stories about Nick, someone who would become overly attached to me, someone who'd be easy to manipulate, who wouldn't think too hard about anything I said because she felt privileged to hear it. Noelle was the obvious choice, and when she told me she was pregnant again- triplets weren't enough, apparently – I realized I could be pregnant too.

A search online: how to drain your toilet for repair.

Noelle invited for lemonade. Lots of lemonade.

Noelle peeing in my drained, unflushable toilet each of us so terribly embarrassed!

Me, a small glass jar, the pee in my toilet going into the glass jar.

Me, a well-laid history of needle/ blood phobia.

Me, a glass of jar of pee hidden in my purse, a doctor's appointment (oh, I can't do a blood test; I have a total phobia of needles...urine test, that'll do fine, thank you).

Me, a pregnancy on my medical record.

Me, running to Noelle with the good news. (290-291)

This passage shows how Amy was perfect in manipulating others. She first gets close to Noelle and tells her false stories about the suffering life with abusive husband to stand for her after her disappearance. She also succeeds in manipulating the nurse to do the urine test instead of a blood one.

Moreover, it is clear that Amy tries to deceive the cops and the public; even the reader is deceived throughout the chapters before her disappearance because they have been narrated from the diary entries she has made up. She wants the cops to see the diary as an evidence so they will arrest Nick,

I wrote her very carefully, Diary Amy. She is designed to appeal to the cops, to appeal to the public should portions be released. They have to read this diary like it's some sort of Gothic tragedy. A wonderful, good-hearted woman – whole life ahead of her, everything going for her, whatever else they say about women who die – choose the wrong mate and pays the ultimate price. They have to like me. Her. (267)

On the other side, Nick becomes desperate in order to persuade people around him that he has nothing to do with Amy's disappearance. He follows the traces and clues that his wife left for him. They used to play "Treasure hunt" every anniversary to give gifts to each other; the treasure hunt was Amy's idea whereby they leave clues comprising of personal hints and information about each other. The clues were mysterious poems and letters, which direct Nick to specific places. When he finally finds the fifth clue, he figures out that, Amy has targeted him for a serious crime and that she is still 'alive'. However, Nick decided to come out at the TV show camera and thought of a strategy that would make Amy come back home. His strategy appealed sincerely to Amy to forgive him; he used sentimental words with some tears hoping that she would fall for it. Consequently, the public opinion gets better and Amy appeared. Nick as result rises to Amy's level and manipulates her to come back home although, eventually, the possessiveness of Deci was the factor that led her to change her plans and go back home as a survivor of rape and abuse.

#### **b) Lack of Remorse**

People with personality disorders tend to dominate and have little remorse for their failures and mistakes. They do not care about the harm, pain, and suffering their actions cause to others. They are often cold-hearted, uncaring, unsympathetic and callous (Awaliyah 24-26). This lack of remorse can be seen in the novel. After Amy goes missing, she does not feel regret for Nick as being accused for her death, she says,

"You're going to have to try again to love me," I told him. The morning after he almost killed me. It happened to be Nick's thirty-fifth birthday, but he didn't mention it. My husband has had enough of my gifts.

"I forgive you for last night", I said, "We were both under a lot of stress. But now you're going to have to try again", "I know", "Things will have to be

different,” I said, “I know”, he said, He doesn’t really know, but he will” (*Gone Girl* 387).

From the conversation above, it is clear that Amy wanted to force Nick to love her again like a proper marriage. Amy felt no remorse for what she had done to Nick. However, Nick finds it hard to accept Amy back after what she did to him. Even Nick felt no remorse for Amy when he first discovered her disappearance.

### **c) Cheating and Lying:**

People who lack empathy and remorse are expected to lie as often and as loudly as they want. Deceiving or tricking someone is an act they often do in every action (Awaliyah 32). In the novel, Nick lies and cheats on Amy (Although he does not lack empathy like Amy), which makes her upset and mad. Amy says,

I’ve watched him ogle himself in the mirror, grooming himself like a horny baboon for their dates. I’ve listened to his lies, lies, lies – from simplistic child’s fibs to elaborate Rube Gold bargain contraptions. I’ve tasted butterscotch on his dry – kiss lips, a cloying flavor that was never there before. I’ve felt the stubble on his cheeks that he knows I don’t like but apparently, she does. I’ve suffered betrayal with all five senses. For over a year.

So I may have gone a bit mad. I do know that framing your husband for your murder is beyond the pale of what an average woman might do. (*Gone Girl* 44)

Amy is extremely intelligent so she easily discovers the lies of Nick and decides to seek revenge on him for his betrayal. Through the same process, which is cheating, lying, faking stories and fabricating things (blood, harming herself, diary, pregnancy, disappeared...etc.).

Nick justified his lies and cheating by the fact that he is deeply unhappy in his marriage, and puts the blame on Amy for this. He believed that if she had been a different sort of wife

and woman, he might have been able to remain faithful to her. He rationalizes his infidelity with himself: “It was that line that caught me, the simplicity of it. The idea that I could do something, and it would make a woman happy and it would be that easy. *Whatever you give me, I’ll like*. I felt an overwhelming wave of relief. And then I knew I didn’t love Amy anymore” (148). Thus, the cheater or deceiver, in general, often lies to cover up his/her lies without being noticed by others and to get out of trouble or appear as a good person as seen with both Amy and Nick.

#### **d) Personality Disorders:**

People differ in the ways that they view themselves and others, engage in relationships, and cope with adversity (Alwin et. al 4). It is quite normal for people to feel unable to cope with life and they might find difficulties in social interactions. When these difficulties are extreme and persistent, and when they lead to significant personal and social problems, they are described as personality disorders (4). Moreover, personality disorders reflect personality traits that are used inappropriately and become maladaptive (Millon et.al 510). Some deviations may be quite mild and interfere very little with the individual’s home or work life, while others may cause great disruption in both the family and society (A Report on Mental Illnesses 70). Furthermore, these disorders have some traits and symptoms that appear due to specific situations or events the individual may undergo. Generally, individuals with personality disorders “have difficulty getting along with others and may be irritable, demanding, hostile, fearful, or manipulative, it may even affect their thought, emotions, interpersonal relationships and impulse control” (A Report on Mental Illnesses 70).

According to *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Disorder, fifth edition* there are several types of personality disorders, some of them are mentioned as below each type and its patterns

(650). The following will be mentioned as characters in the novel manifest many of the symptoms relevant to these disorders, they can be seen in more serious degrees in Amy.

- **Borderline Personality Disorder:** Instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image and affects, and marked impulsivity.
- **Antisocial Personality Disorder:** Disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others.
- **Histrionic Personality Disorder:** Excessive emotionality and dramatic attention seeking.
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** Grandiosity, need for admiration, lack of empathy, and manipulation.
- **Schizoid Personality Disorder:** Detachment from social relationships and restricted range of emotional expression.
- **Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Distrust and suspiciousness in which others' motives are interpreted as malevolent.

Amy seems to endorse a couple of symptoms related to the abovementioned disorders, mainly anti-social personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder as well as narcissistic personality disorder. Amy manifests a variety of common traits of the mentioned disorders; she fails to conform to social norms, tends to be manipulative and influence her surroundings to gain personal profit and pleasure. She also gets easily angry (irritability and aggressiveness); she lacks empathy for others; she desperately needs admiration and to be the center of attention; she attempts to harm herself, etc. Amy is often perceived as charming, funny, easygoing, and talented. In other words, she tries to live up to

“Amazing Amy.” In order to do that, she can seduce and charm any person she wants, she can manipulate, she can lie, she can act, and above all, she can kill a person in cold blood.

## **6. Conclusion:**

From the above-mentioned discussion, it can be concluded that these behaviors are considered as mental condition traits, known as personality disorders. In addition to that, the discussion and the analysis of the characters’ behaviors suggests that Amy falls under the diagnosis of various personality disorders such as anti-social disorder, borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder as well as narcissistic personality disorder. These disorders have common traits like manipulation or treating others harshly, deceitfulness, lack of remorse, violating the law and failing in conforming social norms, and self-centered (needs to be the center of attention). Amy could have one of these mental conditions that mainly reveals from her actions. Even Nick’s actions refer that he could have a narcissistic disorder. The gorgeous and charming man from a working-class family who could make the beautiful, rich woman fall in love with him, in many ways, in order to pump himself up. These characters suffering whose self-concept has been shattered and fragmented end up engaging in toxic and destructive relationships. In the case of Nick and Amy, their relationship becomes a lifetime sentence.

## General Conclusion

As long as humans exist, their behaviors are going to dynamically form new phenomena. If our ancestors seem to have led simple lives and thought of the world in much simpler terms, today's individual is a much more complex creature. In our contemporary times, there is no such a thing as a unitary self in harmony with itself and others. On the contrary, today's self is shattered, fragmented, and highly complex. The way we perceive ourselves is highly dependent on how others perceive us, and our role in this world becomes all the more blurred because we no longer have a clear understanding of who we are. All of this, makes studies in human psychology and the attempt to understand personalities all the more important and appealing. That is why, a close reading of Flynn's *Gone Girl* has proved to be a fertile ground for psychoanalysis.

First, the researcher finds out that some characters are unable to fully identify with themselves. They are unable to embody a sense of self, and instead they try to cling to life in the face of ruthless storms inside their bodies, which leave them completely shattered and fragmented. In addition, in order to maintain the good self-image, it is necessary to adjust one's actions based on family expectation and society's view about themselves. The researcher explored how the characters perceive themselves and how others perceive them. Their families played a crucial role in influencing their sense of self, particularly Amy and Nick.

The second findings resulted from a deep analysis of the characters' family background and their relationships with each other. Thus, the researcher concluded that there are several conflicts within the characters' lives that helped in manifesting the fragmented personality. The first conflict was between Amy and her parents. Her parent's acts manipulated her life since her early times. She was pictured as "Amazing Amy" through a children series written by the parents. She strives to be perfect as Amazing Amy only to satisfy her arrogant parents and to

inspire the fans of the storybook. Ultimately, Amy's personality becomes so distorted that nobody knows who is the real Amy, including herself.

The second conflict is between Amy and her husband Nick. Amy had to move from New York to Missouri, which stressed her out because she needs to adapt from the glorious town into a small town, and change her personality according to her new life. Then after the couple's breakdown, Amy tried to show her husband her real self, yet became more distant and went to adultery. Because of this climax, Amy started to plan the revenge to frame her husband in a murder crime. That is to say, Nick's infidelity pushed Amy to split on her own. After being the Amazing Amy for her parents, then the cool Amy for her husband, now she becomes the revengeful Amy that seeks to teach Nick a lesson for his infidelity. On the other side, Amy's perfectionism and dysfunctional behaviors played a crucial role in destroying Nick's personality. Besides his conflict with his father, Nick's relationship with Amy is the critical factor in his whole life. Nick lived in a family that suffered from abusive father and domestic violence. Thus, he ended up repressing his emotions and agreeing to stay with the "Psycho Amy" for the sake of their child. The researcher concluded that rotten familial relationships, false memories of the hidden past, hidden secrets and the surrounding influence are the primary triggers responsible for fragmentation within each character's personality.

In the last part, the researcher reaches a result that Amy and Nick reveal some features of common personality disorders. Among these features deceitful actions, manipulation, lying, cheating, attention seeking, etc. all of which are traits of larger and more serious personality disorders such as narcissistic Personality disorder, Borderline Personality, and Histrionic Personality. Some of these are more apparent in Amy Dunne than other characters.

To sum up, the child inevitably depends on his family even for his basic needs. For a normal social development, interaction with the family is essential, because for children, the

family is the first and most important model for children. Since childhood is a bridge between individual developments, any source of problematic relationship, abuse, frustration, anxiety, trauma, etc. will affect the individual's self in the first place. The individuals are in need for a stable relationship with their parents in order to avoid any expected harm on their psyche and any personality disturbance.

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## الملخص

مفهوم الذات هو مسألة حساسة بإمكانها التأثير على سلوكيات الافراد وتصرفاتهم وردود افعالهم وحتى نظرتهم لأنفسهم. رواية جون جورل للكاتبة جيليان فلين كأدب قصصي معاصر صورت شخصياتها كأنهم غير قادرين على استشعار ذات متوازنة، لذلك عند قراءة هذه الرواية يسود الاحساس بعدم القدرة على التحديد. تتناول هذه الرسالة المعونة: "الذوات المحطمة والشخصيات المتعددة في رواية جون جورل للكاتبة جيليان فلين" ماهية تصوير شخصيات الرواية على انهم غير قادرين على تجسيد الذات التقليدية المتوازنة و تحري الحقائق الاجتماعية والنفسية التي تقع خلف التسبب في تحطم الشخصيات. حيث تبحث ايضا عن ميزات الاضطرابات الفصامية التي قد تكون لدى الشخصيات. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف وللحصول على تحليل موثوق، استخدمت الدراسة نظرية التصنيف الذاتي وكذلك نظريات فرويد حول "الرومانسية العائلية" و "سيكولوجية الحب". حيث اتضح أنه من الصعب تقييم الذات لأنها تتضمن تصورات شخصية ومشاعر خفية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فهي عامل مهم لكل شخص ويمكنه تغيير معتقداته / مواقفهم، وردود أفعاله تجاه الحياة الشخصية والاجتماعية. معرفة الذات من قبل كل فرد وتطويره بشكل صحيح يمكن أن يكون مفيداً وضرورياً للبشرية وهذا كان يظهر جليا في شخصيتي البطلين.."

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** فلين، فرويد، اضطرابات التعددية الشخصية، الصدمة، مفهوم الذات.