

Integrating Kafka's "A Hunger Artist" in Light of Psychoanalytical Theory

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Abstract

In "The Hunger Artist" the protagonist passes through several stages or some ideas that are discussed in the Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality. The present research paper seeks to integrate and shed light on these three stages of Psychoanalytic theory of personality and its presence in Kafka's work. The study will explain that the human personality is composed up of complex elements and these elements are integrated in the research paper. As Freud states that human personality is composed up of three components which are named as I'd ego and super ego. These elements have their own stages of development which might have an impact on a person's behavior and cognition throughout the time. Lack of the proper working of any of these three components leads to mental and behavioral irregularities. The Hunger Artist is going through the stages of I'd, ego and super ego which provide the basis of understanding the effects of these terms. Also the presence of these elements provoke the evil of character.

Keywords : Integrate , Personality, Mental, Behavioral, id, Ego, Superego, Hunger Artist.

INTRODUCTION

Literary text often induces magnificent objective and later frustrates the most unrealistic avenues of that aspiration, thereby decommissioning those routes of desire and behavior. And just as psychoanalysis develops more fulfilling patterns of desire and action through the patient's identification with new ego ideals offered by the analyst, so reading "Hunger Artist" promote such structural changes through identification with characters and personae of literary texts.

Sigmund Freud first proposed the psychoanalytic theory in 1896. Sigmund Freud separated the human psyche into three sections in this theory he presents : the id, ego, and super ego.

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, the id is the personality aspect made up of unconscious psychic energy and serves to appease the most basic urges, wants, and desires. It is the core component of personality. Additionally, it represents our most primal urges for food and sex. The id seeks out instant fulfilment of our needs and desires. If certain needs and wants are not met, a person may get agitated, angry, or nervous. *For instance*

"In order to get fed, a hungry baby wailed. Having a thirst, Ahmad. He drank from Mr. Ali's glass of water across the table, much to his surprise, instead of waiting for the service to replenish his own".

The ego is the second component of the human psyche that deals with reality. The ego strives to fulfil the indeed d's in a way that is acceptable in society. This can mean holding off on satisfying desires in order to reduce the stress the id feels when a need is not met in the right way. The ego understands that other people have needs and wants as well, and that being selfish is bad in the long term , for instance

"Ayesha wanted to steal her mother's jeweler, but she was aware that if she did so without permission, her mother would be upset. She then asked her mother whether she might wear her jewelry.

Ahmad needed to drink. He really wanted to sip water from Mr. Ali's glass of water, but he knew that his server would be returning soon to replace his glass of water, so he waited till the server arrived and served him water".

The ultimate development is the super ego. It is founded on moral principles and judgments of what is right and wrong. Even when the ego and super ego reach the same conclusions regarding a matter or circumstance, the super ego's choice is more likely to be motivated by moral considerations than the ego's choice, for instance;

“Ali wanted to steal Ahmad’s pen. He knew that no one would know about it but he thought that stealing something from others was wrong. So, he decided not to steal Ahmad’s pen even though he would probably never caught.”

If someone asks you to eat chocolate(just for the sake of formality) then if you want to eat the whole chocolate then it is id, if you want to eat a small bar of it then it is ego but if you say that I am on a super diet, it is super ego.

The psychoanalytic theory is taken into consideration by the researcher. pertinent information on the subject to support the idea that a person's surroundings has a major impact on their mental health. A foundation or pillar for the research is provided by the theoretical framework. The theory of personality based on Freudian psychoanalysis underlies the study. Researchers used Freudian psychoanalysis to interpret the story's characters.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the reasons behind Hunger Artist's psychological problems in the story Hunger Artist?
2. How can we evaluate the Hunger Artist from a psychoanalytic perspective?

1.3 Research Objectives

Research aims the following objectives to be fulfilled at the end.

1. To explore the psychological issues of the Hunger Artist in the story.
2. To examine the Hunger Artist through the perspective of psychoanalysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anthony Elliot (2015) discussed how psychoanalytic philosophy has influenced the humanities and social sciences. It is thrilling, significant, and frequently disputed. In a new version of this classic work, Anthony Elliott skilfully introduces the reader to psychoanalytic theory. He presents clear interpretations of prominent thinkers in addition to exploring their impact on politics, society, and tradition. An Introduction to Psychoanalytic Theory contains updated information on Lacanian and post-Lacanian concepts, post-Kleinian psychotherapist Wilfred Bion, psychoanalytic feminism, and deconstructive psychoanalysis. • investigates the political and cultural components of psychoanalytic studies, from feminism to postmodernism; and • discusses prominent psychoanalytic thinkers, from Freud to Lacan, Klein to Kristina, and Klein to Laplanche. This captivating and vital work was written by one of the world's top social theorists (Elliot,2015).

According to Robert Waelder (1933), children's play has been a topic of clinical discussion for many psychologists from many schools of thought. Child psychology, as it has long been taught in our colleges, has been preoccupied with the immensely positive phenomena that a substantial portion of a growing child's day is spent playing, and has undertaken to make various contributions to the translation of this phenomenon. It is now our task to investigate what contributions psychoanalysis can offer to the question of children's play. When the literature of educational psychology is compared to the greater informal psychoanalytic guides dealing with the problem, it is now clear that each interest to a certain institution of video games. Academic psychology studies primarily what is referred to be "official" children's video games—video games that are common and are played by all youngsters. In psychoanalytic literature, on the other hand, hobby is clearly focused on one-of-a-kind video games—the ones of an extra person nature, to which the child attaches for a positive time only. Naturally, it cannot be said that instructional psychology isn't interested in individual video games or that psychoanalysis isn't interested in the classic, common ones; however, it's far rarely feasible to overlook the fact that the two area the pressure differently. The psychoanalytic concept of play is unable to provide a unifying explanation for the phenomena known as "play," which would allow all video games and all manifestations arising from them to be understood. However, in this instance, as is frequently the case in psychoanalysis, an unmarried occurrence may also have a variety of interpretations and exhibit a variety of characteristics, making it impossible to be described by an unmarried standard interpretation (Waelder, 1933).

When we talk about masochism, according to Rudolph M. Loewenstein (1957), we refer to a tendency toward or search for physical or mental anguish in order to acquire, whether consciously or unconsciously, sexual fulfilment in the broadest sense. Beyond their medical significance, these phenomena are particularly challenging since they seem to go against the gratification principle, which is the tendency to avoid pain and unpleasantness. In fact, for certain masochists, "physically or mentally toiling on the fingers of the sexual item is a circumstance" for sexual fulfilment (Freud, 32). Because of this paradox, one would possibly anticipate that the observer of masochism have to additionally cause exciting concerns handling the issues of the human thoughts whilst confronted with a few painful realities of the outside and inner world.

In "The Economic Principle in Masochism" Freud (36) mentioned that masochism "comes beneathneath our statement in 3 shapes: as a situation beneathneath which sexual excitation can be roused; as an expression of female nature; and as a norm of behaviour." Theoretical concerns on masochism for this reason can address numerous forms of issues. The first and the relatively first-rate recognised of those are the instances of masochistic perversion. They were maximum broadly studied clinically; they have been nicely defined already in pre-Freudian psychiatric literature, and psychoanalytic studies has contributed significantly to their elucidation (Lowenstein, 1957).

According to Guilford Press (1989), "Freud Reappraised" is a thorough and authoritative examination of psychoanalysis's central tenet. It is crucial to remember the humanistic and philosophical elements of psychoanalytic theory in addition to its biological, psychological, and therapeutic foundations. The study's scope serves as a guide for studying Freud and provides a fresh level of understanding of the numerous influences on his ideas and output (Press, 1989).

Dr. Guntrip is particularly concerned with himself and his interpersonal and romantic relationships. He investigates the development of the psychoanalytic idea, its applicability to contemporary healing techniques, and its relevance through the works of Freud, Sullivan, Erikson, Horney, and other theorists. Dr. Guntrip has come to approach the self as the "fundamental mental idea" and psychoanalysis as a result of his extensive work with schizoid patients who are distant, withdrawn, and unable to shape meaningful interpersonal relations (Guntrip, 2008).

It is difficult to help but wonder why there has been such disagreement when headings and phrases like "Psychology against Metapsychology" (Gill and Holzman, 1976), "Metapsychology as the Whipping Boy" (Pruyser, 1978), and "separate psychoanalysis from metapsychology" (Gill and Holzman, 1976) are so frequently used in recent psychoanalytic literature. I think that misconceptions about what Freud meant lead to a lot of the criticism of metapsychology as he used the term. Different analysts have varying interpretations of what metapsychology means to them, whether they reject it or defend it. (1980, Brenner).

Analysis And Discussion

Franz Kafka was a German speaking novelist and short story writer. He is considered as one of the most prominent literary figure of twentieth century literature. Most of his literary works contain elements of reality, fantasy and Psychoanalysis. In his short story "The Hunger Artist" he has sketched the protagonist character enriched with Psychoanalytic elements e.g. I'd, ego and super ego.

"Besides informal onlookers there have been additionally replays of everlasting watchers decided on with the aid of using the public, commonly butchers, unusually sufficient, and it turned into their undertaking to observe the starvation artist day and night, 3 of them at a time, in case he must have a few mystery recourse to nourishment. This turned into not anything however a formality, instigated to reassure the masses, for the initiates knew properly sufficient that in his rapid the artist could in no way in any circumstances, now no longer even beneathneath forcible compulsion, swallow the smallest morsel of food; the respect of his career forbade it".

Super ego is based on perfection/morality. In this state of mind you will think of the fact that why should I prefer to others readymade ideas and things rather I should get independent of others. So in the story "The artist" is confined to his profession so much that even in the absence of a single person he doesn't take a single bite of the food yet his condition is such that he hardly survives because of the extreme level of weakness but it is his such devotion to his profession that he keeps his fast in the absence of the people.

"But his happiest second changed into while the morning got here and considerable breakfast became introduced for them at his price on which they flung themselves with the eager urge for food of healthful guys after a weary night time of wakefulness".

It is concluded the psychological issue i.e. I'd. According to Sigmund Freud psychoanalytical theory of personality, I'd is that component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy the basic urges, needs and desires. It is the most important part of personality. So in the story as it is discussed that the Hunger Artist was having a keen desire to have an appreciation and food of his choice for that purpose he did everything to satisfy the spectators from his art of fasting.

"Yet for different motives he turned into by no means satisfied; it become now no longer possibly mere fasting that had introduced him to such skeleton thinness that many humans had regretfully to avoid his exhibitions, due to the

fact the sight of him changed into an excessive amount of for them, possibly it changed into dissatisfaction with himself that had worn him down”

In the light of the statement mentioned above , these lines reflect the idea of I'd. I'd is that part of a personality which is totally based on the pleasure principle. I'd is the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy the basic urges, needs and desires. It is the most basic part of our personality. If a person's needs on this stage are not fulfilled, the person may become tense, angry or anxious. Similarly, in the story, the Hunger Artist has a keen desire to satisfy the spectators from his art of fasting which has brought him to a condition that his body is now merely a skeleton but he sometimes find dissatisfaction in the satisfaction of the spectators.

“The artist himself should recognise that, he turned into consequently sure to be the soul absolutely happy spectator of his very own fast”.

Here in these lines, the fact that during his fast there were some moments when no body was there to watch and observe him, yet he was so committed to his profession that he even didn't take a single bite of food. Here the spark of the super ego is clearly reflected. As explained earlier that super ego is that component of the human psyche which is based on morality and perfection. Conscience plays a vital role in super ego. So it was the conscience of the Hunger Artist that forbids him from carrying impurity in his profession.

“No one could take his hassle seriously. What consolation ought to he likely need. What greater may want to he likely desire for”?

Though after the completion of forty days fasting (as per bet with impresario) yet he was not satisfied. Not only to get appreciation by the people was his I'd but also the enormous and delicious food was his I'd which was served to him as a reward for the completion of his fast. As after the completion of the bet with impresario, one of his I'd e.g. to be honoured and get appreciation from the people was satisfied but the desire to get the breakfast of his own choice was not satisfied thence. So in order to satisfy his this desire he imprisoned himself in the cage and continuously started to observe the fasts for the rest of his life which ultimately leads to his death.

“To combat towards this loss of understanding, in opposition to an entire global of non-understanding, turned into impossible”.

It is more obvious from the prior statement that the psychoanalytic elements present in this sentence are consciousness (ego) and unconsciousness (I'd). While performing an action, being conscious means being aware and intentional, whereas being unconscious means being oblivious or unintentional about something without realizing it. The Hunger Artist frequently loses his temper with those close to him because his fasting caused him much anguish. On the contrary, many who had gathered to see him seemed to enjoy his depressed state. While the rest of the population was unaware of the difficulties and pain associated with the fast, he was fully aware of them. Therefore, a cognizant person cannot engage in combat with an unconscious person.

“He took go away of the impresario, his accomplice in an exceptional career, and employed himself to a big circus; for you to spare his personal emotions he averted analyzing the situations of his contact”.

In this statement a spark of I'd is reflected. Though after getting so much honour and appreciation from the people yet he was not satisfied. After finishing the contract of forty days fasting with impresario he went to a circus and hired himself to carry on observing fasts. He further wished to get more and more honour and appreciation from the audience about his profession in order to satisfy his desire he even puts his life into death.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the preceding discussion and the information collected that "The Hunger Artist" takes a strong approach to the psychoanalytical theory of personality. There are ideas that the story's portrayal of the Hunger Artist's character reflects. The Hunger Artist explored the concepts of the psychoanalytic theory of personality and dealt with the fundamental concepts of Id, Ego, and Super Ego. Many people were exposed to the psychoanalytical theory of personality and made significant contributions to it, but only a small number of people worked on Franz Kafka's "The Hunger Artist" narrative illustrates three fundamental tenets of psychoanalytic theory. It can be

concluded that in “ A Hunger Artist” Kafka has carried these predicaments to its most plausible conclusion through the character of the Hunger Artist.

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