



Guilt Trips in *Gone Girl* Novel by Gillian Flynn (2012)

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Abstract

This research analyzes the novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn (2012). The main problem analyzed is the guilt trips that happen in the married life of the main characters in the novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. This research uses the psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud to expose the meaning of the novel. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method and the data will be taken from words, phrases, and statements from the novel as the centered data. The aims of the analysis are to reveal how guilt trips are committed by the female character in the *Gone Girl* novel by Gillian Flynn, to uncover the type of guilt trips committed by the female main character, and to expose how the male main character overcomes guilt trips. The findings reveal the reasons why guilt trips happen, the forms, and the responses to the guilt trips. Furthermore, the causes of guilt trips are emotional dependency, the power to manipulate, and low self-esteem and insecurity. Then, it exposes three types of guilt trips there are societal, victimhood, and ethical guilt trips. Lastly, the victim who gets guilt-tripping in the novel responds to the guilt trips by recognizing the manipulation, expressing the emotion, as well as offering sympathy.

Keywords: guilt trips, gone girl, marriage issues.

A. INTRODUCTION

It can be determined from discussing human behavior that almost everyone sometimes feels guilty or gets stuck in guilt, a phenomenon known as guilt-tripping or guilt trips. Guilt occurs within us when someone believe they have committed wrongdoings due to the weight of being overwhelmed by obligations and expectations. Meanwhile, causing someone guilt trips refer to making them feel guilty or responsible for changing their behavior or carrying out a particular action. Silfver (2007) said, according to expert Beaumeister, guilt as emotions that stimulates the moral. Means, people are able to employ guilt as a tool to

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influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others since guilt has the potential to be such a strong motivator of human conduct. Guilt trips can leave the victim feeling emotionally troubling and struggling. Oppositely, the perpetrator uses guilt trips to gain what they want or to keep their dominance in the relationship by using the victim's sense of responsibility, sympathy, or empathy.

Hence, guilt trips happen as a result of betrayal, disloyalty, and faithlessness. When someone dear to you or in a sense of trust betrays you, it is considered an act of betrayal. Rachman (2010), stated the most familiar types of betrayal involve, acts of infidelity, unloyalty, and dishonesty. That happens when someone purposefully behaves in a way that violates their promises, obligations, or the standards you held them to, for example, two-timing or being dishonest to their partner. Which, resulting variety of sentiments, such as rage, sorrow, and a lack of faith in the betrayer, can be delivered by betrayal. Rachman (2010) highlight betrayal leads to various consequences, such as shock, loss, and grief, diminished self-esteem, self-doubt, and feelings of anger.

There are some cases burst out happens because of guilt trips can be cheating, betrayal, or immoral actions between a couple. This issue also outflows into celebrity couples, according to Singh from *Animated Times* (2022), Ben Affleck was guilt-tripped into paying for Jennifer Lopez's expensive limo rides, outfits, and jewelry. Based on one staff (2022) from *Radar Online*, stated this is her way of making him aware that there are consequences to his actions because she has not entirely forgotten or granted forgiveness to him. This means, he fully understands the situation but cannot escape from the blame he takes. In addition, Singh (2022) from *The Insider* reported that, paying off the grand demand as the debt he made from the past whether emotional and financial damages because the last split. Actually, he is aware that he is settling both a material and an emotional debt from his past immoral behavior and she takes revenge on him. Also, it could have happened because of a social judgment attack towards the victim because people sympathize with the perpetrator.

Gone Girl (2012) is a novel by Gillian Flynn. the novel explores guilt trips issues that are mainly shown in most chapters. The actions of the main character in this novel are manipulated activities done by the main character and how they influence her lifestyle becomes part of her behavior. As it starts with a common problem of married couple faces which is the broken partner and two times husband. It is caused by the financial problem, unemployment, and an undiscovered agreement with her husband Nick until she wants to give him a learned lesson to wake him up, therefore with whatsoever her achievement to help her married life as how she thinks it is, Amy leads to her sadistic action as she can kill someone for her manipulation plans. Therefrom, the novel determines the analysis of Guilt Trips by Amy Dune from *Gone Girl* Novel by Gillian Flynn (2012) where Amy's manipulative personality leads to Nick guilt tripping into the traps she created.

1) The Idea of Psychoanalysis

Psychology and literature possess a connection that engages with the way humanity thinks. As cited in Rezaeia and Seyyedrezaeib (2013), Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis forms the base of a framework depicting the operations of our minds which the unconscious, implied from the conscious mind's processes, unveils significant effects on our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Meaning, literature makes psychological assumptions from the writer's perspective and through the interpreter from characters actions about the way they think. Psychoanalysis contributes to our understanding of thinking, culture, faith, and, above all, literature. Literary psychology, according to Septiadi et al. (2019), is the study of literature from the perspective of work as a psychological activity. Means, the overall objective of literary psychology is to comprehend the psychological components included in works of literature. It is not only a subfield of healthcare or psychology.

2) The Composition of the Mind

Psychoanalysis develops from the intuition between what Freud propose as the three fundamental structures of the human intellect: the id, ego, and superego, these three personality systems are interconnected and together they make up the entirety and conduct of people, which barely anything more than the result of their relationship. In keeping with Situmorang & Evyanto (2020), on Freud's perspective, humans possess three primary elements in their personality that drive our behavior and shape our identity.

3) Study of Psychological Criticism

The term criticism carries a bad connotation in common usage. According to Fard (2016), Literary criticism may destroy the delights of an individual evaluation of books as well as the simple enjoyment of absorbing them. A literary critic or audience's distinctive technique, strategy, or perspective on opinion through which they comprehend, examine, and assess literary works and frequently the entire world is known as their theory. The concepts of Freud are equally crucial to literary criticism. According to Freud, the writer's main inspiration for every work of literature is essential, as states in "Psychoanalytic Criticism". Referred to Rezaeia & Seyyedrezaeib (2013), psychoanalysis critique in literature is built on the theories and practices of Freud (1856–1939), he claims that doing so would satisfy some hidden impulses that the writer most likely had as an infant but quickly suppressed and buried in the unconscious.

4) Study of Guilt Trip

A guilt trip includes causing another individual to feel blame or a sense of duty to change their behavior or take a particular move. Since blame can be such a capable spark of human behavior, individuals can use it as an instrument to modify others. Humeny (2013) argued that guilt trip is about someone hold a burden to change their actions opposing what they want. This means when you

feel bad to someone for something you have done or not then these emotions lead you to do something for that person, in that case, you just tripped someone into guilt trips. Strengthened by Baldassar (2014), in many ways guilt is shown and acts much like the emotion of belief. The trap to a person where the perpetrator plays with the emotions and then control them. Mandala and Pikes (2008) stated, guilt trips along with manipulative strategy, that tempted under psychological control patterns.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Using qualitative methodologies for observing the data to comprehend phenomena like as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. that the research subjects go through. Then the data analysis method uses the descriptive approach because the analysis is centered on novel statements and contents. The main information from the novel is described using the descriptive method which leads to the theory uses. To support the analysis, the key data are presented as quotations through pages, lines, and paragraphs provided. The writer uses psychoanalysis theory that is linked with the genre and guilt trips concept. Describes how the married couple guilt tripped and guilt tripped. The writer searched and gathered references for this thesis from the library's collection that contained and supported the subject. The writer also used the internet as a tool by gathering data and looking up some facts online to support my thesis as online journals, and internet articles. The writer chooses the theory of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud which focuses on the concept of the composition of the human mind (id, ego, superego).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The analysis will be focused on two points of view from the female and male character. Amy is the wife and Nick is the husband. This chapter formulate to discover the reasons, form and response to the guilt trips. *Gone Girl* novel by Gillian Flynn reveal the marriage life issue manifest into crime plot where it leads to unpredicted closure. The concept of a guilt trip, specifically how guilt and manipulation affect relationships. One of the main characters uses guilt as a tool to manipulate and influence another during the process of the story. Especially Amy is good at applying guilt to control Nick's behavior and manners toward her.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Reasons of Guilt Trips

There are a few typical reasons for guilt trips:

1. Emotional Dependency

When someone becomes emotionally dependent on another else, they are considered to be emotionally dependent. By establishing in the other person the feeling of obligation to provide care or support, using guilt trips can be a strategy to maintain this dependence.

Sometimes I feel like Nick has decided on a version of me that doesn't exist. Since we've moved here, I've done girls nights out and charity walks, I've cooked casseroles for his dad and helped sell tickets for raffles. I tapped the last of my money to give to Nick and Go so they could buy the bar they've always wanted, and I even put the check inside a card shaped like a mug of beer - Cheers to You! and Nick just gave a flat begrudging thanks. I don't know what to do. I'm trying. (Flynn, 2012:136)

Based on the quotation above meaning how Amy who is excessively dependent on another person for her mental well-being, sense of identity, and sense of belonging which is said to be emotionally dependent. This can appear as a strong want for ongoing validation, reassurance, and attention from the other person. In line with Freud's idea of id, ego, and superego where in here Amy's ego-driven emotional dependency that defined as an unstoppable maintenance of self-esteem, which Amy's high id may manifest to her ego. However, it is happening on her diary where she shows how much love she gives to Nick as moral principle or her superego. Meaning without the presence or consent of the person, they are reliant on, emotionally dependent people frequently experience anxiety, insecurity, and a sense of incompleteness.

2. Power to Manipulate

Guilt may become a powerful tool for controlling other people's emotions in the context of power to manipulate. These manipulators could use this technique to get what they want or maintain their position of power in the relationship.

We talked to Noelle,' Boney said. 'Says your wife was extremely troubled by the marriage, was upset about the money stuff, that she worried you'd married her for her money. She says your wife worried about your temper. (Flynn, 2012:205)

The quotation above refers to Amy who using somebody to depict how mentally unstable her marriage with Nick and spread bad rumors coming from Nick. Which means, power of manipulation refers to the tactics used by those in positions of influence to maintain or increase their power over others, with Noelle statement to the police could biased people toward Amy and blame Nick for it. Aligned with Freud's theory that Amy's id-driven actions can indicate a person who seeks power for her own benefit. In order to achieve control or influence, ego-driven manipulation uses strategies like convincing, negotiating, or compromising.

3. Low Self-Esteem and Insecurity

Low self-esteem refers to a negative perception of oneself and sense of worth. It involves having a critical and often inaccurate view of one's abilities, appearance, and value as a person. Insecurity refers to a persistent feeling of uncertainty, self-doubt, and unease about oneself or the relationships. Insecurity

often contributes to low self-esteem but can also extend beyond self-perception to affect how individuals view their relationships with others.

But I worry. All the time. I know I'm already too old for my husband's tastes. Because I used to be his ideal, six years ago, and so I've heard his ruthless comments about women nearing forty: how pathetic he finds them, overdressed, out at bars, oblivious to their lack of appeal. He'd come back from a night out drinking, and I'd ask him how the bar was, whatever bar, and he'd so often say: "Totally inundated by Lost Causes," his code for women my age. At the time, a girl barely in her thirties, I'd smirked along with him as if that would never happen to me. Now I am his Lost Cause, and he's trapped with me, and maybe that's why he's so angry. (Flynn, 2012:211)

The quote above points out how Amy is insecure with her marriage life because of age and looks based on her husband favor. Also, in line with Freud stated, the pleasure principle disregards the emotions of others which Amy's guilt trips without thinking of how her husband bad not just in himself but others too. This is part of Amy ego to be Nick favor. As this scene showing, while investigators and people see her diary leads them to blame Nick for that statement.

2.2 Types of Guilt Trips

Guilt trips, which can take many different forms, are deceptive strategies designed to make someone feel guilty or responsible for a certain event. Here are a few examples of typical guilt trips:

1. Societal Guilt Trips

This involves individuals feeling guilty due to perceived deviations from societal norms, values, or expectations. This guilt can arise from the fear of judgment or reprisal from others for not conforming to established standards.

I can't be discovered. If I were ever found, I'd be the most hated woman on the planet. I'd go from being the beautiful, kind, doomed, pregnant victim of a selfish, cheating bastard to being the bitter bitch who exploited the good hearts of all America's citizens. Ellen Abbott would devote show after show to me, angry callers venting their hate: This is just another example of a spoiled rich girl doing what she wants, when she wants and not thinking of anyone else's feelings, Ellen. I think she should disappear for life in prison!" Like that, it would go like that. I've read conflicting Internet information on the penalties for faking a death, or framing a spouse for said death, but I know the public opinion would be brutal. No matter what I do after that feed orphans, cuddle lepers - when I died, I'd be known as That Woman Who Faked Her Death and Framed Her Husband, You Remember. I can't allow it. (319)

From quote above, meaning Amy focusing on society think and manner that react to the issue happens around media because she wants society to be affirmative with her. Meaning, this is in compliance with Freud the superego's influence can manifest as a fear of social rejection or criticism which is become her way to play with it and she knows it dangerous if she gets caught, that why she makes the scenario to sympathize with her. Her id driven her ego to keep on her plans as everyone should blame Nick. Individuals might feel guilty for not meeting societal expectations, fearing they can be judged, excluded, or seen as morally deficient, then. These norms can be cultural, moral, or ethical in nature and are often deeply ingrained in a person's social environment.

2. Victimhood Guilt

Guilt trippers play the victim to make the individual feel responsible for their suffering or unhappiness. Emotional manipulation like playing victim is indeed a form of emotional manipulation often employed in guilt trips.

Each clue was hidden in a spot where I'd cheated on Amy. She'd used the treasure hunt to take me on a tour of all my infidelities. I had a shimmer of nausea as I pictured Amy trailing oblivious me in her car to my dad's, to Go's, to goddamn Hannibal - watching me fuck this sweet young girl, my wife's lips twisting in disgust and triumph. (Flynn, 2012:255)

This quote imply Nick realize he is in guilt create by Amy because he thinks about his wrongdoings and gets punish by Amy. Amy wants to portraying herself as the victim of circumstances or the other person's actions, guilt trippers evoke sympathy, guilt, or a sense of responsibility in the other person which in here Nick becomes clear that he is feels nausea which means he is get caught and right being blame. Following Freud's theory where the guilt tripper's id may be motivated by a desire for attention, approval, or dominance over others in the setting of victimhood guilt. It also shows how Nick superego feeling bad in wrongdoing he had done. Amy's appeal to others' guilt by claiming to be victims in order to satisfy their urges. This emotional manipulation is intended to influence the behavior or decisions of the guilt-tripped individual.

3. Ethical Guilt

The act of persuading someone through guilt trips raises ethical considerations. Guilt trips can exploit emotional vulnerabilities, manipulate emotions, and infringe upon an individual's autonomy.

She was scared. I pictured the police knocking, and here I was with a girl I'd been fucking the morning my wife went missing. I'd sought her out that day - I had never gone to her apartment since that first night, but I went right there that morning, because I'd spent hours with my heart pounding behind my ears, trying to get myself to say the words to Amy: I want a divorce. I am in love with someone else. We have to end. I can't pretend to love you, I can't do the anniversary thing-it would actually be more wrong than cheating on you in the first place. (I know:

debatable.) But while I was gathering the guts, Amy had preempted me with her speech about still loving me (lying bitch!), and I lost my nerve. I felt like the ultimate cheat and coward, and the catch-22 - I craved Andie to make me feel better. (Flynn, 2012:271)

In this quote, writer can see how the superego from Andi (the woman Nick cheats with) feels blamed because people (police) react to her and Nick's wrongdoings. In agreement with Fitriani gets idea from Freud theory where an individual's implemented moral principles and societal norms are included in the superego. Superego is an ethical belief that is connected with societal regulations and values. Ethical concerns arise when the use of guilt trips undermines healthy communication, mutual respect, and the well-being of the individuals involved in the quote above their relationship is not in good communication and he feels sorry when Amy still loves him but he cannot respond to it which makes him feels bad about it. However, it is important to consider the potential harm and imbalance of power that can arise from using guilt trips as a means of persuasion.

2.3 Responses to Guilt Trips

There some responses happens in *Gone Girl* novel by the male character:

1. Recognizing the Manipulation

Guilt trips are attempts to control or influence someone's behavior by making them feel guilty for not doing what the manipulator wants. Manipulators may use blame and shame to make you feel guilty, suggesting that your choices have caused harm or disappointment to them or others.

Amy made me believe I was exceptional, that I was up to her level of play. That was both our making and undoing. Because I couldn't handle the demands of greatness. I began craving ease and averageness, and I hated myself for it, and ultimately, I realized, I punished her for it. I turned her into the brittle, prickly thing she became. I had pretended to be one kind of man and revealed myself to be quite another. (Flynn, 2012:241)

From quote above, it shows how Nick realize he makes Amy doing bad to him but this shows the guilt trips because he takes the blame as the one who change Amy even though, all the wrongdoings Amy has done to him are not acceptable as a human being. In here Nick totally thinks he is the fault in response to ethical guilt trips as he does something wrong, it's acceptable if Amy replies terribly as well because the rise of ethical consideration. In line with Freud theory where being aware of attempts to affect or control others by appealing to their sense of morality or social obligation helps to recognize manipulation linked to the superego. Meanwhile, Nick cannot trust his instincts nor prioritizing his well-being in any situation which is needed in this situation. In response to ethical believe that is connected with societal values. That is why, guilt trips continuing in the storyline.

2. Expressing the Emotions

Manipulators distort or deny reality to make you doubt your own perceptions or memory. Expressing the emotions in response to manipulation or victimhood guilt trips is crucial for preserving Nick's mental and emotional well-being.

Andie had screwed me over, Marybeth had turned against me, Go had lost a crucial measure of faith. Boney had trapped me. Amy had destroyed me. I poured a drink. I took a slug, tightened my fingers around the curves of the tumbler, then hurled it at the wall, watched the glass burst into fireworks, heard the tremendous shatter, smelled the cloud of bourbon. Rage in all five senses. Those fucking bitches. (Flynn, 2012:399)

From above it shows, Nick shaken and angry because his overthinking, he lost hope from reaction of everyone around him as result of victimhood guilt trips where Amy is shown as the victim during the investigation on her missing. Writer linked with Mandala and Pikes stated, guilt trips along with manipulative strategy, that tempted under psychological control patterns. Amy success to makes Nick unstable with his emotions on everything happened where everyone starts to turns against Nick and Amy is the victim of dysfunctional marriage.

3. Offering Empathy

When confronting a guilt trip, offering empathy is a helpful tactic that encourages a considerate and open line of conversation. However, it's essential to find a balance between expressing empathy and maintaining personal limits.

Are you okay, Nick?' "The truth? No. I failed my wife so entirely. I have been so wrong. I just hope it's not too late. For me. For us.' 'You're at the end of your rope. Emotionally." Nick looks right at the camera. I want my wife. I want her to be right here.' He takes a breath. 'I'm not the best at showing emotion. I know that. But I love her. I need her to be okay. She has to be okay. I have so much to make up to her." (Flynn, 2012:338)

Quotes above, Nick tries to show sympathy to stop Amy madness and acknowledge what Amy wants, this is also Nick tactic responding to ethical guilt trips because he knows Amy doing this to make him learn on his mistake. Meaning, he tries to end the situation on a positive and respectful way to make his wife come back home because he knows her strategy. Actually, this helps prevent lingering negative feelings. Empathy does not means giving in to manipulation or compromising the own needs and values. It's about understanding and connecting with the other person's emotions while also advocating for their own well-being. As it is compromise with Nick id where he also manipulates Amy's plans to make

her come back home driven ego Amy to her superego where she thinks Nick already surrounded and forgive him by come back home in the end, although it is with terrible manner.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn shows the issue of guilt trips as the result of problematic marriage and misconduct dominance over relationship. This is happening between marriage couple who experience the broken marriage life. The difficulties in the marriage develop into a crime scheme that ultimately results in a surprising conclusion. In particular, the novel explores how lies and anxiety may have a significant negative effect on relationships. Throughout the course of the novel, one of the main characters uses guilt as a tool to control and exercise influence over one another. Particularly, Amy demonstrates skill in guilt tripping Nick's behavior and reactions to her based-on guilt.

The reasons for guilt trips are the novel's first issue. The researcher used the theory of Freud the composition of mind where id, ego, and superego driven the dynamic of those three and conduct some elements about typical reasons for guilt trip. This also strengthen by some researchers Baldassar, Mandala, and Pikes in some journals. Amy is using guilt trips towards Nick mainly because of emotional dependency, power to manipulate, and low self-esteem and insecurity. Amy's reasons are the result of error marriage as disloyalty and betrayal conduct unhealthy relationship. She tries to fix the marriage with wrong action just to fulfil her needed and position in her marriage. Guilt trips is her way to makes Nick stuck with her for the rest of her life.

The second issue within this novel is the types of guilt trips. The researchers used the previous researcher Humeny called A Qualitative Investigation of a Guilt Trips. Following with some related websites and journals discuss about the forms. There are societal, victimhood, and ethical guilt trips. Societal guilt trips happened occurs as a result of what are considered errors from societal norms, values, and expectations. Then, victimhood guilt trips arises where guilt trippers portray her as the victim and society sees her as the helpless victim. Lastly, ethical guilt trips are encouraging a sense of guilt in someone, while appearing ethically responsible. These three types of guilt trips are linked with society superego where it is about societal regulations and value. Amy leading to those around her to believe that Nick is the source of the issue in the scenario. Using people superego these can conclude that everyone on Amy's side and blame Nick for his wrongdoing.

Thirdly, the issue presented within this novel is responses to guilt trips. Nick is the husband of the house where he experiences to be stuck in guilt trips created by Amy his wife. Their unhealthy relationship makes Nick trapped in guilt trips and responses where he recognizing the manipulation where he knows everyone already blame him to be the suspect of missing Amy. Then, expressing the emotions correspondingly with anger and he start to doubting himself. He cannot protect his emotional health because it is ruin by Amy tactics scenario where everyone keeps up with her and turned against Nick. Then, offering empathy as

Nick ways to confronting Amy's guilt trips. Nick tries to show empathy to stop Amy's wrongdoing towards him because he knows what she wants from him which is surrender. Finally, Amy's come back to him but he keeps stuck in Amy's guilt trips because her fame, frame, and image toward society.

This research is searching the representation of the guilt trip that happened in the novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn using the psychological theory by Sigmund Freud. Using qualitative methodologies for observing the data to comprehend phenomena like as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. that the research subjects go through. This research applies the descriptive qualitative research method because it is aimed at describing the guilt trip that happens on the novel *Gone Girl* (2012) by Gillian Flynn. The researcher then focuses on issues that reveal the reasons for guilt trips, the types of guilt trips, and the responses to guilt trips. The research puts an important focus on these discoveries. In order to answer the research questions provided in this research, the researcher needs to initially apply the data collection before moving on to the data analysis stage. Linked for future analysis such as Guilt Trips, another best novel like *The Woman in the Window* is an acclaimed thriller novel by American author A.J. Finn, published by William Morrow on January 2, 2018.

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