

UNVEILING THE UNCONSCIOUS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF THE ID IN JOHN GREEN'S LOOKING FOR ALASKA

Abrar Ahmad

(Corresponding Author)

Student, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat, KPK, Pakistan. Email: abrارشahabi24@gmail.com

Muhammad Ishaq

Student, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat, KPK, Pakistan. Email: muhammadishaqkhanemail@gmail.com

Dr. Kiramatullah

Chairperson, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat, KPK, Pakistan. Email: kiramatazad86@gmail.com

Jawad Ahmad

Student, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat, KPK, Pakistan. Email: Jawadjabari21@gmail.com

Muhammad Hammad Khan

Student, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Lakki Marwat, KPK, Pakistan. Email: hamadkh451@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the Freudian psychoanalysis of Looking for Alaska by John Green with the particular concentration on the idea of the Id as the driving force behind the desires and choices of characters and the breakdown in emotional states. The focal point of analysis is Mile's "Pudge" Halter and Alaska Young whose self-centered behavior and impulsive actions, unresolved and unacceptable traumas, and their emotional extremity reflect the dominance of the Id - the primitive and pleasure-driven part of the hysterics that do not consider the logic, morality, and social order. The study is qualitative and interpretive methodologically, and its method blends the close textual reading and thematic coding with the post-structuralist approach developed by Catherine Belsey that provides the possibility of making various, multiple readings of the character psychology and narrative development. The conclusions lead to conclude that Looking for Alaska breaks the tradition of a coming-of-age novel and turns out to be a psychologically dense book about adolescence, when the forgotten and the urgent are prioritized many times over. In this study, what pairs with Freudian theory and post structuralist criticism is their perpetual relevance to analyzing young adult literature and provides reason to believe that accents on the value of teenage fiction as a means of delivering Freudian impulses of appetite, rebellion and suicide.

Key Words: Looking For Alaska, Psychoanalysis, Id, Thanatos, Adolescence, Unconscious Desire

1. Introduction

Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalytic theory have had a widespread influence on works of literature since its mechanisms provide the chance to analyze the way that the unconscious can influence characters and narratives and create the impact of the influence on the theme. At the very end of the hierarchy of needs and the wildest part of the mind is the Id, the river of motivation of the structural model of the psyche described by Freud and functioning in compliance with the pleasure principle.

Id is the drive that is aimed at satisfying the desires be it sexual desire, aggression, emotional intensity without consideration to logic, moral norms, and expectation (Freud, 1923). It is the wild impulsive essence of the human character and can usually lead to creativity and destruction.

Contemporary young adult literature, with its identity, rebellion and emotional disturbance, is a hotbed of such psychoanalytic work. The novel of John Green, *Looking for Alaska* (2005) is an example of such a genre because it reveals adolescence as the period, when people ask themselves a lot of questions related to their lives and existence. It follows the storey of a

pensive but unrested teenager Miles Halter, Pudge, who joins Culver Creek Preparatory School in pursuit of his Great Perhaps. It is there where he encounters Alaska Young, an in depth, emotionally unstable girl whose reckless behaviour and tragic destiny make Miles doubt his perception of life, love, and loss.

Although the sociological and developmental connotations in the work, ink has been shed on the characters of the novel of a Freudian approach even though the work, *Looking For Alaska*, has been extensively analysed with regards to sociological and developmental aspects. The paper will examine how Freud concept of the Id is depicted in the novel in terms of how Miles obsession with Alaska and Alaska impulsiveness is an expression of the simplified subconscious nature of desire, rebellious impulses, and Thanatos (the death drive). Using the psychotic method of analysis, the work makes the novel look beyond a form of coming-of-age storey unleashing it as a psycho-emotional exploration of young confusion when instinct and compulsion often take precedence over the senses of reason and fitness.

2. Literature Review

Psyche model formulated by Freud, and specifically the part of psyche he introduced as Id has been grossly exploited in the investigation of those literature of which their central hurriedness is of emotional battling and unconscious desire. In communicating in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) Freud explains the idea of the source of the instinctual drives, The Id that is the source of the psychic energy and acts in accordance to what is referred to as pleasure principle. This was later developed by Freud in *Beyond the pleasure principle* (1920) where he develops the concept of a destructive drive (Thanatos) besides demonstrating that unconscious processes can also have a goal of destruction or forgetfulness.

However, even though Freud can be related to adolescent literature, not many scholars have examined his framework extensively in the context of *Looking for Alaska*. Instead, the majority of readings are based on sociological or feministic spectacles. Such an example is the analysis of the youth adult binary in YA novels provided by Lewis, Petrone, and Sarigianides (2016), who claim that Miles and Alaska explore adult roles by acting adolescently irrational. The cultural aspects of power relations are brought out in their work, yet the psychological aspects are underdeveloped.

Existential interpretations also add more depth to the discussion but are psychologically superficial. Using Eriksonian stages of psychosocial development, Ibrati (2018) interprets the evolution of Miles (Industry vs. inferiority to identity vs. role confusion), claiming that his pranks and rule breaking should be regarded as the prom infant trying to establish autonomy. Nevertheless, this discussion does not take into account the fact that the death of Alaska leads to moving back to previous stages of development, which Freudian concept of *Nachträglichkeit* (deferred trauma) might help to explain. In equally explicit fashion, Heryani (2016) psychoanalytic approach suggests that Miles character is an exemplification of Freudian duality his pre-occupation with last words as the drive of Thanatos (death drive) and his pranks and sexual desi4u7jre as the Id-driven rebellion. Maru, Kaya, and Lolowang (2024) provide a wider interpretation of social behavior among adolescents in the novel, with Alaska being impulsive and emotionally unstable seen as a result of a dominating Id, and Miles having an internalized guilt being a work of active Superego.

Further to it, Mawaddah (2023) examines the development of personality according to the theory of Elizabeth Hurlock and the way Miles changes his passivity to assertiveness. Although informative, the analysis dwells on the external factors (e.g., mentorship of Colonel) without internal discrepancies (e.g., Miles feeling guilty about the death of Alaska). That restriction reflects general tendencies in non-psychoanalytic research, which (it is often felt) should focus on observable behaviors rather than unconscious urges. A different non-psychoanalytic approach is given by feminist interpretations. Johansari (2016) focuses on the feminist aspects

of the characterization of Alaska, complaining that she has been turned into a so-called Manic Pixie Dream Girl, whose agency is touched to service the development of Miles. Although the critique by Johansari brings out the gender relations, it fails to address the psychological depth of Alaska her trauma, violent nature, or suppressed sorrow that could be unraveled through a psychoanalytic reading. In comparative approach, Patel (2022) analyzes how the novel deals with the theme of grief in the light of Kubler Ross stages of loss, and why the investigation by Miles into the death of Alaska can be seen as representative of the phase of bargaining.

The contemporary criticism has also started to use the structural model provided by Freud in regards to *Looking for Alaska*, and the results are subtle understandings of the psychological terrain of its characters. Effendi (2023) offers the fullest Freudian interpretation, terms the struggle of Miles a conflict between Id (represented by hedonism of Colonel) and Superego (internalized parental morals). The paper presents that Miles involvement in pranks illustrates Id-motivated urges of belonging, whereas his remorse after the death of Alaska represents a comeback of Superego. This interpretation by Effendi is one of the most attractive parts of the analysis, as he connects the fixation of Miles on the last words with the death instinct (Thanatos) introduced by Freud, explaining the morbid fascination with the definiteness that is parallel to the self-destructive behavior of Alaska. But the analysis is biased towards Miles and Alaska is kept aside as a mere symbolic object, as opposed to a psychological subject.

Summing up, Freudian criticism is considerate to the literary theory; however, its analysis of *Looking for Alaska* is not full yet. Available psychoanalytic literature like those of Atmaja (2019), Heryani (2016), and Maru et al. (2024) also have informative pieces of information yet focus more on the narrative arc of Miles. The psychology of Alaska, her guilt, her impulsiveness, her sexual rebelliousness and existential desperation are noted, but not examined in detail in a Freudian scope.

This paper will fill that gap by examining both Miles and Alaska according to the structural model of Freud, and their personal struggles with the Id. This analysis of Alaska makes her a psychologically complex character unlike the previous readings which confine her to either romantic or tragic character.

3. Methodology

The research is based on a qualitative interpretive approach, which is based on psychoanalytic theory developed by Freud. Elucidating close textual analysis, the analysis focuses on significant passages when making their acts, characters in the story want to feel a pleasure or show all elements of compulsiveness which can be ascribed to the id.

The main source was the novel by John Green, the secondary data were the articles and reviews related to psychoanalysis and literary theory written by the scholars. The passage has been analyzed using a poststructuralist approach by Catherine Belsey and then thematic coding of passages within categories representing the Id (desire, impulsivity, rebellion, obsession and Thanatos). The coded data were then decoded so that the contribution that these psychological aspects made to the core themes of the novel could be analyzed.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Id and Superego: Characters Within a Context

The main characters of *Looking for Alaska*, Miles Halter and Alaska Young are not the only fictional characters; they are allegories of the mind of adolescent at conflict. Whereas Miles is defined by his desperate search of meaning - the search that leads him out of his controlled upbringing to experiences and people he should feel guilty about, Alaska is a whirlpool of opposites: she is impulsive and yet guilty, she is vivid and yet overwhelmed, she is reckless and yet moralistic. This behavior of the characters in question depicts a thrilling interplay of the Id and the Superego, which, in turn, represents one of the most significant psychological

drives in the storey. Miles yearning to chase the so-called Great Perhaps, which can be traced to the last words of Georges Rabelais, instantly designates him as a bestower of intensity and fulfilment traits synonymous with the Id. He says he is longing to break the repeated routine of central Florida suburban life in search of the emotional and spiritual illumination. The wish is irrational, ambivalent and emotional, which are some of the hallmarks of the Id. Yet Miles is not entirely without the moral sense: his scenes of guilty conscience, indecisiveness and self-doubt show doing duty to the Superego through the use of the fines as before.

Alaska is more dramatically conflicted in more Freudian terms. The nature of her choices often involves hedonism and emotional outbursts; she consumes, smokes, gets sexual satisfaction, and plans elaborate tricks. The behaviours are typical of an Id-type personality. However, the mentioning of guilt numerous times, the lamentation of her mother in death and the fact that she could alternate between confidence and depressions suggests that her Superego was taken over by unprocessed trauma and suppressed grief. Freud writes that a too-punitive Superego may lead to neurosis or suicide, elements which also can be followed in the storey line of Alaska.

Though Miles and Alaska are markedly different in their expressions they have in common the idea that they explore the relationships outside of Id and Superego which are in conflict or on the verge of collapse. Psychological complexes form a basic aspect in the academic studies of determining the fundamental issues relating to life, death, morality and the pain experience within a long period of time horizons.

Mile's Id: Desire and Rebellion

In the novel *Looking for Alaska* by John Green, the main character Miles Halter follows his path with an intuitive urging toward leaving the comfort and normal routine of suburban life. Behind this wish, which at first is disguised in the romanticism of dying words, especially those of Francois Rabelais, we see a more profound psychical need - the call of the Id. What Freud called the Id, works solely in the unconscious and demands instant satisfaction of desires, regardless of whether it is in line with reality or moral or not. In Miles' case, this desire is encapsulated in the phrase "the Great Perhaps." In the first chapter Miles states:

"So, this guy," I said, standing in the doorway of the living room. "François Rabelais. He was this poet. And his last words were 'I go to seek a Great Perhaps.' That's why I'm going. So, I don't have to wait until I die to start seeking a Great Perhaps." (Green, 2005, p. 5)

Here, the search for the "Great Perhaps" is not grounded in any tangible goal. It is conceptual, primitive, and very emotional a classic example of the Id in a textbook manner is the uninhibited desire to seek purpose and stimulation. It is not a calculated academic pursuit but an impulsive reaction to the dullness of his prior environment, where "the only thing worse than having a party that no one attends is having a party attended only by two vastly, deeply uninteresting people." (Green, 2005, p. 4). Another manifestation of the power of the Id is Miles, who immediately and thoughtlessly becomes obsessed with Alaska Young.

He is guided by desire ever since he first encounters her: "The hottest girl in all of human history was standing before me in cutoff jeans and a peach tank top." (Green, 2005, p. 19). It is not the gaze of intellectual admiration, of the moral contemplation, it is instinctive, physical, erotic. Miles does not ask himself whether it is a moral thing to fall in love with a girl, who has a boyfriend, he just wants her. She is transformed into his Great Perhaps - an ideal figure of enthusiasm, risk and tabooed delight. This association shows the predominance of the Id in his emotional make-up and more particularly his passive submission to what Freud would term the dictate of the libido.

We witness further loosening of the moral restraint in Miles as he gets included in the group of the Colonel and participates in drinking, smoking, and playing tricks. A turning point is when he chooses to participate in a prank of hacking the school system. He justifies: "We're just,

you know, wreaking a little havoc.” (Green, 2005, p. 70). The term associated with causing havoc describes the rebel nature of the Id that is completely against the regulatory role of the Superego. Miles is not politically rebelling; he is following his animalistic desire - the adrenaline rush of knowing danger, the euphoria of rules and the need to fit in.

The Id overtakes Miles again in another passage, when Alaska dares him to fantasize about being in bed with her and even starts a kiss: “She leaned forward and gave me a light kiss on the lips. After a second she said, ‘To be continued?’ and walked out.” (Green, 2005, p. 97). It is not that Miles is influenced by the feeling concerning her relationship with Jake or guilt to answer in the way she does. Instead, he slips further into fantasy, this time with a sexual and emotional urge, once more the realm of the Id.

Following the death of Alaska, Miles becomes obsessive in his thoughts as he attempts to unravel the mystery behind her last moments. It is his behavior that can be described as the compulsive repetition that Freud linked to the death drive (Thanatos) as well as a desperate measure by the Id to regain lost pleasure. In the event of loss of a libidinal object Freud thought the Id could become fixated or melancholic. Miles explains: “We had to forgive to survive in the labyrinth.” (Green, 2005, p. 218). But he is unable to forgive and forget, he is still emotionally and instinctively bound. The labyrinth is used as a metaphor to the unresolved maze of his Id-driven desires.

To add more to this psychoanalytical interpretation, we can relate it with other literal works which have been done on the power of the Id. Lord Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde is an advocate of a lifestyle led by desire and he says to Dorian: “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.” (Wilde, 1890/2003, p. 19). This reminds of Miles giving in to the lure of Alaska and the allure of rebellion and fantasy.

Also, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce depicts the analogous experience of Stephen Dedalus in the uncontrolled desire and guilt: He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. (Joyce, 1916/2003). Similar to Stephen, Miles is controlled by his unconscious urges that overshadow reasonableness - a characteristic of the Id driven behavior.

The actions of Miles Halter, in the end, depict a young man whose life is governed by an uncontrolled Id. His voyage of discovery of the Great Perhaps is an excursion into instinct, fantasy and emotion. In his obsessive love to Alaska, his reckless attitudes, and the way he reacts to loss, Miles demonstrates the psychological price one pays to acting on unmediated desire without sufficient checks by the Superego.

The aftermath; confusion, pain and disillusionment highlight the risk of having an unbalanced psyche where the Id is king. While Miles’ Id drives his pursuit of the ‘Great Perhaps,’ Alaska’s Id manifests in a more self-destructive form, culminating in the Freudian death drive.

Alaska Id: Impulse and Destruction

Alaska Young is the classic example of the Freudian psychoanalysis Id-dominated personality. Her personality is extremely passionate, unpredictable and impulsive - all the marks of a psyche dominated by unconscious impulses. Freud described the Id as “the dark, inaccessible part of our personality,” governed by primitive drives such as sex, aggression, and the desire for immediate gratification. The action of Alaska behaves on the following emotional landscapes of thrill-seeking, unresolved trauma, and rebellion against authority, which creates a psychological intensity of living a life dominated by the Id.

Right at the beginning Alaska is presented as a sensual and emotional power. Miles’ first encounter with her is one of awe and instant desire: “She smiled with all the delight of a kid at Christmas who unwraps exactly what she wanted, and I instantly knew that I was unquestionably in love.” (Green, 2005, p. 19). This crush is not brought upon by logical reasoning but rather, is an emotional, gut feel or the Id reacting to an object of desire. The

charisma of Alaska is sensuality charged. Her uncensored actions, smoking suggestively, starting a sexy talk, drinking spontaneously, demonstrate her tendency to act without thinking. In one of the spookiest lines, she tells: “Y’all smoke to enjoy it. I smoke to die.” (Green, 2005, p. 44). This spooky proclamation is linked right up to Freudian Thanatos, or death drive - the unconscious urge to self-destruction. Alaska does not smoke to be rebellious or to be part of the crowd but to seduce destruction. This compulsion is nurtured by her repressed guilt at having caused the death of her mother, her resulting behavior being not self-comforting, but self-destructive. That underneath the seeking of pleasure there is sometimes a more destructive stream that was indicated by Freud when he wrote that the goal of all life is death (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1920).

Her instability in emotions is also a product of unchecked Id. She flits easily back and forth into laughter and melancholy, playfulness and panic. She forgets, and bursts into tears when talking about death to her friends “I forgot. God, how could I forget? It’s today. I can’t believe I forgot.” (Green, 2005, p. 130). This is a psychologically break moment, the Superego (internalized voice of morality) fills her with guilt because she has forgotten the anniversary of the death of her mother. But rather than her processing it logically, her Id gets the best of her - she runs, both emotionally and physically, without any rhyme or reason, or even looking ahead. This is a reflection of what Freud identified as neurotic disintegration of the Ego in the event of being pulled in different directions by the demands of the Id and the Superego.

Another aspect that shows that Alaska thrives in chaos is that she is a prank instigator. When the Colonel is putting in action one of their plans she responds with uncontrolled frustration: “Best day of my life so far, and I’m gonna sleep through it. You ruined it.” (Green, 2005, p. 70). This explosion is not based on proportional disappointment, it is a tantrum, a point of pure dissatisfaction that establishes the intolerance of the Id to unfulfilled desire. Alaska is in fact frequently irritated not by actuality, but by its failure to yield to her wishes.

There is also another quotation which contains the essence of Alaska self-conscious fatalism “I may die young, but at least I’ll die smart.” (Green, 2005, p. 100). Here, rebellion is mixed with resignation. She knows she is doomed to a similar tragic curve, but she accepts it, not in terror, but in the dramatic conviction. And like Dorian Gray in the novel by Wilde, she is the personification of destructive beauty of the indulged impulse: “The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.” (Wilde, 1890/2003, p. 19). Her last riverbed - running out of the campus in the middle of the night drunk and sorrow-stricken is not a bid to draw attention but the final bow to her Id. No words, no thought, no reason - only movement caused by emotional panic. It causes, possibly, her death.

The most striking psychological scenes in *Looking for Alaska* are the product of confrontation between the Id and the Superego - unconscious desire and moral conscience. According to Freud, such a conflict is the source of neurosis, which is devastatingly mirror-polished in the death of Alaska and the falling into guilt and perplexity of Miles.

The trauma, the inability to rescue her mother, becomes the basis of her overwhelming Superego in the case of Alaska. The anniversary date comes around again and she finds she has forgotten, her psyche cracks. The Id runs away in panic and the Superego fills her with guilt: “I forgot. God, how could I forget? It’s today. I can’t believe I forgot.” (Green, 2005 p. 130). Ego mediation does not balance her behavior; it has no rational processing. Her mind is literally ripped to shreds and she runs off into the night, under an impulse that even she does not comprehend.

Miles who has been mainly operating under the influence of the Id in his lustful pursuit of Alaska is overcome with guilt following her death. He is eaten up with what Freud would term Superego punishment “If only I had said something. If only I had stopped her. If only I had known.” (Green, 2005, p. 170). The repetition of this lament shows the torture of the Superego,

senseless, disproportionate, overcharged with moral sufferings. The grieving that Miles goes through is not a ordinary one but a psychic collapse where the guilt (Superego) struggles with the longing (Id) and the Ego is not able to stabilize. He is swallowed up in the Freudian maze of an unrelationship inner contradiction.

Similarly, to that, the break-up of Esther Greenwood with the stress of the clashing psychic powers is seen in a similar work by Sylvia Plath, in her old popular text entitled *The Bell Jar* (Plath, 1963/2005, p. 241). This heartbeat of a mantra resonates with the crude desperation of the Id in the trial of an existential Superego that questions her worth. In a similar observation, Alaska and Esther are conflicting between what they want to do and expected to do in life and the looming sense of guilt and depression.

Id vs Authority: Pranks and Transgressions

Key elements used in plotting the novel by John Green in our case, *Looking for Alaska* include pranks and partying as a means of rebelliousness and cultural landscape of adolescence. They are externalizations of the Id -the Id which encompasses the pleasure, risk, and spontaneity. After more thorough observation, such episodes will not only become an opportunity to shop at leisure the goods of passion and desire but also a complex of negotiations that allows thinking of an organized system, the development of identity and the regulation of emotions. By use of pranks and parties, Green depicts how characters, in the short run, become victims of Id impulses, although they make every effort to set up emotional boundaries and psychological balance between themselves.

Perhaps the finest illustrative examples will be found at the beginning of the storey: the initiation of Miles into the secrets of cigarette smoking and the coexisting violation of the rules and regulations of the institutions at Culver creek. Such episode is not an instance of insubordination performed by the boys on the occasion of smoking beside the lake; it follows a ritual. The overall process of disobedience unites the characters into a unified entity in a collective sense, thus, creating the feeling of belongingness. The pleasure principle operates here, but so does the human need for connection: "We smoked cigarettes together every night down by the lake. I never even liked it, but I loved the idea of it." (Green, 2005, p. 39). In this quote, the focus is on the fact that the act, yet being Id-driven, gratifies more than instinct. It fills a heartfelt void within Miles a desire to want to belong to something bigger. Freud admitted that the Id does not just seeks pleasure in the physical meaning of the word, but also seeks relief from discomfort in this case, the discomfort of loneliness and alienation.

One of the brightest instances which can be analyzed is the main prank performed in honor of Alaska. It is supposed to be done in her memory and spirit but it is carefully planned and executed. Though this plan is prankish and rebellious, there is no chaos and violence in it. No one is hurt as underlined by the Colonel. No one gets expelled. It must be colossal, yet it must be without sin (Green, 2005, p. 175). In this case, enjoyment and mayhem sought by the Id are considered by the means of structure which can be taken as a concession between wild and immoral impulses. The competition suggests that in most cases, even transgression is the product of Superego. The prank brings catharsis, therapeutic value, and retention it implies that the most anti-human practices can be satisfying, the most basic human needs are to be resolved, and to persist.

This opposition of rebellion and emotional need are also present in other literary works. As an example, in *The catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield commits an act that is not driven by evil, yet serves as a defense mechanism. He remarks: "It's funny. Never tell anybody anything. When you do, you begin to miss everyone. He means not Holden is unhappy with a futile way of proving something but his coolness and small rebellion are the results of embodying emotional turmoil as are the tricks of Miles and Alaska that are laced with notions of sadness, the development of identity, and longing, not to mention excitement.

The other mainstay of Culver Creek life, parties, also have similar dualities. We can give an example of the pre-death barn night with Alaska, Miles, and their friends: it is a night of laughter, drinking, telling stories, and exploring sex. It seems to be the Id in action in full on the surface - moving characters towards indulgence. But there is a certain vulnerability to the atmosphere, as well. Women make confessions. Suffering is common. The drinking and jokes mask insecurities and unspoken grief: "We drank wine and smoked and laughed and listened to the rain. It felt like freedom, and maybe it was." (Green, 2005, p. 115). Yet this "freedom" is brief. The following day, Alaska collapses Alaska breakdown occurs, thus, indicating that the supposed liberation was a momentary release. The Id, being released of Superego control, becomes unstable. The party, in its turn, turns into a celebration and a symptom of a psychological collapse.

Like in *Lord of the Flies*, the lack of control over freedom tends to lead not to happiness, but to falling apart. Golding writes: "The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away." (Golding, 1954, p. 82) The same idea is reflected in *Looking for Alaska* where uncontrolled debauchery ultimately leads to anarchy and tragedy. In addition, the novel features characters that are in search of identity by means of such acts. To have fun and to dominate is as much as to lay pranks, so as to obtain a form of allegiance, a kind of emotional solidarity. It is the intellectual nature of these pranks of which Colonel is so proud. To him, rebellion is not anarchy, rather a by-word. Though there be again in this intellectualization of Id-motivated action, the arrangement of such transgressive acts in a relationship of tension, as of a kind of service to the Superego.

This way, pranks, parties, and transgressions in *Looking for Alaska* act not only to represent the playfulness of the teenage. They form a psychological presentation fairly representative of the psychological makeup of the teens, the need to have fun, the possibility of loss, the need to fit in, and the conflict within the inner mindset on the yearning to have and the right to discipline. These experiences, according to Freud, exemplify how the war between the Id and the Superego is constant and the Ego makes all endeavours to become a broker and save the self. Whether there is a call, as in American and English understanding, to obtain freedom, or there is a hidden agenda of having the harmony of the heart, these scenes play a significant part in the progress of the characters or in bringing out the larger picture of the novel as regards to the human condition.

It turns out that the tragedy of the book, and even more, a tragedy of a girl, *Looking for Alaska*, is more about the death of Alaska than about the psychological and emotional injury that this inward human struggle caused. In this case, the Id and Superego are no longer just theoretical concepts, but facts that govern the decision-making process, personality formation and leave no possibility to reverse the outcome.

Alaska's Thanatos

Sigmund Freud later came up with the notion of Thanatos (death drive) to balance out Eros (life instinct). Whereas Eros aims at survival, pleasure and unity, Thanatos aims at stillness, dissolution and finally, death. The action of Alaska Young in the novel *Looking for Alaska* can be considered a textbook example of Thanatos. Her mood shifts, lack of self-control and episodes of deep depression demonstrate an individual tortured by inner guilt and attracted to self-destruction.

One of the most revealing passages comes when Alaska discusses her mother's death: "I didn't call 911. I just watched her die." (Green, 2005, p. 144). The Superego - a moral conscience, which developed in Alaska because of this guilt - tortures her. Her inability to intervene appears to her as an impossible crime that causes a psychological breach, which she is unable to overcome. It is this guilt that powers a self-destructive urge - through excessive drinking, emotional instability and eventually, her unexplained death. "She was sleeping under the

weight of a hundred lives she couldn't live. Or maybe she just didn't want to wake up." (Green, 2005, p. 172). This passage implies the mental fatigue of Alaska, the exhaustion, which according to Freud, is associated with Thanatos. Her suicide or rather murder seems the logical end of this destructive way. To Freud, the death drive does not necessarily have to be conscious but it reveals itself through actions that tend to undermine well-being, sanity, or safety of oneself.

The recklessness, exhibited by Alaska, particularly, the drive into the night, when she knows she would not make it alive, can be viewed as the point when Thanatos takes over Eros. She is engulfed by emotional anguish and guilt and at that point, death appears as punishment and as an escape.

Such inner hell is reflected in the work of Sylvia Plath *The Bell Jar* when Esther Greenwood describes her psychological condition: "The silence depressed me and it was not the silence of silence. It was my own silence." (Plath, 2005, p. 17). This is Plath taking a snap shot of the inner emptiness - a psychological implosion - just as Alaska feels emotionally numb and alienated. Just as Alaska, Esther as well struggles with self-destructive impulses caused by her inner conflict which remains unresolved.

We see a similar instance in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* when the titular character thinks of death not in the context of anger but rather exhaustion with the weight of existence: To die, to sleep / No more, and by a sleep to say good night / To all the kings and queens of England: ay, therein lies the rub, / Because in a sleep of death what dreams may come. (Shakespeare, 1603/1992, 3.1.6466). Alaska, like Hamlet, shrouds her death in ambiguity - is it an act of fate, a lapse of judgment, or a subconscious yielding to the desire for oblivion?

The case of Alaska, interpreted through the Freudian prism, proves to be not merely a personal tragedy but a metaphorical performance of Thanatos the young woman who has been exhausted by the sense of guilt, manipulated by trauma, and eventually destroyed by the subconscious desire of escaping. Her suicide is not the mere closure of her life but the apparent result of a gradual psychological falling.

Following the death of Alaska, the guilt and obsession that Miles experiences may be clearly related to the work of Freud on melancholia (long-lasting grief concerning unconscious conflict).

Conclusion

The present work has demonstrated that, John Green in his work, *Looking for Alaska*, transcends the scope of a normal young adult fictionbook, presenting an in-depth, psychoanalysis of the adolescent stage, in the Freudian Id concept. In analysing the contents of the novel through the characters of Miles "Pudge" Halter and Alaska Young, this paper unveiled the influence of their instinctive urges, emotional highs and lows, as well as unresolved traumas that overwhelm common sense and moral standards. The outcomes have shown that their problem is not an act of being rebellious as the teenagers, but in something deeper and subconscious, that they want to find pleasure, escape, and sense, compromising their stability and sanity. Both tragic and illogical deaths of Alaska and mental illness of Miles are symbolical objects of destructive power of uncontrollable lust and mental weakness of youth.

The paper convincingly proves, through textual analysis, that *Looking for Alaska* ought to be perceived as a psychologically filled book which reveals the very essence of the adolescent turmoil and which depicts the phase of life when the Id and the superego are virtually close to each other, leaving the ego without a crucial influence. This revelation made the reader believe and the scholars believe that the novel was not just a coming-of-age storey, but a novel that is greatly preoccupied with the unconscious and also introduces adolescence as the time when instinct and compulsion take over thought and action.

Further research can proceed on the current work by expanding the psychoanalytic method to study the role of Ego and Superego in the novel, to have a more comprehensive Freudian approach to the novel. It would be also possible to engage in the comparison of other novels by young adult writers that address the identical psychological torment to comprehend the universality of the Id dominance in the adolescence stage. Also, interdisciplinary studies involving psychoanalysis, and education or psychology of adolescents would assist educators, counselors and parents to appreciate emotional and psychological contradiction that young readers may have attributed in the reading. These questions would contribute to the academic debate and improve our comprehension of how the inner processes of the human mind are reflected in the works of literature.

References

- Effendi, M. A. R. (2023). *Miles Halter's personality in Looking for Alaska by John Green* (Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Freud, S. (1917/1957). *Mourning and melancholia*. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 243–258). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1917)
- Freud, S. (1923). *The Ego and the Id*. In J. Strachey et al. (Trans.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIX*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Freud, S. (1930). *Civilization and its discontents*. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of complete work of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 21, pp.57-146) London: Hogarth Press.
- Golding, W. (1954). *Lord of the flies*. Faber & Faber.
- Green, J. (2005). *Looking for Alaska*. Dutton Books.
- Heryani, Y. (2016). Miles's character in *Looking for Alaska*: A psychological perspective. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 2(2), 136–144.
- Ibrati, A. (2018). *Peer and Adolescence Stage Development in John Green's Looking For Alaska* (Bachelor's thesis, Jakarta: Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora UIN Syarif Hidayatullah).
- Johansari, C. A. (2016). *Gender conflict in John Green's Looking for Alaska* (Undergraduate thesis). Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya.
- Joyce, J. (1916/2003). *A portrait of the artist as a young man*. Penguin Classics.
- Lewis, C., Petrone, R., & Sarigianides, S. T. (2016). Acting adolescent? Critical examinations of the youth–adult binary in *Feed* and *Looking for Alaska*. *The ALAN Review*, 43(2), 25–32. <https://doi.org/10.21061/alan.v43i2.a.5>
- Maru, G., Kaya, N. N., & Lolowang, I. S. (2024). Teenage social life in Green's *Looking for Alaska*: A psychoanalytic approach. *SoCul International Journal of Research in Social Cultural Issues*, 3(6), 1063–1070. <https://doi.org/10.53682/soculijrcsscli.v3i6.8550>
- Mawaddah, F. (2023). *Miles' personality development in John Green's Looking For Alaska* (Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Plath, S. (1963/2005). *The bell jar*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- Salinger, J. D. (1951/2019). *The catcher in the rye*. Little, Brown and Company.
- Shakespeare, W. (1603/1992). *Hamlet*. (S. Greenblatt, Ed.). W. W. Norton.
- Wilde, O. (1890/2003). *The picture of Dorian Gray*. Penguin Classics.