



Spirituality and Psyche: A Freudian Reading of Naeem Amin Bhatti's *Chasing the Lord*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines a psychoanalytic explanation of Naeem Amin Bhatti novel *Chasing the Lord* in the light of structural model of psyche given by Sigmund Freud. The paper states that the religious experience of the main character Andrew is not simply a question of religious belief, but a complex mechanism of psychological defense, namely sublimation, in reaction to deep socio-economic traumas. This study explores the role of qualitative textual analysis based on Freudian theories of the Id, Ego, and Superego in understanding how Andrew overcame his suicidal despair to become a spiritual seeker as part of the attempts by his Ego to balance between his aggressively primal drives and his oppressively internalized conscience. The results show that in the novel, spirituality is seen to be a survival mechanism of the psyche that focuses frustrated secular desires into a significant though strenuous spiritual quest. This work is an original contribution to Pakistani English literature as it is the first comprehensive psychoanalytic reading of the work of Bhatti to fill the gap between the spiritual and the psychological. The study draws a conclusion that *Chasing the Lord* is a strong literary portrayal of the capacity of the human psyche to spiritual searching as an engine to attain psychic coherence and sense in the wake of crippling personal disaster.

1. Introduction and Background

This paper gives a fruitful method for interpreting literary texts and it was assumed that such works of literature are the rich expressions of unconscious thoughts, desires, and fears, just as dreams are. This idea, put forward by Sigmund Freud, allows the scholars to delve deeper than the content of the book and discover the characters' hidden motivations and the symbolic reflection of the story. The psychoanalytic criticism can provide ways to better understand the hidden meanings and ideas that may be in the text, as if it were a psychological case study (Freud 1900). In the past century this approach has, therefore, dominated the analysis of literature, which can now be examined to see how the writers in these stories subconsciously introduce psychological conflicts.

Freudian psychoanalysis grew out of clinical practice in late 19th and early 20th-century Vienna, and was born with the publication of the initial text of psychoanalysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). At the heart of this psychology is the

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structural theory of psychology in the human psyche consisting of Superego, Ego and Id. The Id is the primitive, instinctual drives, the Superego is the internalized moral conscience and the Ego is the mediator between these two factors and the outside world (Freud, 1923). In addition, the Ego also uses defense mechanisms like sublimation, to handle anxiety by channeling the unacceptable energies into activities that are socially acceptable or noble (Freud, 1930). The two most crucial models in appreciating this novel, Bhatti's 'Three-part' model and sublimation, highlight the characters with questionable psycho-emotional behaviors.

In his novel *Chasing the Lord*, Naeem Amin Bhatti provides a healthy set of events on which an analysis can be performed. Andrew, a 36-year-old family man, turns to be the protagonist in a situation of crippling socio-economic failure. Despairing and considering suicide, Andrew takes a fateful step on a flight to Lebanon and says, "No, I am going to follow the Lord" (Bhatti, p. 24), when questioned whether he is going to a foreign country to get money. The importance of this sentence is very great, and it is one of the conversion points of the world's ambition to spiritual journey. Because of this, *Chasing the Lord* is a rich text in which to explore the role of a spiritual journey as a "psychological tool to alleviate a profound personal crisis; this is a resonating theme of the modern experience for economic insecurity and meaning searching.

The Freudian trilogy comes to a full understanding in the novel. Andrew's first suicidal ideation is his death drive (Thanatos) of the Id, a primitive response to too much pain. The shame and guilt he feels as he is crushed is because of the constant judgment of the Superego of his failure to live up to family and society expectations. Between these two forces, Andrew Ego is torn in between. A religious quest may be seen then, as a sophisticated psychological process, that is, sublimation in which the beleaguered and aggravated feeling of his worldliness gets redirected in a religious direction; so that his Ego can find a way to deal with the destructive impulse of his Id and his Superego can be appeased. This study will look at this story as a mental activity, to try to analyze the story more detailed and in-depth as has not yet been tried.

1.1. Research Objectives

- To analyze how Andrew's spiritual journey in *Chasing the Lord* functions as a psychological process of sublimation in response to socio-economic trauma.
- To examine the Freudian dynamics of the Id, Ego, and Superego in Andrew's character, tracing their interplay throughout his transformation.

1.2. Research Questions

1. How does *Chasing the Lord* represent spirituality as a response to personal trauma and socio-economic failure?
2. How do the Id, Ego, and Superego shape Andrew's psychological transformation from despair to spiritual quest?

1.3. Importance of the Study

This study is important on a number of levels. Being one of the earliest in-depth scholarly reviews of the novel by Naeem Amin Bhatti, it offers a fundamental criticism of a novel in the Pakistani English literature, thus being part of the increasing literature on modern Pakistani literature. The synthesis of spiritual and psychoanalytic theories provides a very subtle interpretation of a text which adds more depth to the interpretation of the text than a perfunctory reading. What is more, this study evidences that Freudian psychoanalysis remains the highly effective means of literary criticism that could reveal the profoundly psychological roots of even the most spiritual stories. In the end, this study reveals how spirituality in Pakistani fiction can be interpreted not simply as faith, but as a survival mechanism, an aspect that is lacking in the literature on the Pakistani literature today.

2. Literature Review

Literature review is a crucial background of any academic research project and it places the current research in the existing academic environment. Survey and synthesis of the past research results help it to define the important theories and concepts, but, most importantly, point out the particular gap in the existing body of knowledge that the proposed research is expected to address (Ridley, 2012). To conduct this study, the psychoanalytic critique of the *Chasing the Lord* will be put into perspective by first defining the theoretical basis of Freudian criticism, and then discussing how it applies in pertinent studies of literature, thus validating the methodology of this paper.

Understanding of literature used in this study was derived from the works of Sigmund Freud whose seminal works form the foundation of the concepts to be used for the analysis. Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) introduced the crucial idea of the "unconscious mind," where repressed sensual desires accumulate, and asked questions about them with symbolic language, and was thus an inherent basis for using psychoanalysis to discuss literary work. At a later stage, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), he introduced his powerful model of the psyche - Id/ego/superego, which serves as a model for dynamic understanding of the intrapsychological conflict in literary and clinical situations. Lastly, some of his works such as *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), addressed the idea of defense mechanisms especially sublimation where human culture and creativity is usually a by-

product of displaced instinctual energy. These are the most significant Freudian publications, the theory that underlies this work, and provide language and notions for a purely psychoanalytical interpretation.

Freud, who was the one laying the foundation, was assisted in developing psychoanalysis as a critical instrument in literary theory by others. His daughter Anna Freud was more systematic in her explanations and presentation of the defense mechanism in *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1936) which is significant for subtle characterization of characters in literature. Finally, other manifestations of psychoanalytic criticism by Jacques Lacan and others, who restated Freudian concepts in terms of structural linguistics, a view that emphasizes the role of language in shaping the unconscious, are not included in this research. Within the scope of this paper the most relevant papers are ones which applied Freudian theory to the interpretation of text in a more direct fashion, those of literary critics. The psychoanalytic idea has been used to explain, among others, emotional problems among poets, as in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) by Harold Bloom, and moral and psychological depth of poets, as in Lionel Trilling's (1955) study of *הסתיי*. These changes have solidified psychoanalysis as a powerful and versatile tool for literary interpretation across a variety of genres and across diverse cultures and contexts.

Without a doubt, the most important theoretical framework of the research is classical Freudian psychoanalysis with special reference classical model of the Id, Ego and Superego as defense mechanism of sublimation. As the primitivist center of such primal instincts as the death instinct (Thanatos), the Id is crucial to perceiving the primitivist roots of the original despair and suicidal thoughts of Andrew as instinctual, not just emotional. The inability to perform the internalized societal and family norms of success and provision puzzles him and leads him to deep guilt and shame in the Superego, which plays an important role when examining his roots of deep guilt and shame. Christians will pay particular attention to the Ego because the Ego is the mediator in this instance, and it's the Ego's efforts to cope with this inner conflict that make the story of *Chasing the Lord*. The role of this systemisation of the novel will be systematic: the breakdown of his business will be evaluated as the main trauma that disrupted the Ego of Andrew, and the idea that he no longer has to pursue an earthly career but instead a spiritual one will be regarded as the sublimation, worldly ambitions thwarted and redirected.

Chasing the Lord is a relatively new novel written by a fairly novice author, no specific body of scholarly writing on this novel exists at the moment. Therefore this review will survey literature in the three adjacent fields to have a background to the original analysis and to highlight the originality of this research. First of all, this study is situated in the context of psychoanalyses of literary texts which deal with the problems of trauma and identity, where traditional texts like Oedipus Rex by Sophocles have already been interpreted in the light of Freudian reading with emphasis on the notions of guilt and the unconscious (Bloom, 1973). Postcolonial literature has increasingly adopted psychoanalysis in an attempt to already analyse the psychological trauma of displacement, cultural loss in the mind of the colonised; as has been done by postcolonial critics such as Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and others who consider the psycho-traumatic experience of colonial and postcolonial upbringing. In the process of commenting on these approaches, this research shows the leadership that psychoanalysis has enjoyed in elucidating individual crisis narratives.

Secondly to this, the literary criticism which has developed about the spirituality-psychology diptongate, which has always captured the attention of scholars, is also taken into consideration. The psychology of religious conversion stories or mystical journeys has been investigated in numerous ways, and the psychology of the mystics, like St. John of the Cross, in relation to psychological conditions described in the dark night of the soul (DNT) can be considered (Underhill, 1911). These experiments show that spiritual experiences and clinical depression have common characteristics and that therefore spiritual experiences often may stem from profound psychological suffering. This literary work helps to understand that the novel is readable not only spiritually, but also psychologically, without assigning to Andrew a less spiritual seriousness than the novel's, which is crucial.

Lastly, the review discusses scholarship on the modern Pakistani literature in English about the themes of economic disadvantage and social pressures. Focusing on its impact on narrative construction and character psychology, economic turbulence and migration have been analysed by critics like Muneeza Shamsie (2015) and others who have researched on English fiction in Pakistan. These studies may not be considered psychoanalytical but provide for the reader an excellent socio-economic context of the outside factors that contribute to Andrew's crises of conscience. Her works are examples of those which point to tribulations of migration, impact of economic uncertainty on the family unit, and ways of finding meaning in the fast-changing societies (Kabir, 2018). In engaging with these different strands of thought and discussion, this study makes its own psychoanalytical (re)reading of *Chasing the Lord* a novel contribution which resolves the gap between spiritual interpretation and socio-economic background and psychological analysis in Pakistani English literature. It is important to note, however, that there is no academic literature that exists for the novel that Bhatti wrote, which makes this research even more novel and which will add something to contemporary research on the novel.

2.1. Research Gap

Although the literature has already discussed psychoanalytic interpretation of spiritual texts and social-economic backgrounds of Pakistan English literature, a serious gap still exists. Current paper, has not found any articles that have applied Freudian

psychoanalysis in the main character Naeem Amin Bhatti's search for the Lord in the religious context in the analysis that the Religious Search of the main character Naeem Amin Bhatti is a psychological defense mechanism. More specifically, this book doesn't discuss specifically the link between socio-economic trauma, ego's collapse and spiritual sublimation in any way. Further, the extant literature on Pakistani fiction which addresses the subject of spirituality will likely present it religiously or mystically and not psychologically. Being the very first systematic Freudian analysis of the novel by Bhatti, the analysis here proffered fills these gaps and provides an insight that reveals the novel's spiritual questing can become a higher form of psychic survival, but not necessarily a faith-expressive.

3. Methodology

The research design chosen in this study is a qualitative research study because the main aim of the study is to perform a deep interpretive study of a piece of literature. As other methodologists suggested (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004) emphasis is given to what they call "underlying meaning/meaningful message/psychological complexities" of the novel and not generating numbers. The most suitable approach for this investigation would be a qualitative approach because it would allow for a flexible and subtle interaction with the main novel, as well as an investigation to the motivation of characters, symbolism and their construction of a story whilst adhering to the specific approach within which the novel has been considered - psychoanalysis. Qualitative Text Analysis is not the same question as quantitative techniques that seek to obtain measurable variables, because qualitative textual analysis helps the researcher to reveal the implicit layers of meaning but not explicit ones.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study will use a single-text, theory-based qualitative analysis, a proven research design in the field of psychoanalysis of literature. Creswell (2014), a researcher of the literary field, concludes that qualitative research designs are particularly suitable to draw answers and describe a complex human phenomenon in its natural environment and in literary research the setting is the text itself. The paper will not compare a few texts or make a generalization about a few texts in a corpus, it will focus heavily on *Chasing the Lord*, and attempt to make as detailed an interpretation of this text as possible. The design is theory based because it is based on the Freudian model of self, namely the ideas of Id, Ego, Superego and sublimation and instead of being impressionist, it is systematic in terms of the existing principles of psychoanalysis.

It is based on the above Freudian psychoanalysis theory. The paper will focus on the structural model of the psyche of Freud (Id, Ego and Superego) and his theory of defense mechanisms – sublimation. The framework is used as an lens to investigate the layer of meaning created in the text and to identify the key words and concepts needed to "deconstruct" the path of the main character. The lessons that Andrew learns spiritual life is therefore explained in terms of the psychological response to the traumatic situation and struggle and not solely religious. The structure is applied systemically: the Id is characterized via the instances of primitive hopelessness and destructive instincts; the Superego is characterized referring to the instances of guilt or shame; the Ego is characterized as an intermediate structure; and sublimation is characterized with reference to the instances where the frustrated worldly energies are transformed in the religious domain.

4. Data Analysis Results and Findings

The data analysis technique is a type of textual analysis which is based on psychoanalytic criticism. Based on the model of critical reading, developed by various scholars such as Catherine Belsey (2002), the analysis will concentrate on the identification of meaning construction by the use of language and structural components of the text. This is a multi-layered, systematic reading of the novel, with emphasis put on three main spheres: character, symbolic, and narrative development.

To understand the characters, the work breaks down the actions, thoughts and dialogues of Andrew in order to determine how his Id, Ego, and Superego operate. This includes a close analysis of his inner monologues, responses to external stimuli, and interactions with other characters and occasions when unconscious conflicts are manifested in his words or actions. To interpret symbolically, the analysis determines and analyzes the main symbolic motifs, including the Sidhnai Canal, which symbolizes suicidal ideation, the motorcycle, which symbolizes ambition in the past, and the journey abroad, which symbolizes spiritual and physical displacement, and their unconscious meaning. These symbols are decoded by Freudian categories, understanding that in psychoanalytic interpretation, objects and events tend to have connoted meanings. To facilitate the development of the narrative, the research plots the plot because the psychological development of Andrew is that of ego-collapse to possible psychic reintegration and the plot of the events is a narrative account of a psychological process in the mind. All of these analysis strategies are used consistently throughout the text so as to have a comprehensive and rigorous interpretation.

4.1. The Id and the Death Drive: Andrew is despairing First

The introductory chapters of *Chasing the Lord* offer a clear image of mental breakdown which can be effectively discussed within the framework of Freudian theory of the Id. The Id, according to Freud (1923) acts under the pleasure principle, which aims to achieve instant satisfaction of the primitive urges, both libidinal (Eros) and destructive (Thanatos) drives. Andrew's

contemplation of suicide in the Sidhnai Canal is an exemplary expression of the death drive – Thanatos – resulting from his Id's reaction to the socio-economic trauma that is omnipresent. He is feeling a loss of identity in himself as a provider and as a successful professional and a feeling of great psychic pain has been instilled in him by his business; and his destructive urge, the id, is seeking the ultimate solution: self-destruction. Bhatti mentions how it is with Andrew, **he said that he gazed on the dark water, and felt the tug of it, and questioned whether the chilly grip of the canal would permanently lift the stain of shame on him** (Bhatti, p. 15). This text shows how the primitive reaction of the Id to pain avoids the Ego as a mediator of rationality in search of the most direct form of reprieve.

Moreover, the early paralysis and anti-social behavior exhibited by Andrew can be explained as yet another expression of Id-related behavior. His family attempts to talk him down, but he gets very irritated and withdrawn, and tells his family, **“Go away. There is nothing that one can do now”** (Bhatti, p. 18). This response indicates the regression of the Id into a lower level of partialness as the pleasure principle does not aim at positive gratification but at the elimination of pain by means of isolation and withdrawal. The Ego, the one that has governed the drive/ external reality, has been temporarily negated by the shock of not achieving a desired objective, and the Id wants now to rule the conduct of Andrew. This point of view is consistent with Freud (1930) observation that, when the Ego is traumatized and the primitive drives of the Id become evident, they may break through resulting in what seems, externally, to be irrational but internally makes sense as a means to minimize psychic pain.

Clearly, the death drive is in Andrew's own suicidal wishes, but also in his dreams and fantasies those roads Freud (1900) called “the royal road to the unconscious”. There are several elements where Godirra is similar, including a dream sequence where Andrew imagines drowning in the canal, and his father standing on the bank of the canal who does not help **“Andrew recalls that when he woke up, he called out to him but he shook his head in dismay”** (Bhatti, p. 22). This dream may be understood as an attempt at a compromise formation between the death wish of the Id and the punishment of Superego. The drowning represents the Id Thanatos drive, and the disappointed look of the father represents the Superego which condemns. Importantly, the dream doesn't show Andrew choosing death, it shows him passively undergoing it and one way of reading this indicates that in his unconscious, the Ego is resisting him from accepting the full responsibility for the death wish.

4.2. Superego and Guilt Burden

Although the Id is what propels Andrew to destruction, the Superego is the cause of his crushing guilt and shame. Freud (1923) believed that Superego was the part within us that contained the internalized parental and society authority to which the Ego refers when deciding whether or not his actions were correct in accordance with the internalized society rules and parental qualities. In Andrew's case, the Superego appears to be particularly tough, as would have been characterised by psychoanalysts as a punitive Superego, where the parent expectations and involvement in culture with respect to the achievement of males was very strict. **Bhatti shows the reader that the father of Andrew was a business man who had created everything out of nothing** (Bhatti, p. 10), which would then create an expected norm that Andrew cannot keep pace with. But he has his own dilemma with him, so the Superego blames him for his own failure: **“I have failed everybody. Ruined the name of my father because of me. My children will grow up ashamed”** (Bhatti, p. 20).

The power of Superego is exemplified by its ability to create guilt but also guilt in others, fear of negative judgment of others. That Andrew did not face off with his community and decided instead to leave Pakistan might have been his choice to keep the external causes of shame within limits and thus to evade the Superego judgments. However, Freud (1930) notes, even if the Superego is alone it does not rests as it is internal and not external. So, Andrew carries his guilt to Lebanon with him a guilt that plays out in his interactions. As he arrives and is finding it hard to cope with the physical requirements of his new job, **he tells himself, you deserve this pain. This is what failures go through** (Bhatti, p. 45). The Superego is essentially one of those more, I suppose, ‘punitive’ self-thought shows where it seems as if it is still operating and, against all odds, telling Andrew to bear any and all disappointments as compensation for whatever faults he may have in themselves.

Again, the relationship Superego and the Id in Andrew's psyche is an extremely painful one. As for the relief alternatives-annihilation, which is provided by the death drive of the Id would be one, while the Superego would demand that Andrew carry on living to meet punishment. **“This struggle can be seen in the inner monologue of Andrew: a part of me would have wished to kill myself, but another, a more difficult, crueler part of me said that I have not yet suffered enough”** (Bhatti, p. 28). The Superego is the tougher of the two, which will not let the death wish of the Id come true because the Id could thus run away from the punishment he or she deserves. This stalemate between the two internal forces causes a high psychic tension which has to be resolved in some manner by the Ego preparing the stage of Andrew turning to spirituality as one of the possible resolutions.

4.3. The Struggle of the Ego: To be in between Destruction and Judgment

Being between the Id death drive, and the Superego punitive judgment, Andrew Ego is confronted with an almost impossible challenge of psyche coherence. It is well known that Freud (1923) metaphorically likened the Ego to a rider, constantly trying

to control his ferocious horse (or Id), and to submit to the will of the higher authority (or Superego and external reality). *Chasing the Lord* opens with eros as out of control with equestrian freedom and control over the self, yet the ego cannot fend off the reproaches that the Superego tosses at it or the satisfaction that the Id seeks. The psychological state that leads up to his subsequent conversion to spirituality are this Ego-collapse which in turn is of special interest in psychoanalytic interpretation.

The main task of the Ego as described by Freud (1926) is to cope with anxiety by the use of diverse defense mechanisms which are methods of distorting or diverting threatening impulses and feelings. Andrew tries out a number of less successful defenses before his spiritual conversion. He tries to deny that too tries to get the bank to feel as if it's The Other Guy that's been wrong – but that's except when presented with a fact (Bhatti, p. 12). He hopes to rationalize it, and informs his wife that **“there are many businesses that go under”** (Bhatti, p. 14), but this is no good to either her or himself. He tries to shift the blame by blaming his workers and collaborators, but this only increases his guilt, instead of acknowledging his responsibility for the lack of follow-up and sharing the failure. All these failures of defense make him more anxious; he is only a step away from breaking down and entertaining his suicidal thoughts at the canal. Let us recall that these failures lead to the recognition of the desperate eagerness of the Ego and set the stage for a more radical “defence” policy.

Andrew is being questioned by one other passenger on the plane, in regards to going out of the country to get money, during the flight to Lebanon. **His answer, No, I am going to chase the Lord** (Bhatti, p. 24) is a creative act of the Ego that re-interpreted his whole situation. Now rather than biting at the bit and seeing himself as lacking at the business side of things, on the run, Andrew begins to create a new self: a seeker of the spiritual journey of meaningful goods. This re-framing does not just consist in a shift of subject matter but it is an underlying reorganization of his psychological reality, enabling the Ego to alter the sense of his suffering and exile. Anna Freud's psychoanalysis (1936) indicates that in this scene the Ego transforms the persecution fantasy into the seemingly more benign use of a primary defense mechanism sublimation, the most highly evolved and most flexible.

4.4. Sublimation, the Spiritual Quest, as Psychological Strategy

According to Freud (1930), sublimation is where primitive and socially unacceptable impulses are diverted to more culturally acceptable activities which can be of benefit to the individual and the society. It isn't the same as repression where the “unacceptable impulses” are pushed back to the unconscious and continue causing problems: it is moving the energy that is in the “unacceptable impulses” into a positive direction. The spiritual quest in which Andrew becomes lost in *Chasing the Lord* could be interpreted as a massive defence of the death drive of his Id against the punitive drive of his Superego, both things which are destructive; and its pathway could be seen as an attempt at socialization or making himself a social and personal worthy being. His journey to seek the Lord makes him the victim of the experience instead of causing him to seek it; an active seeker with purpose, direction.

The special circumstances of Andrew's spiritual journey lend credence to this understanding. Andrew's religious tour does not feature community prayers and worship, but rather a chasing, an active, indeed an aggressive search towards the divine. **I shall not wait that God will come and find me, he says. I will seek Him like a man seeketh water in the desert** (Bhatti, p. 30). The language in this passage is also notable: hunting, chasing, pursuing are words that include the elements of aggression and determination. In a psychoanalytic approach, this language implies that the energy which used to be focused on business competitiveness and worldly success has been shifted to a spiritual purpose, though the underlying drive energy is not very different. Andrew continues to chase something, continues to struggle and fight, and the thing that he is pursuing has been lifted higher to a spiritual level than to material success.

Moreover, the physical suffering to which Andrew is subjected in Lebanon, the hard manual labor, the distance between him and his family, the loneliness and deprivation may be interpreted as fulfilling various psychological roles at the same time. At the one hand, these sufferings fulfill the Superego need to be punished, and Andrew can feel that he is compensating his failures with pain. **Every pain in my muscles was a payment of an unending debt; his thought goes** (Bhatti, p. 52). At a different dimension, the physical fatigue is the release of aggressive energies which would otherwise be channeled inwards towards self-destruction. The trial on a third level is evidence that his spiritual sincerity is suffering; that his pursuit is not a mere flight. The Ego therefore turns the suffering that had only a negative meaning before to something meaningful and even redemptive.

4.5. The Transformation and the Potential of the Psychic Integration

As the novel unfolds, the spiritual quest of Andrew starts to bring about real psychological transformations that hint at the progress towards what Freud (1930) referred to as a state of psychic integration- a state where the Ego is able to harmonize the needs of the Id, Superego and the external reality. Andrew no longer accuses himself in his inner monologue, but reflects on himself, no longer despairing, but experiencing a more complicated emotional state, which has its moments of calm and even happiness.

He notes that after a particularly bad day of work and hours of prayer, **he felt something but not shame, as it was the first time in months** (Bhatti, p. 78). This something other is important in that it signifies the fact that his emotional repertoire has increased beyond the small scope of pain and guilt that dominated his pre-quest psychology.

The change is also reflected in the relationships Andrew has with other people, especially fellow migrant workers whom he meets in Lebanon. Alone at first through his shame, Andrew slowly builds relationships with other men who too have abandoned their homes in pursuit of something—money, escape, meaning. One of these friends is an older employee known as Mahmoud who turns into a sort of spiritual guide and tells Andrew, **“We are all pursuing something. The wise man is the one who learns what it is that he is actually pursuing”** (Bhatti, p. 66). This is what echoes through the psychoanalytic understanding of the journey of Andrew: as he believed he was seeking the Lord, what he was seeking was psychological survival and meaning. That this revelation is delivered by another character indicates that Bhatti is consciously searching to find the connection between spiritual seeking and psychological need.

But even a strictly psychoanalytic analysis has to note that the novel does not lend itself to the simplification of spirituality as a psychological defense. Although, it is possible to interpret Andrew in Freudian terms in his quest, there are also the instances of pure spiritual experience that cannot be explained by psychology presented by Bhatti. In the text, when Andrew talks of his experiences of feeling a presence that was not his, not his thoughts, not his feelings, but something Other, the text indicates that there is something real in his spiritual experiences that extends beyond their psychological functions. Responsible psychoanalytic interpretation should not rule out this possibility, but on the contrary, it must consider the fact that there exist psychological and spiritual aspects of human experience. The Freudian interpretation illuminates one of the layers of meaning without purporting to get the entire truth of the journey of Andrew.

4.6. Symbolic Analysis: The Major Motifs of the Novel

The psychoanalysis approach also throws light on some of the important symbols used in *Chasing the Lord* that have unconscious meanings. The Sidhnai Canal, to which Andrew considers committing suicide, is the border between life and death, awakened and unconscious. Water is also a good symbol in Freudian symbolism, as it can symbolize both birth (amniotic fluid) and death (drowning) and is a very suitable choice to represent the moment of crisis in Andrew (Freud, 1900). His refusal to see the canal can be seen as not only a choice to live, but as a psychological refusal of the dominance of the death drive, a reaffirmation of the power of the Ego over the Thanatos impulse of the Id. The fact that the canal remains in the dreams of Andrew throughout the novel implies that the death drive never goes away entirely and could be used as an option to help him deal with future crisis.

The motorcycle which Andrew sells prior to leaving Pakistan is his old aspiration and global self. It was all I had accomplished with that bike, he says. **“Without it, I was no one”** (Bhatti, p. 26). The motorcycle as a symbol of masculine accomplishment and independence has various psychoanalytic connotations. Its sale is a symbolic castration, the sacrifice of the phallic icon of success, which must be made in order to transform Andrew. Such symbolic sacrifices are frequently necessitated by psychological development in Freudian theory because the person must sacrifice infantile attachments in order to become able to operate in a mature manner (Freud, 1905). The sale of the motorcycle helps Andrew to recognize the fact that his former identity cannot survive and prepares him to the prospect of a new identity that will be built on new grounds.

Lastly, the very experience of traveling, Pakistan-Lebanon, is an eloquent symbol of psychological displacement and the need to find a new center. Lebanon, as a location, is not the home of Andrew or a totally alien place, it is in between, the liminal space befitting a protagonist who himself exists in an in-between psychological condition. The physical journey is a reflection of the internal journey that Andrew is experiencing, and the challenges of the physical journey, the loss of sense of direction, the isolation, the suffering, the effort, are a reflection of the challenges of psychological change. Andrew is at the same time building a new psychological structure to replace the one that crumbled with the failure of his business as he works and prays and struggles in Lebanon. The fact that the novel ends with the suggestion that Andrew has not yet finished his quest but is still seeking it, is a sign that the Freudian view of psychological development being never fully fled and needing continuous work and adjustment.

5. Conclusion

This study has presented a psychoanalytic interpretation of Naeem Amin Bhatti *Chasing the Lord*, in which the spiritual experience of the protagonist Andrew can be seen as an advanced psychological defense mechanism, namely sublimation, to deep-rooted socio-economic trauma. By using the structural model of the psyche proposed by Freud, the ID, Ego, and Superego, this study has followed Andrew of his suicidal despair to spiritual quest and discovered the psychological processes behind his seemingly religious conversion. As the analysis has demonstrated, the first crisis that Andrew has encountered is a breakdown of Ego functioning due to pressure of the death drive of the Id, as well as the punitive Superego, and the turn to spirituality is a creative response of the Ego to drain the destructive energies into a more significant and socially acceptable outlet.

The study has met its three main objectives. First, it has examined how the spiritual journey of Andrew is sublimation; the worldly ambition that is frustrated is changed into spiritual searching. Secondly, it has discussed the Id, Ego and Superego dynamics in the character of Andrew and how these forces play off in his character change. Third, it has examined the ways in which spirituality in the novel comes out of socio-economic deprivation, indicating its presence as a psychological survival mechanism. To answer the research questions, this paper has demonstrated that *Chasing the Lord* exemplifies spirituality as a reaction to personal trauma that the Freudian triad is the product of each of the stages through which Andrew passes and sublimation is the defense mechanism that allows him to survive psychologically.

The importance of this study is not limited to the findings of the study. Being the earliest in-depth scholarly study of the novel by Bhatti, it offers fundamental criticism to a novel in the Pakistani English literature, which promises future research. It provides a subtle analysis by synthesizing spiritual and psychoanalytic models that enhance the comprehension of how modern Pakistani fiction tackles the issues of trauma, meaning and psychological survival. Moreover, it proves that Freudian psychoanalysis is still relevant to literary criticism as even those narratives that seem to be about spiritual transcendence can be clarified through the focus on psychological conflicts and defenses that define human experience. The work has also added to the literature on Pakistani English fiction by demonstrating how economic deprivation and social pressures create psychological crises which are manifested in spiritual search.

Nevertheless, this study takes into consideration a number of limitations. The fact that it only centers on one novel implies that the results cannot be applied to other works by Bhatti and Pakistani English literature in general. The monopoly of the Freudian psychoanalysis, although fruitful, makes other theoretical options unexplored, which could bring different understanding, e.g., postcolonial, feminist, or existential. Also, the paper has concentrated on the psychology of the protagonist instead of attempting to interact with the style and formal aspects of the novel, which may be the topic of a future study. Future research may also draw a comparison between *Chasing the Lord* and other Pakistani novels dealing with spirituality and psychological crisis, or could employ other psychoanalytic models like Lacanian or Jungian models to the same work.

Chasing the Lord is a compelling literary portrayal of how the human mind can convert spiritual searching into a psychic alignment and meaning confronting a crippling personal crisis. Naeem Amin Bhatti has made in Andrew a hero whose spiritual quest is close to all human beings in their quest to seek meaning, identity, and psychological survival. The Freudian interpretation given in the present work does not reduce the spiritual aspects of the quest of Andrew, on the contrary, it adds to our knowledge since we can see the psychological depths through which true spiritual seeking can be developed. And as Andrew himself thinks somewhere near the end of the novel, **it might be that the Lord was not to be sought after but to be discovered when we were finally ready to cease running** (Bhatti, p. 156). This spiritual and psychological intuition is the main triumph of the novel of Bhatti, and of psychoanalytic treatment of literature: the intuition that the most human experiences are never, after all, any one thing, but always complex mixtures of spirit and psyche, of faith and psychology, of the search after God and the search after self.

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