

# Psychoanalysis of gordon gekko psychology essay



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The paper will describe a character, Gordon Gekko from Wall Street (Edwin & Stone, 1987) from a psychoanalytic perspective of Dr. Sigmund Freud. This paper will pair several quotes of Gordon Gekko with the appropriate perceived diagnosed disorder. In particular, this will illustrate Gekko's two personality disorders: Antisocial Personality Disorder and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder. The paper will conclude by summarizing these faults and then present an opinion of how well these theories describe the person in question.

Bud Fox, a stockbroker has been relentless in arranging a meeting with his hero Gordon Gekko. He has called his office, every day, for over a month, but his attempts have failed miserably. He notices that it is Gordon's birthday and as a final effort to get to the man he admires he pays a visit to Gordon's offices in Manhattan. Armed with a box of the finest and most expensive Cuban cigars Bud makes his way to the receptionist. She returns after delivering the cigars and has Bud take a seat. After an hour has passed, she tells Bud he has five minutes with Mr. Gekko. His persistence and desperation to get to the top and work with the person he admires has now come down to this moment.

As Bud walks into the office, he notices it is everything he could have imagined. The furniture, latest computer systems and view of downtown Manhattan give him a taste of the life he so desperately wants. Gordon positioned behind his desk is talking on the phone as Bud is admiring his surroundings. Gordon finally acknowledges Bud and asks him his intentions. Bud is there to pitch stocks to Gordon in hopes of landing him as a client, but quickly realizes he is not prepared as Gordon constantly calls his

recommendations crap and is unimpressed. He finally tells Bud to give him something or get out. Knowing that he is losing his opportunity, Bud gives Gordon insider information on a stock that he received from his father the day before on an airline business his father works for. Gordon has Bud leave with the understanding he will think about it. Later that day Gordon calls Bud and places an order for the stock.

After doing research on Bud, Gordon understands how Bud became aware of the insider information. He is impressed with the move and takes Bud under his wing, but challenges him to find new information at all costs on future stock deals and hostile takeovers. He tells Bud his five hundred dollar suits are not up to par and to invest in new ones. As more inside deals go through, Gordon takes Bud further into his world. The relationship deepens as Bud enjoys the perks and lifestyle he is creating by working for Gordon. Bud becomes wealthy, moves into an apartment, nicer office and gets the woman of his dreams. All of this was obtained through dealings with Gordon, and Mr. Gekko reminds him who the superior man is every step of the way.

The relationship takes a turn for the worse when Bud finds out that Gordon is now using the same unethical business practices with his father's airline company. Bud decides to manipulate the stock in order to push Gordon to sell instead of buy. Even though he knows that by doing this, he will lose everything. After realizing he was played, Gordon confronts Bud in Central Park, and both physically and verbally assaults him. Gordon lets Bud know that he is still the most powerful man on Wall Street, and he is now relegated to nothing.

Using Freud's psychoanalytical approach and the incorporation of which therapeutic approach should be employed in concern to the psychoanalysis of Gordon Gekko from the film Wall Street (Edwin & Stone, 1987) will be twofold: 1) diagnosis, and 2) practical therapy. First, point out the evident faults; next, create a conscious awareness of these faults and determine a means by which to work around these obstacles. Dr. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical approach is fundamentally set around human behaviors and the unconscious. He believes humans are somehow driven by instincts and these all originate in the unconscious (Ridgeway, 2007). Based upon that, from A Glossary of Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts (Moore, 1967), here are the three applications of Psychoanalysis: a method of investigation of the mind and the way one thinks; a systematized set of theories about human behavior; method of treatment of psychological or emotional illness.

With this in mind, Gordon Gekko is now set to experience Dr. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical approach. From the following quote within the film a duality of psychoanalytical constituents becomes evident: " In the last seven deals that I've been involved with, there were 2. 5 million stockholders who have made a pretax profit of 12 billion dollars. Thank you. I am not a destroyer of companies. I am a liberator of them! The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right, greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms: greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind" - Gordon Gekko, (Edwin & Stone, 1987)

From the view of the capitalistic mindset, this quote brings two rather evident perspectives together: it takes that perspective of the individual, the independent laborer who must make the utmost priority in watching out for the "I," and then straddles that thin line between the better benefit of the group. Humans are social; we only benefit optimally by working together; humans benefit only through interactions with other humans; humans need humans to build such fortresses and provide for those 2.5 million corporate stockholders, right along with all companies and businesses in general. However, Gekko solely advocates the view of the individual while complete disregard to that of any collaborative effort. This is a red-flag to signal psychological disorders.

"A corporation is a legal entity separate from the persons that form it. It is a legal entity owned by individual stockholders" -Gordon Gekko, (Edwin & Stone, 1987). Let's start with the most apparent, Antisocial Sociopath Disorder. This illustrates certainly no regard for the concerns of others; people with this affliction will do anything to acquire self-satisfaction and feelings of self-entitlement with no respect for how their actions affect any other person. An antisocial sociopath is utterly indifferent to others around him or her. This person operates under a regime totally unfamiliar to social behaviors, including lying, cheating, and stealing. The conduct of these people goes well beyond any social norm of acceptable behavior, and purely in order to get ahead. Personality disorders typically begin in childhood, and then progress over time into rigid personality traits, obstructing social abilities and acceptable functioning when relating to other people. However, everyone can understand and recognize selfish behaviors, even selfish

behavioral patterns, but this does not indicate that a person is becoming, has become, or may become an antisocial sociopath; one with this disorder can identify symptoms from childhood. Surely Gordon Gekko carried this affliction from an extremely early age, too.

“ Greed is good” -Gordon Gekko, (Edwin & Stone, 1987). Like a puppet, greed in this situation pulls the strings motivating Gordon Gekko to operate by this tunnel focus. Yes, this personality disorder is prevalent in what we commonly perceive as spiteful, calculative, and manipulative materialists. Another feature shared by Gekko, particularly the greedy antisocial sociopathic feature of this character, rests in his complete lack of self-identification; antisocial sociopaths bring a sense of self-denial of any of this self-absorption.

As much a paradox that this seems, due to the self-sacrifice he perceives because of self-denial, Gekko is so consumed in the self that he executes all his decisions with a complete lack of self-identification. Again, the antisocial sociopath disorder is the most apparent disorder of this character. In detailing how Gordon Gekko portrays the Antisocial Sociopathic qualities, Dr. Robbins conveys these characteristics: Antisocial Personality Disorder: These people generally have no regard for the rights of others; they are exploitative, they see themselves as better or superior, and are very opportunistic. They are deceitful, steal from people around them, and often have trouble with the law. They frequently engage in fraudulent activities, make very good scam artists, and tend to be irritable and impulsive. They often come in as a savior for a church, for example, and end up stealing everything. They have no remorse. Conduct disorder as a child often morphs

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into antisocial personality disorder. Examples include the Mafia ' Dapper Don' John Gotti, or Tony Soprano in ' The Sopranos'. TV shows such as Dateline or 20/20 are replete with stories revolving around antisocial personality disorders (Robbins, 2005).

Gekko also displays features of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Understood and commonly underplayed as vanity or conceit, this personality disorder, dictates that the narcissist is right, while everyone else is wrong. If an object, ideal, occasion, etc., do not benefit the narcissist, then it is of no worth. We can all think of people who fit this ideal. We all bring these traits to the table, but the difference between a person with either of these clinical disorders and the rest of the " normal crowd" is that we identify these traits; any person with this clinical disorder cannot. In a nutshell, let us allow Dr. Lawrence Robbins to provide another bit of enlightenment: Narcissistic Personality Disorder: This is less common, and the people see themselves as being above others, they are grandiose, have a lack of empathy, and they feel self-important. There is a true sense of entitlement. They may be extremely vain and constantly require admiration. They are envious, arrogant, exploitative, and can be very angry. Examples include General George Patton, Nicole Kidman's character in the movie " To Die For", Michael Douglas' character, Gordon Gekko, in the movie " Wall Street", Kelsey Grammer's character in " Frazier", and the Chief of Medicine, Dr. Robert Romano on the TV show " ER" (Robbins, 2005).

The applicable approach of Psychoanalytic therapy is to allow access to the unconscious. " The treatment process can, at times, become blocked by the client's resistance (their unwillingness to provide information). Transference

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is a condition in which the client begins to consider their therapist in the same emotional way they would consider a person in their lives, such as a parent or sibling. Working with interpretation, resistance, and transference is sometimes called working through, a therapeutic technique in which the therapist helps the client better understand their conflicts and how to resolve them" (Depression Guide, 2005).

If Gordon Gekko had become a patient of Dr. Freud's I can only guess there would have been a considerable amount of time spent with free association in order to discuss childhood events, dreams or trauma that were repressed in the unconscious. Freud believed being greedy was natural, that we are born with it. He believed the unconscious was a place that consisted of unthinkable wishes and drives that needed to be socialized. Dr. Freud believed that we progressed through psychosexual stages as we grew from child to adult, and greed could be expressed in each of the stages. If you look at these stages it is easy to see where we could associate greed with each one. Oral greed could be in the form of a biting hunger-perhaps the kind that Gekko, who built his company's strategy around chewing up other companies, displayed. Gordon could have expressed anal greed either by keeping all of his money which he did in offshore bank accounts or by spending all of it on the finer things in life. Finally, Gordon's business greed came from the ambition that characterizes phallic greed and was displayed by his desire to become the most powerful and wealthiest man on Wall Street.