

Obsession and Death Drive in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story *The Oval Portrait*: A Psychoanalysis Study

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DOI: 10.37729/scripta.v12i2.6704

Abstract. The research emphasizes the short story "*The Oval Portrait*" by Edgar Allan Poe through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Specifically, the study investigates (1) how the artist's obsession with immortalizing beauty reflects Freud's notion of the death drive, (2) how the narrator's attitude mirrors this obsession, and (3) how the obsession ultimately leads to the wife's self-destruction and death. Using a descriptive-qualitative method, the study identifies aggression and repetition compulsion as key manifestations of the artist's obsession and death drive. The findings suggest that the artist's repressed subconscious desires, dominated by the id, drive his obsessive-compulsive behavior and death drive, which in turn influence the wife's self-sacrifice and her death.

Keywords: Obsession, Death Drive, Psychoanalysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Obsession is an intrusive, repeating thought, idea, or impulse that is inappropriate or undesirable and causes subjective resistance that is frequently viewed by the person as offensive and causes distress; they mostly engage in behavior aimed at providing "relief" from their misery, usually associated with three forms of behavior: avoidance, compulsiveness, and neutralizing [1]. Obsession, particularly with perfection, may be harmful to oneself and others because it typically sets unrealistic standards that are difficult to meet. We frequently meet this trait in everyday life, including contamination or hoarding, ordering, religion, body image, health, aggression, sexuality, and many others.

Obsession with compulsion could lead to another problem linked to the death drive. In this way, the death drive serves to maintain life in some way, allowing a human being to die in a humane manner rather than simply dying. The death drive, on the other hand, fights off the obstacles of external reality that could put it in danger early [2]. The death drive, which is generated by a person's obsession and causes other people to become victims, occurs frequently in real life today, and its acts can ruin other people, such as violence, bullying, and even murder. Victimizing others is an extremely negative and sad act. Then, the cause is the management of impulses that cannot be controlled by the perpetrator or a mental illness that needs to be explored further.

Obsession and death drive can be researched using various types of analytical studies, one of which is using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, which we now identify three aspects of personality to determine their behavior. The three psychological structures that Freud identified—the ego, superego, and id—are frequently used by literary critics to understand the actions of literary characters in works of literature [3]. Researchers investigate the artist's obsession with immortalizing beauty, reflecting on Freud's theory of the death drive; the narrator's attitude, mirroring the obsession of the artist, which can also lead to self-destruction; and the artist's obsession, which influenced the wife's self-sacrifice that led to her death.

Writers were seeking previous research on subjects similar to the study that could support these ideas. Earlier studies include the following:

A Freudian psychoanalytic analysis of *Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter* [4] identifies the id, ego, and superego of the novel's main characters by referencing their repressed childhood memories. The analysis revealed that the actors struggle to balance these three aspects of the human psyche. Their id and ego sometimes dominate them, and sometimes they are subjugated to the strict regulations that serve as a

superego. However, the effects of this ambiguity provide unexpected outcomes for each character. Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale obeyed their seductive ids' commands, but the cost of their love affair was too great for both.

Personality Dynamics According to Sigmund Freud's theory, a literary psychological analysis of the character Restu in the novel '*Secret Obsession*' [5]. In her research, she intends to explore the psychoanalytic structure of the actor, specifically Restu, applying descriptive qualitative methodologies and Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. The findings of this study show that the id personality structure outperforms other personality structures. The id structure of the character Restu is demonstrated by her desire to exact revenge on the perpetrator of her mother's murder, as well as some impulsive behaviors that stem from the impulses that arise from the id personality structure in Restu, despite the fact that the superego structure is still present.

A Freudian psychoanalytic analysis of female characters' obsessions in *Daphne du Maurier's novel* Rebecca [6] examines the relationship between Rebecca's, Danvers', and Mrs. de Winter's obsessions. The study focuses on the female characters' obsessions, as manifested in their conduct. Using Freudian psychoanalytic theory, evaluate and explain how Rebecca exemplifies feminine obsessions and their impact on behavior. The study depicts Rebecca's concern with power and attractiveness, Mrs. de Winter's infatuation with her husband's love, and Mrs. Danvers' self-centered love for Rebecca. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that Rebecca's fixation leads to narcissistic personality disorder, whereas Mrs. de Winter's obsession leads to envy and copying of Rebecca to boost self-esteem.

The psychoanalytic perspective of fixation with perfection, represented in *the Black Swan* film [7] is that the character had an obsession with perfection, which caused her to acquire a mental condition. State that Nina's injuries are caused by overtraining because she pushes herself too hard. Nina expresses her wish to be perfect. Nina's training with a trainer improves her dancing abilities. She also steals the former Swan Queen's stuff in an attempt to compete with Beth's perfection. Nina's fixation with perfection leads to two mental disorders: obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and schizophrenia. OCD is tied to her actions, whereas schizophrenia is related to the hallucinations she has.

Death Instinct in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* [8], an analysis of how the death instinct is represented in the novel Frankenstein, discovered that the novel depicts the death instinct as reflected by Dr. Frankenstein and the monster as the characters of Shelley's Frankenstein. The monster's actions indicate the death instinct, particularly its objective. In evaluating the killing instinct, this study attempts to elaborate on conversation, conflict, and action in the novel while also applying the notion. Their investigation revealed that the killing instinct and its component, hostility, are dependent on the characteristics. The death instinct, which encompasses unconsciousness and the id, also has the intention to damage something or kill someone.

Researchers compared the previous research and some theories to support and provide more insight in completing the study. Previous research has focused solely on one problem of obsession or death drive, whereas the author's research corroborates the relationship between obsession and death drive, which is then analyzed using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. In this case, the authors have not found any research related to the obsession with the death drive in an Edgar Allan Poe short story.

Short Story

A short story is a piece of literary prose fiction [9]. The short story may only include one or a few significant events or scenes, and it usually focuses on a single effect. The form encourages an economic setting, a concise story, and the absence of a complicated plot. The character appears in action and dramatic settings but is rarely fully developed. Short stories offer writers the opportunity to approach a topic from multiple perspectives, each with its unique hue. This is a common technique used in story cycles [10].

Rohrberger and Burns are based on the short story writer's essential dependence on the reader's imagination, that the brief narrative serves as a mirror, yet the reflection is not a representation of the human mind but rather of awake reality [10]. Even though a short story is packaged concisely, it is possible to announce a wider imagery view.

A short story is made up of major subcomponents such as the plot, setting, character, theme, and point of view, which distinguish this literary work as an independent art form and make it interesting to read in comparison to other works, such as poems, novels, and so on.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is Sigmund Freud's theory of human personality, which is used to analyze human behavior in various literary and medical research. In his psychoanalysis, Freud describes some of the unconscious aspects of human life that serve as the foundation for the study of the mind. Freud [3] proposed a structure of the mind that visualizes the mind as divided into three distinct yet interacting agencies:

- (1) The id (the wholly unconscious domain of the mind, consisting of the drives and of material later repressed) is the instinctual, primal component of the mind that acts under the "pleasure principle." Regardless of the implications, it seeks to satisfy needs and desires immediately. The id is the most fundamental and instinctual aspect of the mind, present from birth. It follows the pleasure principle, pursuing rapid gratification for all cravings, wants, and needs, regardless of social acceptability or repercussions. The id is completely unconscious and the primary source of psychic energy, including sexual and aggressive impulses.
- (2) The ego (which is partly conscious and contains the defense mechanisms and the capacities to calculate, reason, and plan) emerges from the id in infancy and functions on the reality principle. It serves as a bridge between the id's unrealistic demands and the rest of the world. The ego delays gratification, examines social norms and regulations, and seeks realistic and acceptable ways to fulfill the id's impulses. The ego emerges from the id and functions under the reality principle. Its role is to mediate between the id's unreasonable expectations and the restrictions of the outside world, ensuring that the id's impulses are expressed in a realistic, safe, and socially acceptable manner. The ego operates in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious minds, using rational cognition and decision-making to navigate daily problems.
- (3) The superego (also only partly conscious, which harbors the conscience and, beyond that, unconscious feelings of guilt). The superego is the moralistic and idealistic aspect of the mind that emerges later in early childhood (around the ages of 3-5). It integrates the values and standards gained from parents and society, acting as an internal guide. The superego, the final psychic structure to emerge, usually around the ages of four or five, integrates the internalized moral norms and ideals that we learn from our parents, family, and society. It serves as our conscience, providing standards for making decisions about what is right and wrong and prioritizing perfection over mere pleasure or actuality.

Death Drive

In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" [11], Sigmund Freud presented the concept of the death drive, or Thanatos, as a basic force operating within the human psyche. This theory arose from Freud's attempts to comprehend psychological events that appeared to contradict his previous emphasis on the pleasure principle, which holds that people are essentially motivated to seek pleasure and avoid suffering. Freud studied the repetition compulsion in trauma survivors, noticing their unconscious urge to re-experience past painful events in dreams, play, and behavior, even when these repetitions did not provide pleasure. He also acknowledged the natural tendency of all living organisms to revert to an inorganic, inanimate state.

These findings prompted Freud to propose the existence of a death drive (Thanatos) as a complement to the life drive (Eros). Eros represents the urges for survival, reproduction, pleasure, and the creation of life and connection. Thanatos represents the drive for aggression, repetition compulsion, and repression. Freud claimed that these two primary drives are constantly in conflict within the psyche, affecting human behavior and experience.

Aggression

Aggression encompasses a variety of activities that can result in physical or psychological injury to oneself, others, or objects. It may be verbal, physical, direct, indirect, planned, or in response to a perceived danger or provocation. Aggression has typically been characterized as overt behavior to inflict bodily damage on another individual or "goal entity" [12]

Repetition Compulsion

Repetition is merely the act of doing or saying something again, or the occurrence of an event or pattern. It refers to the unconscious tendency to repeat painful experiences or dysfunctional patterns of conduct, even when they cause misery.

A compulsion is a strong, uncontrollable, and sometimes unreasonable urge to execute an action, even if it is undesirable or causes distress. It is often a repetitive behavior or mental act that an individual feels

motivated to perform in response to an obsession or according to rigorous guidelines. Compulsions are a key symptom of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Compulsions in OCD are usually conducted to neutralize or lessen anxiety induced by obsessions (recurrent, intrusive thoughts, pictures, or desires) [13].\

Sigmund Freud noted that patients will continually reenact traumatic experiences from their past, without consciously remembering them, but acting them out in new situations or relationships. This seemingly counterintuitive action, which defies the "pleasure principle" (the mind's predisposition to seek pleasure while avoiding pain), prompted Freud to propose a power "beyond the pleasure principle."

Repression

Repression is the unconscious suppression of ideas or urges that trigger feelings of threat, guilt, or shame. Freud identified repression as the foundation for all other defense strategies. It entails transferring unpleasant thoughts, fantasies, or memories from conscious consciousness to the unconscious. While other defenses may distort or reroute unpleasant impulses, their primary function is to keep some materials suppressed, or "out of sight" [2]. This is done to shield the individual from worry, guilt, or discomfort caused by these unwanted contents. Unlike suppression, which is a deliberate effort to push something away, repression is completely unconscious. However, repressed content does not just disappear. It continues to impact unconscious thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, often manifesting as dreams, neurotic symptoms, or repetitive compulsions.

Obsession

An obsession is defined as an unwanted, intrusive idea, vision, or drive that appears frequently in an individual's mind. Obsessions are disturbing, but they are recognized as originating in a person's mind and not imposed by an outside source [14]. The person frequently views it as offensive, and it causes distress. It can typically be difficult to control or eliminate. Obsessive people typically engage in behavior aimed at providing "relief" from their misery. Obsessions are typically associated with three forms of behavior: avoidance, compulsiveness, and neutralizing [1], [6].

(1) Avoidance

Avoidance is a highly prevalent and powerful type of compulsion or safety behavior in obsession. Rather than engaging in an active ritual, the individual avoids circumstances, items, people, or even thoughts that may trigger their obsessions or anxieties.

(2) Compulsiveness

To relieve the distress caused by obsessions or to avoid a feared outcome, the person feels compelled to engage in compulsions. Compulsions are repeated behaviors or mental acts. While they may provide brief respite, they are not enjoyable and are frequently perceived by the individual as illogical or excessive.

(3) Neutralizing

Neutralizing is a special kind of mental compulsion. It refers to the act of "undoing" a perceived dangerous or "bad" idea or conduct by replacing it with a different thought or activity. The idea is to counteract the perceived negative consequences of the preoccupation.

2. METHOD

Authors analyze the actor in *Oval Portrait*, applying Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories about obsession and the death drive. The data used in the following section are the story itself, as well as literature in the form of books and articles on psychoanalysis, obsession, and the death drive. The author's research method is descriptive-qualitative, in which the data collected is in the form of words or pictures, not numbers. The written research findings include data quotations to illustrate and support the discussion [15]. Writers then describe the analysis result. The research approach employs qualitative data analysis to describe the actors in *The Oval Portrait*. Writers assess the short story by reading and discussing the text "The *Oval Portrait*" by Edgar Allan Poe, identifying words that indicate psychoanalysis, obsession, and the death drive.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The artist's obsession with immortalizing beauty reflects Freud's theory of the death drive.

The artist, as the supporting character, completes the setting and perspective of the story. The genre is also influenced by the character of the artist who makes up the whole story. The artist was described as being highly excited about painting, but he sacrificed his wife, forcing her to suffer for days in a remote and isolated castle while her husband painted her. Although his wife remained mute, the artist's role had taken over his wife's sentiments and behaviors, leaving her with no alternative but to stay while her husband painted. The actor's passion for painting culminated in a tragic occurrence, the death of his wife. The artist's obsession reflecting the death drive can be described with the subsequent investigation:

Obsession

The artist's obsession arises from repressed desires that operate in the subconscious. Information or encouragement from the actor was unconsciously displayed when painting his wife as the object. The unacceptable thoughts and wishes are pushed out of consciousness by the ego and into the unconscious. The actor's ambition to show a realistic painting is a pressure that frequently manifests as an obsession.

The obsession that developed in the artist's personality was a disturbing and repetitive urge, which ultimately led to rejection. It is difficult to control or eliminate what is viewed by the artist as offensive and causing distress, as can be seen in this sentence:

“But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour and from day to day. And he was a passionate, wild, and moody man who became lost in reveries.”[16]

According to the sentence snippet, the actor is unaware of his actions, which are carried out continuously from hour to hour or even day to day. The time he spent creating a work that seemed real took away from his ability to pay more attention to himself. The actor does not feel tired or ignore his tiredness; instead, he feels a high, wild urge that always appears, as well as dissatisfaction with the results of what he was performing.

According to Freud, the feeling of not being tired and the urge to keep doing what a person wants is called obsession. This obsession often leads to ignorance about one's condition or the condition of others, because they make an effort to fulfill repressed, unrealistic desires. Meanwhile, the artist's repetitive conduct is an obsessive-compulsive act since he repeats his behaviors to ease suffering induced by obsessions or to prevent a dreaded outcome. Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts.

Aggression

In his structural model of the psyche, Sigmund Freud [3] postulated that the human mind is made up of three different but interconnected agents: the id, ego, and superego. This three-part division provides a framework for understanding the internal dynamics that contribute to both normal and disordered psychological functioning, including the emergence of obsessions.

The artist, in doing the painting project, can be seen as a manifestation of the id, the part of the psyche driven by primal desires and impulses. His obsessive pursuit of capturing his wife's likeness, to the point of her demise, reflects the id's relentless drive for gratification. This compulsive behavior can be interpreted as a form of sublimation, where the artist channels his libidinal energy into artistic creation. However, in this case, the sublimation becomes destructive, resulting in a tragic outcome as shown in the following sentences:

“But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work and turned his eyes from canvas merely to regard even the countenance of his wife.” [16]

According to the sentence above, the artist is so dominant in his actions that he eventually refuses to let anybody enter the castle where he completed the project. He becomes utterly wild, and the ego, which serves as a balance to the superego and the id, is missing. The ego's protective systems are gone, balancing the demands of the id, which is consumed by the painter's frantic need to create the masterpiece of his fantasies. This situation is the result of the fulfillment of id impulses in collaboration with obsessions and death drives, which both represent destruction and aggressiveness.

The death drive, on the other hand, fights off the obstacles of external reality that could put it in danger early [17]. According to Freud's psychoanalysis theory, conflict in the form of obsessions and the death drive arises in the control or dominance of the id when the ego is unable to rationalize the id, resulting in

the emergence of id fulfillment, which is considered irrational and leads to destructive and aggressive behavior.

Repetition Compulsion

According to the psychoanalysis theory of Sigmund Freud, the repetition compulsion is a major manifestation of the death drive, which is an unconscious need to repeat prior experiences, whether they were pleasant or unpleasant. He believed this compulsion arose from the organism's natural tendency to return to a past condition, which is a fundamental feature of all instincts. The death drive is also expressed outwardly as aggression and destructiveness, directed either towards oneself in the form of self-harm or towards others. The artist has created many works in which he displays the life or soul in his art, each of which is described as

“Its decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque.” [16]

It shows that the actor acts out a repetition compulsion in creating spirited art in their creation. He will always try to show the spirit, which in that case is his wife's love and life.

The artist exhibits obsessive repetition and compulsion in his art, alongside the manifestation of the id's control. As his basic need for art is strong, he captured the image of his wife's love. He realized and poured the fixation into the strokes on the painting and intended to produce an art that was as alive as he was experiencing in his waking hours, if not more so. He was continually pursuing perfection in his strokes, as the narrator explains:

“And sat meekly for many weeks in the dark, high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead.”

“The painter took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour and from day to day. And he was a passionate, wild, and moody man who became lost in reveries.” [16]

The artist is doing repetition in a very intensive way because there is no other activity he did while doing his project, and it lasts for many weeks. Indeed, he doesn't care about his wife's feelings, tiredness, or sickness, which indicates a death drive as shown in the sentence below:

“But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work and turned his eyes from canvas merely to regard even the countenance of his wife.” [16]

In the sentence fragment, the artist forbids anybody from approaching the castle and abandons his wife hungry and thirsty, ignoring his wife's need for energy to survive, which is counter to the pleasure principle, but rather a tendency toward the death drive that he directed at her. This behavior represents the death drive that he applies to others, causing agony to the extent of killing his wife.

Compulsions and obsessions are related. Uncontrollably repeated thoughts result in uncontrollably repeated acts. To put it another way, compulsions result from obsessions [17]. According to Freud, obsessive-compulsive behavior is characterized by extreme repetition, which shows a compulsion to repeat previous trauma, including the death drive itself, because the compulsions are irrational and cause misery and harm to others. These obsessions and death drives continue without the perpetrator recognizing them, and they are unstoppable.

The narrator's attitude mirrors the obsession of the artist.

The narrator is the most essential character in the story. The primary character is the individual who drives the plot of a book and is the focus of most debate [18]. The narrator's thoughts are vividly expressed in the story of the *Oval Portrait*. He explains the setting and his sentiments toward the room's atmosphere, which is alien and unusual to him, as well as many of the pieces of art inside, which he regards as having a spirit. He also mirrors his attitude, influenced by the personalities of some actors. The narrator's attitude can be described with the subsequent investigation:

Ego Balanced

In his first visit to the castle, the narrator demonstrated an ego-dominant attitude; he acted as if he ordered Pedro to close the window of the room because it was nearing night and needed lighting, so he lit candles and opened the velvet cover that surrounded the room he would use to rest. The actor's desire at the moment was the desire to live, which was the tendency of the living principle. At that time, the narrator recognized that he needed a place to rest from the pain of the wound he suffered, as shown in the sentence below:

“So that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room—since it was already night—to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed—and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures and the perusal of a small volume that had been found upon the pillow and that purported to criticize and describe them.” [16]

After he found the book of the oval portrait, he seemed to ignore his sickness. There is also an inner conflict between letting himself rest from the wound or following his curiosity with some apparitions that surprised him, the urge of the id in him, which eventually led him to explore further the strange apparitions in the oval portrait, as shown in the sentences below:

“The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I sought eagerly the volume that discussed the paintings and their histories. Turning to the number which designated the oval portrait, I there read the vague and quaint words which follow:” [16]

The narrator chooses to examine the artwork's story rather than rest from his wounds, but this id impulse is tempered by the ego, as evidenced by his enjoyment of and exploration of the background story to appreciate the realistic painting. The actor resembles an art enthusiast who understands how to appreciate art. The narrator's worry has subsided.

What the narrator did in appreciating *the oval portrait* and seeking the story behind the oval portrait mirrors Freud's psychoanalysis about the role of the ego, that the ego is partly conscious and contains the defense mechanisms and the capacities to calculate, reason, and plan, which emerge from the id in infancy and function on the reality principle. Its role is to mediate between the id's unreasonable expectations and the restrictions of the outside world, ensuring that the id's impulses are expressed in a realistic, safe, and socially acceptable manner. The ego operates in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious minds, using rational cognition and decision-making to navigate daily problems.

Anxiety

The narrator's attention to detail in analyzing art draws the plot of *the Oval Portrait* story closer, lit up, and supported by his evaluation of the notes he presented. The existing notes offer both criticism and details of art that is constructed in such a way that his patience in observing the work of art led him to find and convey the oval portrait and the photographs he acquired as a result of his observations. The narrator admires the work created by the artist because the expression he captured was very real. However, it appears that the oval portrait he discovered made him feel restless, as he explains in the following:

“I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute life-likeness of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued, and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe, I replaced the candelabrum in its former position. The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I sought eagerly the volume that discussed the paintings and their histories.” [16]

The narrator felt anxious when he first saw the painting, which appeared to be alive, but his ego alerted him and pushed him to seek facts and solutions in a book that explained the oval portrait occurrence.

The narrator also believes that the artist is highly enthusiastic about his work and is amazed by the portrait, as seen by his emotion when he first saw the oval portrait. The artist is a passionate, wild guy who sometimes expresses his dissatisfaction with the art he is working on because of his perfectionist demands in his work, his gloomy nature, and insensitivity to anything other than the artwork he is working on, so that he ignores his wife, whom he creates as an object, who weakens day by day because she is disregarded by the artist, as seen in the following text

“And he was a passionate, wild, and moody man who became lost in reveries so that he would not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him.” [16]

His reaction to the actor's behavior is not clearly described, and the narrator is more likely to consciously admire and be surprised by the painter's professionalism in creating a work that appears alive. The narrator's attitude when he discovered the oval portrait made him feel restless and tended to be an anxiety that accrued in his unconscious. Freud states that the unconscious is a collection of feelings, thoughts, impulses, and memories that exist outside our cognitive awareness. The unconscious contains undesirable or unpleasant information, such as pain, anxiety, or conflict.

The artist's obsession influenced the wife's self-sacrifice

The artist's wife, who also plays a supporting role, completes the setting and character. The wife is described as having a good personality and becoming a victim of her husband's obsession. The wife demonstrated her strong superego character, which will be discussed in the next analytical section:

Anxiety

The wife also has anxiety because she dislikes art. She is scared of all things about art, and the conflict of her feelings arose when the actor was asked to paint her. As the narrator argues that the painter's wife disregards painting because of her envy, and she is scared of the scheme, tools, and equipment that separate her from her beloved, as indicated in the following phrase:

“Hating only the art that was her rival, dreading only the palette and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover”

“It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride.” [16]

The wife's first anxiety was because art was always separating her from her husband, and her anxiety conflict happened when her husband was willing to have her as the model. They will be together because of an art project, and she allowed him to paint her; she felt free to let him paint her without hesitation. However, she denied her anxiety about the artist's obsession with art. Freud separated the mind into three levels of awareness: preconscious, conscious, and unconscious. Anxiety occurs in the unconscious mind, which contains unpleasant or undesirable information. This includes the dislikes of some things, but still accepts them as feelings and continues to do what the other people want.

The Dominance of the Superego

The wife lets the actor paint her, resulting in an internal struggle that she cannot resolve. Her hatred of art, along with her love for her spouse and the effect of her husband's devotion, makes her vulnerable. Her dislike of art reflects the stress she is under, whereas her love for her husband is a basic need of her id, along with the superego, which is a social rule that a wife must obey her husband, and a woman's nobility is how she can please her husband, behave rudely, be gentle, or rebel against him, as reflected in the following text:

“It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride.”

“But she was humble and obedient and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark, high turret chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour and from day to day. And he was a passionate, wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries, so that he would not see that the light, which fell so ghastly in that lone turret, withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him.” [16]

The artist's wife's projection of her internal struggle is that she appears to be unable to express or access basic id urges, such as pain, physical comfort, or the need to survive. These basic requirements are completely ignored by a mind preoccupied with her husband. The artist's ego appears to be considerably

stronger or entirely subjugated to her ego, which is supposed to operate as a bridge between her id impulses and the demands of the superego or outer world.

The superego that manifests the society's expectations of a good wife and emphasizes obedience and self-sacrifice in marriage is a superego role. According to Freud, the moralistic and idealistic part of the mind, known as the superego, serves as an internal guide by integrating the norms and values learned from parents and society. It acts as the conscience, giving guidelines for determining what is right and wrong and emphasizing perfection above actuality or pleasure alone.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, writers found (1) aggression and (2) repetition compulsion in the manifestation of obsession and the death drive. According to Sigmund Freud, Thanatos, or the death drive, represents the drive for aggression, repetition compulsion, and self-destructiveness. Those are traits of the painter who employs his wife as his model. The artist has repressed desires in his subconscious, and his conduct is dominated by the id, resulting in obsessive-compulsive behavior and a death drive. The ego's protective defenses have vanished, balancing the demands of the id, which is overwhelmed by the painter's feverish desire to produce the masterpiece of his dreams. This scenario results from the fulfillment of id impulses in conjunction with obsessions and death drives, both of which signify destruction and aggression.

The narrator's attitude was appreciative of the *Oval Portrait*, and he sought the story behind the *Oval Portrait*. From the analysis, writers did not find that the narrator has a significant feeling about the artist's attitude that mirrors the obsession, which can also lead to self-destruction. He resembles an art enthusiast who understands how to appreciate art. He respected and enjoyed the artwork despite the background of the frightening process of creating the artwork, featuring obsession and the death drive. Writers found anxiety in the narrator when he first discovered the *Oval Portrait* because the portrait made him feel restless.

The artist's obsession influenced the wife's self-sacrifice, which led to her death. The wife that a good person and has a balanced personality that can be effectively addressed by the id, ego, and superego. But finally, aside from her role as the artist's object and inspiration, she is unable to establish boundaries or maintain her distinct personality. An internalized superego that manifested the society's expectations of a "good" or "devoted" wife and emphasized obedience and self-sacrifice in marriage could be the source of her passivity. As an alternative, the artist may have a significant impact on this superego, holding her to the highest moral standards by his demands and obsessions.

After analyzing the obsession and death drive in *The Oval Portrait* using Sigmund Freud's theories of psychoanalysis, the authors gained knowledge about the obsession and death drive reflected in the artists. In the psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, the obsession and the death drive are psychological conditions that are revealed in the unconscious mind from an imbalance of the id, ego, and superego, with the id being dominant. The artist's attitude also influenced and dominated the wife's personality so that the wife was unable to control her basic personality.

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