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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provided dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF CRIME IN GOTHIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the psychological and legal ramifications of crime in Gothic literature, with particular attention to Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein** and Edgar Allan Poe's **The Tell-Tale Heart**. In order to analyse how characters' behaviours are motivated by unconscious impulses, shame, and repression and ultimately result in psychological breakdown, it leans on Freudian and Jungian psychological ideas. While Jungian ideas like the shadow, anima, and persona offer additional understanding of the characters' internal issues, Freudian philosophy is used to examine the themes of the id, superego, and guilt. Mens rea, moral responsibility, and the legal treatment of people with mental illnesses are all brought up by the narrators' planned crimes and subsequent psychological collapses. These ideas are analysed from the perspectives of insanity and criminal culpability. The study offers a greater understanding of the relationship between moral conflict, societal systems, and human behaviour by combining law, psychology, and Gothic literature. It challenges readers to consider the intricacies of duty, justice, and the unconscious mind. In the end, it aims to show how literature clarifies the complex interplay between personal psychology and social norms, illuminating the legal and psychological difficulties in defining criminality, guilt, and anxiety in situations of mental instability. It also provides insight into how the human mind functions.

“Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.”

-SIGMUND FREUD

INTRODUCTION

Two of the most powerful factors influencing society are law and literature. By setting guidelines that reduce crime and foster harmony, the law offers the framework for justice and order. On the other hand, literature fosters creativity and intelligence while assisting people in thinking critically about social concerns and human nature. When combined, they provide a distinctive perspective for comprehending the complex workings of social norms and human behaviour.

The study of crime in gothic literature is one intriguing area where these disciplines converge. Gothic books explore the darker aspects of human nature, frequently showing moral dilemmas, psychological problems, and legal infractions. The colour dark is linked to "mysterious, wicked, obscure, despair and sorrow and supernatural," according to the definition provided by Cambridge University.¹ Themes of mystery, hopelessness, and the paranormal abound in these tales, which illuminate both the greatest and worst aspects of human nature. We can discover the deeper motivations behind the crimes and characters in Gothic literature by analysing it through a psychological lens, namely by using the theories of Carl Jung² and Sigmund Freud³. Gothic literature frequently highlights the dark, suppressed aspects of the soul, which represent both social and personal struggles. We learn more about our nature and the factors that influence our behaviour through this amalgamation of psychology, literature, and law. Examining these intersections enables us to consider ourselves and the society we live in, in addition to the characters in gothic books.

THE TELL TALE HEART

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), an American writer, poet, and literary critic, is renowned for his contributions to gothic literature and the genres of horror, mystery, and science fiction. One of his most famous psychological thrillers, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, showcases his mastery of dark and complex themes. The story follows an unnamed narrator who describes how he murdered an old man. Obsessed with the man's "vulture-like" blue eye, which he perceives as a source

¹ S. K. Mishra, P. Mishra, J.K. Sharma(2023) "elements of horror, grotesque bodies, and the fragmentation of identity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of LANGUAGE, LITERATURE and CULTURE* (Vol-3, Issue-2) pp.no.3

² Sigmund Freud (6 may 1856- 23 September 1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for evaluating and treating pathologies seen as originating from conflicts in the psyche through dialogue between patient and psychoanalyst.

³ Carl Jung (26 July 1875 - 6 June 1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist, psychotherapist, psychologists and pioneering evolutionary theorist who founded the school of analytical psychology.

of fear and judgment, the narrator spies on him for eight nights. On the ninth night, when the eye finally opens, the narrator, overcome by anxiety and dread, kills the old man and hides his body under the floorboards. The tale explores emotions like fear, guilt, and paranoia. The old man's eye symbolizes judgment and morality, which terrifies the narrator. After the murder, he becomes haunted by the sound of the old man's heartbeat, manifestation of his overwhelming guilt. Poe's story brilliantly captures the psychological torment of a troubled mind, blending gothic elements with profound emotional depth.

The sound of the old man's heartbeat grows louder in the narrator's mind, intensifying his anxiety. This relentless noise symbolizes his overwhelming guilt for committing such a horrific act. The narrator's character is deeply complex, his unstable mind allows him to carry out inhumane actions while attempting to justify them as rational. According to Sigmund Freud's theory of the psyche, the narrator's actions are largely driven by his **id** the primal, instinctual part of the mind that operates unconsciously. Often referred to as the "dark side" of human nature, the id seeks immediate gratification of desires without regard for morality or consequences. Freud defines the id as the most basic and impulsive aspect of the psyche, one that dominates when our rational and ethical faculties are suppressed.

"It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the dream work and of the construction of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego. We approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations... It has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle."⁴ Id is that part of our mind from which our lust, greediness, anger, anxiety, etc. emotions comes from. We can call this id (primitive instincts) in Carl Jung's **shadow** also. Carl Jung writes about shadow in his book like, ***"The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge."***⁵ The old

⁴ Sigmund Freud (1933) *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Translated by W. J. H. Sprott. New York : W. W. Norton & Company

⁵ Carl Jung (1959) *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, New Jersey, USA : Princeton University Press

man's eye symbolizes the narrator's **shadow**, his repressed fears and internal conflicts. The discomfort and anxiety the narrator feels when seeing the eye reflect his projection of this inner turmoil onto the old man. By killing the old man, he attempts to destroy his shadow self but ultimately fails, leading to his descent into madness. Carl Jung's concept of the **persona** also applies here. The persona represents the self-image we present to the world overwhelming guilt. Poe's story brilliantly captures the psychological torment of a troubled mind, blending gothic elements with profound emotional depth.

Carl Jung's concept of the **persona** also applies here. The **persona** represents the self-image we present to the world. The narrator's **persona** is one of hyper-rationality and sanity, as he repeatedly insists, "I am not mad." However, this facade reveals a fragile ego desperately trying to suppress the unconscious forces that threaten to consume him. This tension between his **persona** and shadow highlights his psychological unravelling. Jung defines **persona** as, "*The persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is.*"⁶ The narrator's **anima** can also be seen as attempting to balance his unconscious mind when he hears the old man's heartbeat. This suppressed guilt represents his unintegrated emotions, surfacing as the sound grows louder. But what exactly is the **anima**, and what role does it play in human psychology? Carl Jung has wrote about **anima**, "*The anima is the archetype of life itself. She is life and passion in one.*"⁷

The **anima** bridges the conscious and unconscious, shaping emotions and relationships. When integrated, it fosters inner balance and wholeness. In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the rising heartbeat symbolizes the narrator's **superego**, representing his suppressed guilt and moral conflict, driving him to madness.

The sound of heartbeat is a manifestation of the internalized guilt and the **superego's** punishment for violating moral boundaries. The narrator is trying to repress his guilt of the murder but unconsciously he projects it outward as the sound of heart beat of that old man. As the sound of that heartbeat rises and it leads to narrator's break down. The narrator's failure to integrate his **shadow** leads to his psychological breakdown. A balanced mind would not fixate

⁶ Carl Jung (1923) *Psychological Types*. Translated by H.G. Baynes. Princeton, New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press.

⁷ Carl Jung. (1959) *the Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, New Jersey, USA : Princeton University Press

on something as trivial as a vulture-like eye, but the narrator becomes obsessed, watching the old man for eight nights. This fixation reveals his lack of self-awareness and inner balance, highlighting his disintegrated psyche.

The Tell-Tale Heart falls within the gothic genre, rich with themes of crime and moral ambiguity, allowing for legal analysis. One key aspect is **criminal responsibility**, which holds individuals accountable if they can understand their actions and distinguish right from wrong. The narrator claims sanity, meticulously plans the murder, and conceals the body, indicating awareness of his actions. However, his erratic behavior and obsession with the old man's eye suggest mental instability, raising the possibility of an insanity defense. Yet, his rational planning and efforts to hide the crime undermine this defense, disqualifying him under the **M'Naghten Rule**⁸. Additionally, **mens rea** (guilty mind) is evident in the narrator's deliberate actions. His careful observation and premeditated murder show intent, proving he acted with full knowledge of the crime and its consequences, solidifying his culpability. **The Tell-tale heart** Edgar Allan Poe gives us a complex portrayal of the character flowing between rationality and madness. The narrator's insistence on his sanity and then his psychological obsessive behaviour invites readers to question his sanity and criminal responsibility.

FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley (1797–1851), an English author, is best known for her ground breaking novel *Frankenstein*, published in 1818 when she was just 20. Widely regarded as one of the first works of science fiction and a cornerstone of gothic literature, the novel remains a timeless exploration of human ambition and its consequences. Here, we will delve into a thorough analysis of this iconic work.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is a gothic novel about Captain Robert Walton, an Arctic explorer, who encounters Victor Frankenstein and learns of his tragic tale. Victor, a young scientist from Geneva, creates life by reanimating dead matter but abandons the grotesque creature he brings to life.

Rejected by society due to its appearance, the creature becomes isolated in the Arctic. It demands a female companion, but Victor destroys the creation, fearing they would breed more

⁸ *R v. M'Naghten* [1843] 10 Cl & F 200

monsters. In revenge, the creature kills Victor's family, leading Victor into self-isolation. Overcome by guilt, Victor pursues the creature in the Arctic, where he dies aboard Walton's ship. Victor's ambition to push the limits of science leads to his downfall, demonstrating the dangers of unchecked ambition and the consequences of defying natural boundaries. Both Victor and the creature experience deep isolation. Victor due to his obsession with science, and the creature due to his monstrous appearance and rejection by society. Novel's central is how victor fails to take responsibility for his creation. He abandons the creature. He neglects the ethical and emotional obligations of a creator.

The psychology of the characters in *Frankenstein* can be analyzed from different perspectives. The creature, in particular, is largely driven by his **id**, reflecting his primal instincts. His demand for a female companion reveals his deep yearning for connection and companionship. Additionally, his violent actions, including the murders of William and Elizabeth, stem from his raw emotional pain and a desire for revenge against Victor and society for the suffering he endures. The creature also exhibits the **ego** when he tries to rationalize his behavior and negotiate with victor. Sigmund Freud says about ego like, "*The ego seeks to bring the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies.*"⁹ In *Frankenstein*, the Creature's psychology can be analyzed through Freud's theory of the **ego**. The **ego** mediates between the desires of the **id**, the moral constraints of the **superego**, and the reality of the situation. Initially, the creature attempts to learn language and integrate into human society, driven by his **id's** desire for connection. However, after repeated rejection, his **ego** breaks down, and he succumbs to vengeful actions. His **superego** is underdeveloped, as his abandonment and isolation corrupt his moral compass, turning him from a longing for goodness into a vengeful being. Victor Frankenstein also exhibits **id-driven** behavior, particularly in his selfish quest for glory and his disregard for moral boundaries when creating life. His ambition blinds him to the consequences of his actions.

However, when he contemplates creating a female companion for the creature, his **superego** comes into play. He fears the ethical implications and the potential destruction it could bring, leading to his decision to stop.

⁹ Sigmund Freud (1927) *The Ego and the Id*. Translated by Joan Riviera. USA: The International Psycho-Analytical Press.

Victor's internal conflict can also be examined through Freud's **Oedipus complex**, which refers to a subconscious rivalry or attachment to one's parents. Victor's mourning of his mother, Caroline Beaufort, reflects unresolved emotional attachment. His pursuit of forbidden knowledge and defiance of natural limits can be seen as a subconscious rebellion against his father. Freud defines **Oedipus complex** as, "*The child begins to experience a libidinal attraction to the parent of the opposite sex and hostility or jealousy toward the parent of the same sex.*"¹⁰ Victor's **Oedipus complex** can be seen in his relationship with Elizabeth Lavenza, who is adopted into the Frankenstein family and raised as his sister. His love for her symbolizes idealized womanhood, reminiscent of his mother. Freud suggested that unresolved Oedipus complexes often lead individuals to seek partners resembling their parents. The creature also displays aspects of the **Oedipus complex** in his relationship with Victor. He craves parental validation, seeing Victor as both a creator (father) and a potential source of affection. When rejected, the creature's anger and resentment mirror oedipal rivalry. His murders of Victor's younger brother and fiancée can be seen as a displacement of this anger, reflecting the rivalry aspect of the Oedipus complex, where the "child" (the creature) harms the "father" figure's other "offspring." Another aspect of Freud can be seen in Victor and the creature, it is the **Death Drive**. The **death drive**, according to Freud, is an unconscious impulse toward self-destruction, aggression, and a return to non-existence. He believed all living beings are inherently driven to seek stillness, or a state of non-being. This drive often manifests as a compulsive repetition of painful or traumatic experiences, suggesting an unconscious desire to revisit and resolve these issues through destruction or equilibrium. While primarily inwardly directed, the death drive can also lead to outward aggression, resulting in violence or destructive behaviour. Freud explains Thanatos like, "*the aim all life is death*"¹¹ Victor Frankenstein's obsessive pursuit of creating life can be seen as a conflict with death, reflecting an unconscious drive to control it. Ironically, his quest for creation leads to his own destruction, symbolizing the dual nature of the **death drive**, where creation and self-destruction are intertwined. By abandoning his creature, Victor sets off a chain of events leading to suffering and death. His repeated choices that doom him align with Freud's theory of **repetitive compulsion**, an unconscious drive toward self-inflicted suffering and eventual annihilation.

The acts of violence that the creature had done because he was born in rejection and isolation

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud (1922) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Translated by C. J. M. Hubback. London, United Kingdom: The International Psycho-Analytical Press

¹¹ *ibid*

that leads him to destructive rage can be the symbol of death drive. He is seeking to resolve the pain through destruction of others.

The creature is aware of his unnatural state and when he goes into the arctic for complete isolation that moment can be seen as the final act of self-destruction that can symbolize the return to the inanimate state from which it originated.

A number of legal issues can be looked at in **Frankenstein**. First, Victor Frankenstein's abandonment of the creature can be viewed as both morally and legally negligent. Despite having a duty of care as its creator, he discarded the creature as soon as it came to life. He left the creature to fend for itself by not offering direction, instruction, or emotional support. Most significantly, Victor did nothing to alert others to the creature's potential for danger. Victor might therefore be responsible for the creature's fatalities brought on by its need for vengeance.

Injustice affects the entity itself. Because of his hideous appearance, Victor ignored him right away and showed no concern or emotional support. In addition, society unfairly rejected the creature, judging him only on the basis of his appearance even though he was compassionate. The creature's anguish is exacerbated by Victor's broken promise to produce a female partner, which makes him want retribution. The creature is presented as the antagonist in the book, mostly from Victor's point of view, which reinforces the injustice he encounters. The erroneous execution of Justine Moritz is another significant legal matter.

Circumstantial evidence of the finding of William's locket in her possession led to her conviction for William's murder. The idea of another culprit was disregarded, and neither a forensic nor a scientific inquiry was carried out. Justine's confession was forced rather than voluntarily, and it's possible that her social standing as a servant played a role in the court's and society's harsh treatment of her.

IMPACT ON READERS

Now we are going to talk about the most crucial part of this research paper, is that the impact these novels has created on its readers. These impact can both be analyzed through legal and psychological aspect.

Both Freudian and Jungian perspectives can be used to fully comprehend the psychological effects of the crime on readers in Edgar Allan Poe's **The Tell-Tale Heart**, emphasizing the intricate relationship between guilt, repression, and unconscious urges. According to Freud, the narrator's great obsession with the elderly man's "vulture-like" eye symbolizes the struggle between his **id** and **superego**. The narrator's irrational, primitive reaction, known as the **id**, is triggered by the eye, which represents an externalized form of judgment and drives him to destroy what he believes to be a threat.

The narrator's **superego**, or moral consciousness, is originally repressed, but the crime itself awakens it. The constant heartbeat that only the narrator hears after the murder represents the reemergence of suppressed guilt. As his **superego** punishes him for his mistake, this shame represented by the increasing sound becomes more intense, making readers face the unavoidable nature of guilt and the effects of moral suppression. In addition to being an internal struggle, the narrator's psychological suffering serves as an external example of how Freud's theory of the unconscious mind manifests itself when moral principles and repressed urges clash.

The narrator's **shadow**, or the darker, hidden parts of his psyche that he is unable to embrace or integrate, can be represented by the old man's eye from a Jungian standpoint. The narrator sees the eye as something foreign and dangerous, projecting his inner anguish onto it. Jung would contend that the narrator tries to get rid of these undesirable aspects of himself by killing the elderly guy. But his psychological collapse results from his inability to face his **shadow**. As a result of the narrator's incapacity to reconcile his unconscious guilt and worries, his heartbeat becomes an outward sign of his insanity. According to Jungian philosophy, the narrator experiences an overpowering sensation of fragmentation as a result of his incapacity to face his **shadow**, since he is overwhelmed by his own unacknowledged darkness. This psychological disentanglement prompts readers to consider the perils of projection, repression, and the inability to acknowledge the complete complexity of one's inner reality. Readers can interact with the story's examination of how internal psychological problems can materialize in destructive behaviours and the ensuing disintegration of the **ego** through both Freudian and Jungian interpretations.

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe has a legal impact on readers that centres on issues of criminal culpability, the definition of insanity, and the results of deeds. Despite his claims

of sanity, the narrator's deliberate killing of the elderly man raises concerns about his criminal responsibility. Because of his seeming preoccupation with the eye and the remorse that eventually overcomes him, the reader is left wondering whether he can be held accountable for his acts even though he carefully organizes and carries out the murder. The legal ideas of mens rea (guilty mind) and the M'Naghten Rule are brought into focus by the narrator's emphasis on his rationality in contrast to his unpredictable behaviour and auditory hallucinations, which raise the possibility of an insanity defence. Although his deliberate acts show a definite desire to kill, the idea of a completely responsible, sane mind at the time of the crime is called into question by his subsequent decline into guilt-driven insanity. This conflict between deliberate behaviour and psychological collapse offers readers an engaging look at the intricacies of criminal law, especially with relation to the differentiation between moral responsibility and mental illness.

The narrative poses more general legal queries on the role of guilt and conscience in the punishment of crimes, how society assigns blame for crimes, and how the law handles people with mental illnesses. Readers are left to consider the limits of justice, accountability, and human psychology as Poe demonstrates how the law interacts with the psyche through the narrator's unravelling.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, gothic literature's examination of crime, especially in Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein** and Edgar Allan Poe's **The Tell-Tale Heart**, demonstrates significant psychological and legal effects on readers. These books explore the intricacies of human nature via the prisms of Freud and Jung, highlighting the interaction of moral struggle, repression, guilt, and unconscious impulses. Poe's anonymous protagonist and Shelley's Victor **Frankenstein** are both narrators who experience psychological breakdowns as a result of internal conflict and the fallout from their deeds. From a legal standpoint, these tales also make readers consider the relationship between morality, the law, and the human psyche by posing queries regarding criminal accountability, sanity, and moral culpability. The darkest sides of human nature and the complex interrelationships between our unconscious minds and society systems are ultimately powerfully reflected in these gothic stories.

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