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The Tragedy of Conscience in Edgar Allan Poe's Tales: A Nietzschean/Freudian Dialectical Approach

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THE TRAGEDY OF CONSCIENCE IN EDGAR ALLAN POE'S TALES: A
NIETZSCHEAN/FREUDIAN DIALECTICAL APPROACH

A Thesis

by

MELISSA CHRISTINA CASTRO

Submitted to Texas A&M International University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2020

Major Subject: English

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Approved as to style and content by:

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ABSTRACT

The Tragedy of Conscience in Edgar Allan Poe's Tales: A Nietzschean/Freudian Dialectical

Approach (August 2020)

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Chair of Committee: Dr. Jonathan Murphy

The American Gothic tales of Edgar Allan Poe often follow protagonists that are mentally plagued by their conscience. These protagonists attempt to rid themselves of their conscience through violent actions that bring them a momentary sense of freedom before their immediate downfall. For various literary critics, Poe's recurrent theme of ridding oneself of a conscience has put into question the need or motivation for such actions. As Poe's protagonists demonstrate an internal split of the mind, it is evident that there are extreme oppositional forces in the psyche that influence the actions of his characters. The theoretical studies put forth by European thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud show how human nature is fundamentally divided much like the identities of Poe's characters. On the one hand, Nietzsche's theory of Greek art in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) explains how the truth about suffering and life is made possible through two oppositional forces: Dionysius and Apollo. On the other hand, Freud's view, as expounded in his article "The Id and the Ego" (1923), explains how the ego is involved in a constant battle between the instincts of the id and the moral imperatives of the super-ego. Although both thinkers focused on differing areas of study, it is evident that Freud's super-ego is Apollonian, and the id is Dionysian. In Poe's tales such as "William Wilson" (1839), "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), and "The Black Cat" (1843), Nietzsche's and Freud's theories will be used to analyze the internal and external influences of his characters' actions and

why their desires remain unfulfilled and inevitably doomed. The application of Nietzsche's and Freud's theories to Poe's tales show how each narrator's perception of his world includes a manifestation of the conscience through an Apollonian illusion which they react to in an overwhelming Dionysian passion of instinctive violence. These illusions are what Poe's narrators use to mentally justify their impulsive and violent actions as each protagonist's motivation to rid themselves of their conscience proves to be insufficient because the conscience inevitably returns to exact its due.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As an inherent part of the human condition, the conscience has interested many scholars and literary authors alike. American author and literary critic, Edgar Allan Poe, a Romantic writer whose tales are primarily categorized as Gothic fiction, demonstrated a great interest in the human conscience. Much of his fictional literature is heavily focused on the conscience, or rather, the ability to rid oneself of the conscience. Poe's tales show how human nature is fundamentally split between instincts and morals. Some of his tales that exemplify notions of the conscience and a divided human nature are "William Wilson" (1839), "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), and "The Black Cat" (1843). These tales follow protagonists who are psychologically plagued due to the imposition of their consciences. However, the reason as to why these narrators would want to live in a conscience-free world seems unclear. One way to find the answer to this conundrum is to attempt to understand their motivation for such a bizarre goal. Perhaps the way in which each protagonist's mind visually perceives or interprets his reality can be a worthwhile notion to consider. There are two ways in which an individual can make sense of his reality, and it is either internally in the mind, or externally through the environment that surrounds us. How people interpret the world is a key factor on how they react towards it, which can either be more instinctual or moralistic. Poe's protagonists react in their worlds both instinctually and moralistically, but they continue to hold on to their imminent desire to rid themselves of their conscience in order to attain a sense of unlimited freedom.

Some might argue that Poe's reoccurring theme of ridding oneself of one's conscience may have stemmed from his personal experiences, as other events that occurred in his life are clearly represented in his tales. Born in Boston, Massachusetts on January 19, 1808, Poe quickly began to experience tragic events of life. Before he was three years old, both of his parents died,

This thesis follows the model of *Arizona Quarterly*

marking one of the first permanent tragedies of his lifetime (Commire 167). Poe's love life also resulted in a tragedy as his wife, Virginia, suddenly died due to tuberculosis (Sova 1). These traumatic events, combined with his alcoholism and temperamental attitude, influenced many of his dark tales and poems (Sova 1). For instance, Poe's alcoholism is evident in "William Wilson" (1839) and "The Black Cat" (1843). Notwithstanding these influences, Poe's susceptibility to madness, or rather mental illness, and his fragile psyche are the clearest influences in his tales. Madness is evident in the tales "William Wilson," "The Tale-Tell Heart," and "The Black Cat" and is the end result of the narrators attempts to rid themselves of their consciences. Each narrator is consumed by the desire for freedom from their conscience and the agonizing pressure that comes from with living with a conscience. As the central driving motivation in Poe's tales, the conscience is manifested in various ways. For example, it appears as an external object like an old man's eye, a black cat, and an illusory doppelganger. These visual manifestations of the conscience add to each narrator's madness as well as heighten their need for aggression. Poe's tales show that the conscience can be killed, but merely for a moment, only to return with a much greater force in the end. After each narrator purges themselves of their consciences, they inevitably remain in the midst of an even greater turmoil. Each of these short stories follow a narrator who is psychologically plagued by his conscience which leads to their tragic downfall.

Poe's ideas about conscience, as presented in his fictional tales, anticipate the theories put forth by German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Austrian psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. Although Nietzsche is known for his existential philosophies and Freud for his psychoanalytical theories, both intellectuals put forth concepts that can be used to analyze the internal moralistic crisis that the protagonists in Poe's short stories experience. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872),

Nietzsche argues that the fundamental understanding of Greek art, cultures, and even man can be understood through the dialectical opposition between Dionysius and Apollo. Although these two Greek gods oppose each other in various representative ways, Nietzsche points out that a greater harmony or unity exists between them, of which Greek tragedy was born. Freud elaborates another significant dichotomy between the instincts, or the id, and the conscience, which he called the super-ego, in his article "The Id and the Ego" (1923). In spite of the fact that Nietzsche's theory is an aesthetic one and Freud's theory is ethical, there are similarities between both dichotomies that can be used to decipher the internal conflicts in Poe's works. Nietzsche's Apollonian force and Freud's super-ego are similar in fundamental ways. The Apollonian force, which represents truth, intellect, structure, and light, corresponds with the super-ego, which is the part of the mind that is dominated by morality, authority, and the law. On the other hand, there is the Dionysian force that represents pleasure, intoxication, madness, and death, which corresponds with the sexual and aggressive instincts housed in the id. The aim of my thesis is to compare and contrast the aesthetic opposition elaborated by Nietzsche between Dionysus and Apollo, with Freud's ethical ideas about the id and the super-ego, to see if their twin dialectics are identifiable in the various protagonists of Poe's tales, and to see if such a meta-dialectical approach might help us to understand the complex motives of Poe's narrators, as well as to comprehend their tragic fates.

CHAPTER II: AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEORIES OF NIETZSCHE AND FREUD

To be human is to be never truly understood. The theories of two of the world's greatest thinkers, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud, resonate with this statement about the uncertainty of our complex human nature. Nietzsche once said, "we are unknown to ourselves, we knowers: and with good reason. We have never looked for ourselves, so how are we ever supposed to find ourselves?" (3). This conundrum of not entirely understanding humans was also a notion of interest for Freud, who dedicated his life to investigating the human psyche. Both thinkers were fascinated by the intricate nature of humankind. Their works, such as Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and Freud's essay "The Id and the Ego" (1923), propose a dualistic approach to understanding the human condition. Respectively, both Nietzsche and Freud conceive of the root of human suffering as being due to a fundamental split within human life. Nietzsche approached this dilemma in various ways, one of which includes an aesthetical approach in *The Birth of Tragedy* where he argues that Greek art is the basis for understanding human suffering. Sigmund Freud proposed a clinical approach in determining the complexity of humans in his essay, "The Id and the Ego", where he attempts to compartmentalize the human psyche in order to come to a deeper understanding of mental life.

Although the definition of aesthetics has been debated by many, it is commonly defined as being the philosophical study of beauty and art. Aesthetics involves aesthetical judgements, objects, and experiences. By understanding that art is creation, those aspects of life that can be considered art become boundless. To quote Nietzsche, "art is the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life" (9). In *The Birth of Tragedy*, traditional Greek tragedies represented the truth or reality of life as they were imitations of human action. Nietzsche stresses that these attic tragedies were only made possible through the opposition of two

representative forces: Dionysius and Apollo. Dionysius is the god of intoxication, ecstasy, and passion, while Apollo is the god of plastic forces, images, and forms. Ultimately, for Nietzsche, the tragic hero or heroine is an Apollonian image of the Dionysian “truth” that lies at the heart of the human condition.

Sigmund Freud’s work is metapsychological, and much like Nietzsche believed aesthetics held the metaphysical answer of life, Freud believed that psychoanalysis provided a similar key to unlocking the mysteries of existence. Freud created a topography of the human mind that broke it down into three major faculties: the id, the ego, and the super-ego. Each part of the mind functions in different ways: the id is the instinctual or primal part of the mind, the super-ego is the policing agency or the conscience, and the ego is the conscious mediator of the other two. Freud suggests that the ego should mediate between the id and the super-ego in order to maintain balance. The mental balance accomplished by the ego is important to maintain in order to avoid both inappropriate erotic and aggressive behavior motivated by the id and a sadistic, guilt-ridden conscience that is plagued by a morbid super-ego. The balance maintained by the ego is a skill acquired by all humans as they progress through life. In a sense, maintaining a healthy ego is the product of an art form that can become refined with practice as life progresses, and Freud conceived of his clinical practice as helping his patients to achieve this balance.

The first theorist to put his ideas on paper was Friedrich Nietzsche, who lived between the years 1844 to 1900 in Germany. Nietzsche is historically known as one of the most influential figures in modern philosophy, particularly in the area of nihilistic and existential thought. In one of his earliest works, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche argues about the importance of Greek art and how its exceptionality was due to the dichotomy between two

traditional Greek gods: Dionysius and Apollo. Dionysius and Apollo, according to Nietzsche, can be viewed as much more than the gods they represented, but as existential forces. The terms Dionysian, or Dionysiac, and Apollonian, or *Apolline*, are used interchangeably in a variety of contexts. *The Birth of Tragedy* focuses on the context of art and how the dichotomy between the Dionysian and Apollonian forces gave rise to the traditional Attic tragedy.

The origin of the Dionysian force comes from Dionysus, which is the Greek god that represents intoxication, pleasure, dance, music, pain, and death. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Dionysus is viewed as a force that is characterized by a primitive resistance to structure and reason. According to a historical analysis of Dionysus by Walter Otto in his book *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, Dionysus is described as a dynamic god:

All of antiquity extolled Dionysus as the god who gave man wine. However, he was known also as the raving god whose presence makes man mad and incites him to savagery and even to lust for blood. He was the confidant and companion of the spirits of the dead. The flowers of spring bore witness to him, too. The ivy, the pine, the fig tree were dear to him. Yet far above all of these blessing in the natural world of vegetation stood the gift of the vine. Dionysus was the god of the most blessed ecstasy and the most enraptured love. But he was also the persecuted god, the suffering and dying god, and all whom he loved, all who attended him, had to share his tragic fate. (49)

Otto's description of Dionysus reflects Nietzsche's argument in his *The Birth of Tragedy*. The first being that the Dionysian realm is filled with intoxication which corresponds with Nietzsche's claims that the "Dionysiac" is "most immediately understandable to us in the analogy of intoxication" (17). Furthermore, "primitive men and peoples" that are "under the influence of the narcotic potion" are those who have been exposed to the force of Dionysus. Under these intoxications, "subjectivity" gives way to the "complete forgetting of the self" (17). Critic Christa Davis Acampora states that "it is widely recognized that Nietzsche describes

forgetting not as an absence or lack of memory but rather as an *active force* in its own right” (39).

Additionally, that which is tied to the Dionysian realm is not only pleasurable, but also harmful because it promotes death. The elimination of self or coming to a state of nothingness is desired by the Dionysian mind. The forgetting of individuality is promoted through the Dionysian realm, as explained in the words of Silenus, Dionysius’ companion, whom Nietzsche cites in his book. In his analysis of Silenus, Nietzsche explains how the best and most desirable thing of all mankind is “something entirely outside of [our] grasp: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing” (22). Other critics add that “the best thing for us is not to be” and “that human life” is “*without* meaning or valid order” (Bennett 125). The Dionysian force is harmful because of its pessimistic outlook towards life that makes one desire death over living. This is also why the Dionysian force encompasses suffering because it is also represented by a dying god. In “the oblivion of the Dionysiac state” that an individual can “forget the Apolline dictates” (Nietzsche 27). Of course, it is Apollo and the illusions that he represents that ultimately promise to redeem man from his Dionysian fate.

Sexual freedom is another identifying quality of the Dionysian force. Nietzsche states that at the center of barbaric Dionysian festivals was “lack of sexual discipline” (19). As Nietzsche mentions, the “witches’ brew” that was drunk by Dionysian men was a combination of “lust and cruelty” (19). A mythical creature that is related to Dionysius is that of the satyr, who represents “sexual omnipotence.” The satyr, a dainty, flute-playing goat that resides in the woods, is an image that the “Dionysian Greek” saw himself transformed into in the midst of his ecstasy (Nietzsche 41). The satyr was something “divine and sublime” for the Greeks and they viewed its image with respect. According to Nietzsche, the urge for sublime satisfaction is

wonderous compared to the “cultured” and “shriveled up” man (41). Indeed, sexual freedom threatens the structured tradition of a family life promoted by the Apollonian force of law and order.

The Dionysian ecstasy mentioned by Otto corresponds with Nietzsche’s descriptions of the Dionysian realm of song and dance. Before explaining the effects of song and dance on humans, Nietzsche gives a historical account of medieval German singing and dancing. He describes the German dancers of Saint John and Saint Vitus as recognizers of the Bacchic choruses from the Greeks (17). Nietzsche criticizes those who do not understand the origins of these types of dances and who label people who partake in them as being infested with “folk diseases” (17). Nietzsche makes clear that those critics are missing out on the beauty and “glowing life” of the “Dionysiac revelers” (17). He explains how men who sing and dance express themselves as members of a higher community. While in the middle of singing and dancing, humans tend to forget themselves entirely, or as Nietzsche states, they “forget how to walk and talk” and instead feel as if they are about to fly into the heavens (18). Because of the joy and exuberance that is elicited by song and dance, the individual who partakes feels as if he or she is a god who “walks about enraptured and elated” (18). Nietzsche proposes that individuals who sing and dance become demonstrations of art themselves. This is an interesting statement because his whole argument explains how art is only possible with both the Dionysian and the Apollonian. However, it is not difficult to determine how the singing and dancing human is an example of both of these realms. The Apollonian is visible through the man himself, as an object; however, the Dionysian is visible through the passion and ecstasy that man is experiencing.

The Dionysian at moments demonstrates a sort of superiority over the Apollonian. Nietzsche believed freedom is only possible by embracing the Dionysian will. Nietzsche explains this by making a reference to Beethoven's "Hymn of Joy." The ecstatic spirit of man can be taken to limitless place because of music:

Now the slave is a free man, now all the rigid and hostile boundaries that distress, despotism, or "impudent fashion" have erected between man and man break down. Now, with the gospel of world harmony, each man feels himself not only hinted, reconciled, and at one with his neighbor, but one with him, as if the veil of Maya had been rent and now hung in rags before the mysterious Primal Oneness. (17)

It is only through the Dionysian force that one can come to reach the unifying primal Oneness. Primal Oneness is a sense of unity with human beings that is only encountered when humans partake in those aspects which are purely Dionysian. Nietzsche's emphasis on this sense of unity promoted the abandonment of the self in order to come to a greater understanding of a collective unification. Unification is also a type of freedom for humans because they abandon personal thoughts and individualized feelings and begin to behave and experience as part of a community. As Nietzsche put it, the bond between "man and man" becomes sealed through "Dionysiac magic" (17).

In addition to this unification of men that the Dionysian realm perpetuates is the sense of understanding the "essence of things," or what is beyond the realm of Apollonian illusions, in a world that is bewildering and filled with suffering (Nietzsche 39). Nietzsche states that through the Dionysian ecstasy, at times even madness, "the worlds of everyday and Dionysiac reality become separated" (39). Nietzsche uses the Shakespearean protagonist of Hamlet to explain how the opposition between the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces can occur within men. He claims that Hamlet saw and comprehended his terrible reality and the "true nature of things," meaning he understood that the circumstances of his life were chaotic, and his actions did little to

nothing to alleviate this chaos (19). This type of understanding is what Nietzsche refers to as the understanding of a Dionysian man. As a result of this wisdom, Hamlet is no longer driven to act within his world of Apollonian forms that holds up the “veil of illusion” (19).

Apollo, on the other hand, is defined as the god of reason, structure, logic, and life. As a force, Apollo is referred to as the *Apolline* or the Apollonian. Apollo expresses measure, calm, and sunlight and, according to Cornelia Isler-Kerenyi, Apollo has even represented a patriarchal system (236-48). Nietzsche’s Apollo is “etymologically the ‘shining one’, the deity of light”, and through this force, “the higher truth” is made visible (Nietzsche 16). *Apolline* culture depicts the actions of “the glorious *Olympian* figures” or gods on the gables and structures of the Greek city-state (21). These images also included “the bright image projections of the Sophoclean hero” (46). Homer is stated as being “related to Apollonian popular culture as the single dream artist.” Everything is “deified whether it be good or evil” by the Apollonian force. In addition, this force brings humans “freedom from wilder impulses” and brings about a “calm” (16). The Apollonian can be viewed as superior to the Dionysian because it is highly focused on forms that inhabit the world; it is focused on what is visible, rather than invisible, and it is what imposes order, meaning, and form upon the chaos of existence.

The irony about Apollonian force is that it encompasses dreams and sculptures as well as reason and truth. Nietzsche explains how dreams are “the illusion of illusion” because they replicate the immediate illusion, which is life. Additionally, these illusions can provide redemptive qualities for people who live in a world filled with torment. As Nietzsche states, Apollo “also holds sway over the beautiful illusion of the inner fantasy world” (16). Although this may seem like a contradictory statement because truth is not often thought of as an illusion, “Apollo the god of illusions [...] means god of the protective illusion” (Pappas 45). In other

words, dreams are illusions that give comfort to the individual making one think or feel something is real when it is not. They are what Nietzsche would call “powerful and pleasurable illusions” (24). Nietzsche criticized the Apollonian artist as one who “lived in these images and only in them,” meaning that the Apollonian can only see the surface level of life and lives in “pure contemplation of images” (25). But this is exactly how the Apollonian should function since Apollo is the “soothsaying god” who gives an illusion of what the future will be (Nietzsche 16). To restate, individuals find pleasure in the Apollonian realm because it gives them reassurance of their surroundings and even of their future. Nietzsche states that the “*Apolline*” is “the world of dream images, whose perfection is not at all dependent on the intellectual accomplishments or artistic culture of the individual” (18). The Apollonian veil of illusion plays an important role in the understanding of life. According to Nietzsche, the need for action in the world depends entirely upon the “beautiful illusions” presented by the *Apolline* (16). Through these beautiful illusions and divine images man finds his most sublime expression. Moreover, when man loses grip of the “cognitive forms and appearances,” he is then filled with “tremendous dread” because his reality “seems suspended” (16).

The Dionysian and Apollonian forces necessary for art are also natural forces that are manifested within human beings. Critic Benjamin Bennett states that “the Apollonian and the Dionysian are related by ‘mutual necessity’ [...] not in the sense that they modify each other, but in the sense that they intensify each other so that the whole essence of each may be revealed” (119). This dichotomy between “artistic powers,” as Nietzsche states, is necessary just like the “reproduction of the species depends on the duality of the sexes” (14). The dichotomy between the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces, for Nietzsche, is essential for optimization within one’s self. Both forces depend on each other in a way that creates harmony, but also in understanding

that human life is filled with suffering and pain. However, this suffering and pain is redeemed by Apollonian illusions that motivate people to continue striving for life and motivates them to act.

Nietzsche, who coined the term “dream artist” for the Apollonian and “ecstatic artist” for the Dionysian, ultimately believed that both are “one in the same” (18). For instance, in song or music, it is apparent how both the Apollonian and the Dionysian are interrelated. According to Nietzsche, music is fundamentally Apollonian because of its use of rhyme and meter. He refers to the Doric hymns to describe how music was at first fundamentally Apollonian. As the evolution of music occurred, as all things evolve, music became Dionysian for its “overwhelming power of sound, unified flow of melody and utterly incomparable world of harmony” (21). Additionally, Nietzsche explains how music, if it were to be put in the form of appearance would have to appear as passion and madness, which are Dionysian modes (34). In this explanation, the body of man becomes the mediator between the Apollonian structure and Dionysian ecstasy.

Discovering truth is a key factor for Nietzsche and is another instance in which both the Apollonian and the Dionysian intermingle. Nietzsche argues that although the Apollonian force may present the appearance of truth, there is a deeper truth expressed by the Dionysian force. Bennett adds that “Nietzsche speaks of the Dionysian most often as ‘Weisheit’ ‘wisdom,’ whereas he calls the Apollonian “Illusion”: and whereas the former is a mental *ability* or attitude, the latter is an *object* of cognition or a mental *image*” (124-125). For instance, within theatrical tragedies, “the Apollonian truth is *symbolized*, because it makes use of appearance, but as a *symbol*, as a sign for the truth” (Bennett 120). Excess is what reveals truth and excess is bound to that which is Dionysian (Nietzsche 27). Bennett states that “Dionysian wisdom involves

knowledge of *truth* ('Wahrheit'), the horrible truth of the emptiness of existence, the truth that the best thing for man is not to exist in the first place" (124). The Apollonian truth, by way of contrast, is through appearances and illusions which are dreams or redeeming images. Nickolas Pappas notes that *The Birth of Tragedy* "casts Apollo in the role of barrier or obstacle, not only between individuals but also between any one individual and the truth of things" (47). Although Apollo is the soothsaying god, the Apollonian ironically "stands in truth's way" (47). Nietzsche gives various examples of how Apollo cannot live without Dionysius and vice-versa, which means they are almost two sides of the same coin that are always present when the other is around. Bennett provides an elaborate explanation of Nietzsche's understanding of the interconnectivity between these two artistic forces:

They are, he says, mutually necessary, so that if one weakens or vanishes, then the other does too: "And since you, Euripides, abandoned Dionysus, Apollo abandoned you as well." They are also mutually intensifying, so that each increase or purification of one is accompanied by a similar development in the other; it is on this assumption that Nietzsche bases his faith for the future: "Where Dionysian forces make themselves felt as tempestuously as in our experience, there also Apollo, wrapped in a cloud, must already have descended among us." (124)

Nietzsche understood that both forces were necessary for art and were intermingled even in contexts where one would not expect the other to be. This is one reason why Nietzsche criticized the new founded ways of thinking in ancient Greece. Nietzsche explains that the Greeks once exemplified both forces through their Attic tragedies, but then eventually abandoned the Dionysian force and became much more Apollonian in their ways of thought. This was an unfortunate development for Nietzsche because he believed that the Dionysian force should be embraced because it is necessary for human life so that life can be understood to its fullest.

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychoanalyst who lived from 1856 to 1939 and is known for his contributions in the field of psychology. Some critics argue that Freud can be

viewed as a philosopher although Freud himself steered clear of such associations. Primarily known as the founder or “the creator and dictator of psychoanalysis,” Freud believed his studies investigated facts (Murray 134). Freud wrote many short articles, lectures, and semi-philosophical essays that contain his best observations and ideas. Freud’s studies are focused on the human psyche, and are proposed to help us understand “the pathological process in mental life” (Freud 630). One specific proposition that Freud noted in multiple essays was the idea that there are three parts to the human psyche. The human psyche, otherwise known as the mind, is dynamically composed of the id, the ego, and the super-ego. Freud discusses the relationship between the ego and the id and the omniscient super-ego in his article “The Ego and The Id.”

In “The Ego and The Id,” Freud defines the ego as the part in each individual that “is a coherent organization of mental processes” (630). The ego is where “consciousness is attached” and where motility is controlled. The ego is “the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night.” According to critic Henry A. Murray, the ego is “partially conscious” and “defends itself against obnoxious impulses by certain mechanisms: repression, distortion, rationalization, projection, sublimation” (137). Freud differentiates between the ego and the id, as follows: “the ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions” (636). Freud described the ego’s relation to the id as being “a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse” (636). The ego, represented by the rider in this analogy, can guide the horse where it wants to go, meaning that the ego has the ability to transform the “id’s will into action as if it were its own” (636). This means that the ego can satisfy the impulses of the id when it desires to do so. In addition, the ego is thought of as a component of the mind that can either be strong or weak depending on the instincts, or the id. Herman Nunberg adds that

Freud understood that the ego is “fed by the energies coming from the instincts of the id” which then constitutes whether the ego is strong or weak (25).

Freud describes the id as the part of the mind that contains the passions, or in a more literal sense, human instinctual desires. The id, which encompasses the instincts that established itself in the mind before the ego did. The id is known as having “no unified will” as it is the representation of “the earliest organization of mental life of the individual and contains within itself the emotional and instinctive forces” (Bowman 644). The id defines what is impersonal in human nature and subject to natural law; it is also the instinctive and primitive force in the human psyche. Freud believed that the id is the storehouse of primal drives including one’s basic desires for food, sex, and aggression. These primal drives may be acceptable for children, but as we develop, we soon realize that “we cannot simply act on the primal instincts of the id as we have to navigate ourselves in the social spaces we inhabit” (Dimmock and Fisher 162). Individuals who do not balance their id are those who are viewed as unacceptable by society.

An identifying factor of the id is that it encompasses the instincts. Freud argued that there are two classes of instincts. The first he referred to as *Eros* which means love and includes the sexual instinct within humans. Erich Fromm explains how “*Eros* aims at complicating life and preserving it, and hence is also conservative, because with the emergence of life an instinct is born which is to preserve it” (505). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud explains that *Eros* operated from the beginning of life and appears as a “life instinct” in opposition to the “death instinct” (5). One of the purposes of *Eros* is to hold “together the portions of living substances” (Freud 4). Besides *Eros*, there is Thanatos, death, or death drive, “which [leads] organic life back into the inanimate state” (Freud 645). Overall, it is the death drive leads what is living to death. In “Thoughts on War and Death” (1915), Freud states “that death [is] the

necessary outcome of life” and “everyone owes nature a death and must expect to pay the debt” (3-4). Although the purposes of both instincts, that of the sexual instinct for self-preservation and the death instinct for the end of life, seem contradictory, Freud explains their complex correlation:

Both instincts would be conservative in the strictest sense of the word, since both would be endeavoring to re-establish a state of things that was disturbed by the emergence of life. The emergence of life would thus be the cause of the continuance of life and also at the same time of the striving towards death; and life itself would be a conflict and compromise between these two trends. The problem of the origin of life would remain a cosmological one; and the problem of the goal and purpose of life would be answered dualistically. (“The Ego and The Id” 646)

Life is the central focus, or as Freud states, the disturbance for both drives. Without life, these two drives would not exist. However contradictory these two drives are, they both depend on living organisms to attain their purpose. For Freud, the relationship between *Eros* and *Thanatos* is an “eternal struggle,” however, this conflict is fundamental to a proper understanding of human life (“Civilization and its Discontents” 1194). Both drives are natural and inherent in all human beings and play a foundational role in individual life. Freud informs us that

[...] we have to distinguish two classes of instincts, one of which, the sexual instincts or *Eros*, is by far the more conspicuous and accessible to study. It comprises not merely the uninhibited sexual instinct proper and the instinctual impulses of an aim-inhibited or sublimated nature derived from it, but also the self-preservation instinct, which must be assigned to the ego and which at the beginning of our analytic work we had good reason for contrasting with the sexual object-instincts. The second class of instincts was not so easy to point to; in the end we came to recognize sadism as its representative. On the basis of theoretical considerations, supported by biology, we put forward the hypothesis of a death-instinct. The task of which is to lead organic matter back into inorganic state; on the other hand, we supposed that *Eros*, by bringing about a more and more far-reaching combination of the particles into which living substance is dispersed, aims at complicating life and, at the same time of course, at preserving it. (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 5)

Sadism is known as a human quality in which sexual gratification occurs from the infliction of pain. A perhaps more common instance of the death-instinct is seen in the common sports, such as boxing or car racing. The desire for immediate fame in the sports industry surpasses the risky behaviors that the sport entails, which can bring them closer to dying. As stated by Moshe HaLevi Spero, “this instinct includes man’s essential aggressiveness and the tendency to destroy the Other;” it also “represents the fatal evolution toward stagnant inertia” (158). The death-drive, which attempts to return organic matter to previous states of being by mean of death and destruction, appears to be a pessimistic necessity for humankind (Spero 158).

Besides the ego and the id, Freud put forth a third mental agency: the super-ego. The super-ego functions by suppressing the urges of the id and attempts to make the ego behave in a moral way. For Freud, the super-ego originated from both the ego and the id but is the much more authoritarian portion of the mind. According to Freud, the super-ego arose from an “outcome of two highly important factors, one of a biological and the other of historical nature” (“The Ego and The Id” 642). The manifestation of the super-ego arose from the influence of authority, religious teaching, education, and reading. The super-ego exerts a stronger influence upon the mind because it encompasses the internalized ideas and morals that people gain from the parents and society. The super-ego and the ego may at times become convoluted, but Freud mentions how they are different due to the distinct origin of the super-ego:

The differentiation of the super-ego from the ego is no matter of chance; it represents the most important characteristics of the development both of the individual and of the species; indeed, by giving permanent expression to the influence of the parents it perpetuates the existence of the factors to which it owes its origin. (642)

The super-ego originates from those aspects or qualities learned from a parent. Critic Karl M. Bowmen states that “the super-ego is formed from the primary identification with the parent”

and is regarded as a “modification of the ego” (64). In this sense, it is evident that the super-ego acts as a policing agency within the mind. In addition to being influenced by a parent figure, the super-ego is also influenced by “religion, morality, and social sense,” which, as mentioned before, are influential factors that stem from society (Freud 643). All of these factors are what Freud considered to be part of “the higher nature of man,” since they are social constructs accepted by most communities (643). Overall, the key factor of the super-ego is that it is the moralistic conscience of the mind and it functions through restraint and moderation.

As the conscience is the most identifiable quality of the super-ego, it is worth mentioning how it functions. The conscience functions primarily by instilling in the mind a sense of guilt. As Freud explains, the “conscious sense of guilt (conscience) is based between the ego and the ego-ideal and is the expression of a condemnation of the ego by its critical agency” (“The Ego and The Id” 652). The anxiety that is manifested by the super-ego is what has been commonly referred to as a “guilty conscience” (Dimmock and Fisher 163). The ego becomes “punished through guilt by the form of the super-ego we call conscience” (Dimmock and Fisher 163). The super-ego can at times become sadistic and lead to a sense of self-loathing or self-hatred. Marcia Cavell Aufhauser explains how many psychoanalysts have “agreed that, though the capacity for guilt is both human and ‘healthy’, the degree of guilt can be crippling [...]” (291). Freud’s ideas reflect this notion as he was aware that the super-ego’s ability to instill guilt can lead to many negative impacts on the human mind like neurosis and melancholia. An excess of the super-ego, or when the super-ego fails to deal with the demands of the id, can result in what Freud calls neurosis. A dominating super-ego can cause a state of melancholia. The dominating super-ego is an “excessively strong super-ego [that obtains] a hold upon consciousness” and “rages against the ego with merciless violence, as if it had taken possession of the whole of the sadism available

in the person concerned” (Freud 654). The sadism inflicted by the super-ego can even cause people to yearn for death. Ironically, the super-ego, which promotes life, can give rise to “a pure death instinct” (Freud 654).

Freud’s ethical views, those that show how the mind is driven by instinctual drives and sadistic guilt, demonstrate that there is always a tension in the human mind between the private self and the public’s expectations. Basically, it is plain to see how the mind is set up for tragedy. The mind can neither give in to its instinctual desires or its super-ego without ending up dissatisfied. Even if the mind is balanced, it still must battle between the desires of the id and the dictations of the super-ego. The tragedy of the human mind is due to either the sadistic super-ego, the part of the mind that judges the self, or the impulsive id, the part of the mind that is consumed by primitive instincts. The purpose of the super-ego is to attain complete control of the ego, while the id strives for total freedom of expression. Balancing between these two opposing faculties of the mind is a skill that is acquired by the ego, and one could even consider this balancing act by the ego the art of life.

Nietzsche’s and Freud’s theories share similarities. The super-ego is Apollonian because it is the part of the mind that functions based on rules and laws which are rational and logical. In addition, the id is Dionysian because it is the part of the mind that functions sexually and aggressively and is pleasurable and chaotic. Another similarity between both theories is that both dichotomies result in a tragedy. For Nietzsche, the opposition between the Dionysian and the Apollonian created the birth of tragic arts. Freud’s opposition between the super-ego and the id also shows how the ego is caught in a tragic tug-of-war. For both theorists, the tragedy comes because of the inability to balance between contrasting inclinations. The opposing inclinations continuously try to overpower each other, and this results in the tragedy of the human condition.

For Nietzsche, human conflict is demonstrated in music and particularly in the theatrical visual arts. In these Greek tragedies, humans are depicted as a mixture of half-logical, reasonable human beings and half-impulsive, instinctual animals. These theatrical representations of human life exemplify how at times the super-ego can be Apollonian and the id can be Dionysian. For instance, to be a Dionysian individual could result in the id reacting to the external Apollonian constructs that are manifestations of the super-ego. The reason why Freud's metapsychology can be viewed as a tragedy of the mind is because the super-ego and the id need each other yet want to eliminate and overpower each other as well. If Freud's vision of the human mind is correct, then it can only be understood that the mind is set up for pain and suffering: tragedy. In other words, the mind suffers because of its need to maintain balance between these two opposing forces. The individual who is swayed by the super-ego becomes guilt ridden and suffers a great deal. Yet, the individual who avoids Apollonian structure and impulsively acts out in violence also suffers great consequences. In this sense, it is evident that studies that are concerned with ethical notions, such as Freud's, are intertwined with those studies of the aesthetic, such as Nietzsche's. When applied to literature, these dialectical approaches make it apparent how the human mind, with its over-powering conscience and its impulsive desires, sways either dramatically one way or the other. The constant opposition within the psyche shows how individuals are never truly masters of their own minds as much as they are egotistical puppets to their id and super-ego. The overwhelming sway of either the id or super-ego may result in the tragic downfall of individuals.

CHAPTER III: FREUD'S ID AND SUPER-EGO IN POE'S TALES

Poe's fictional works are filled with notions of the complex and dualistic nature of the human mind. The mental conflict that Poe's characters experience anticipates the views of both Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. Poe's tales are heavily focused on a split human mind, which makes Freud's views of the id and the super-ego are more clearly evident in Poe's tales "William Wilson," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat," rather than Nietzsche's views on art in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Various literary critics have applied Freud's views to Poe's tales and concluded that Poe's narrators are caught in a conflict between their consciences and instincts. The tension Poe develops between the immoral impulses of his narrators and their scrutinizing conscience resembles Freud's views of the conflict between the instinctual id and an overpowering super-ego. While a Freudian analysis of Poe is undoubtedly relevant, Nietzsche's views on Greek tragedy are applicable. This is because Poe's characters' consciences are manifested onto external objects, or as Nietzsche states, Apollonian forms. Poe's characters are extremely uneasy with these visual reminders which are only figments of their imagination. This then furthers Nietzsche's Apollonian concept of an illusion of an illusion. These forms, which are constant reminders of the immoral actions done by the narrators, elicit aggression and violence in all the narrators. In these fits of Dionysian madness and overpowering emotion, each narrator attempts to take down the Apollonian illusion that afflicts him. In the following chapter, I will write a literary analysis of Poe's tales by first applying Freud's dichotomy of the super-ego and the id, and then applying Nietzsche's dichotomy between the Apollonian and the Dionysian to evaluate how each of Poe's narrator's delusional perceptions are triggered by their consciences, and ultimately motivate them to kill.

Poe's writings incorporate ideas that anticipate the psychological theories put forth by Sigmund Freud. Critic Floyd Stovall mentions how many people read Poe to use "psychoanalysis as a technique of criticism" (418). Poe's tales strongly focus on mental conflicts that arise from the fundamentally split human nature of the human psyche. Sigmund Freud believed that the ego was involved in a constant clash between the desires of the id and the objections of the super-ego. Similarly, Poe's characters are also torn between their instincts and their conscience. Reason is presented in Poe's tales as the conscience, which is like Freud's super-ego. In Poe's "William Wilson," for instance "the diction used to describe the double may be "moral ("conscience"), or Freudian ("superego")" (Ware 198). Instincts are relatable to what Poe called "the imp of the perverse," which resembles Freud's id. Poe's theory about perversity shows how complex human instincts can be. Poe describes perversity as a "radical and primitive impulse" to "do wrong for the wrong's sake" (Poe 717). His definition suggests that perversity is a primary impulse that motivates human behavior. Poe also proposes that it is natural for humans to be consumed by perversity and that with "certain minds," it is "absolutely irresistible" (717). Poe's narrators are consumed by an instinctual or diabolic desire that loathes the moral laws imposed by the conscience or super-ego.

Poe's tale, "William Wilson," focuses on the motif of doppelgangers. According to Eric Carlson, "the protagonist's counterpart, or double (alter-ego, shadow, doppelganger) becomes the source of conflict, anxiety, and final self-annihilation or self-realization" (186). William Wilson recounts a series of events in which he was plagued by a mysterious double that is evidently his conscience. This double has appeared to him since he was a boy and well into his adult life. The double only occurs when the original Wilson is about to partake in evil actions. The original Wilson is dissolute and perverted while the double appears to be the super-ego to

the original Wilson's id (Magistrale and Poger 38). This contrast between moral and immoral character is a central point to be noted and it is what drives the original Wilson to maddening and violent actions. In fact, "this contradictory function of the human will is the central concern" of this tale (Coskren 177). The original Wilson is driven mad because of the excessive amount of times the double appears when the original Wilson is in the middle of or about to partake in some acts of debauchery such as gambling, intoxication, and sexual affairs. The battle between the two Wilsons eventually leads Wilson to murder his double, or his "contradictory" conscience (Coskren 177). Just before the original Wilson murders his double, they are both locked within a chamber containing what the narrator at first believes to be a large mirror. In his anger, the original Wilson attacks his double by stabbing him, which then leads him to understand that he was only battling with himself. This is clearly shown in final lines of the tale spoken by the double:

You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead—dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist—and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself. (329)

At the end of the tale, he kills his double, but the ending leaves it ambiguous with what cost his victory is purchased. Because of his action, the narrator not only rid himself of his conscience, but he also rids himself of any opportunity for life in the world, for redemption in heaven, and for any possibility of hope. These last lines, which are told by a super-ego, or Wilson's dying double, is the final reminder of consequences for the original Wilson. William Wilson was so internally divided that he visualized the moralistic side of himself, or the super-ego, as an external entity his entire life.

Poe's creation of an uncertain narrator makes it very difficult to determine which Wilson is recounting the tale. Critic Ruth Sullivan proposes a perspectival question about the narration

of the tale: “is it the instinctual side of Wilson unleashed or is it the representative of conscience who narrates?” (254). Poe’s clever use of a doppelganger adds to the uncertainty of the narrative. The presence of the doppelganger, “brings into question the reliance upon a concept of an indivisible and unified identity that is continuous and fixed over time” (Slethaug 100). Determining which side of Wilson is good and which is evil is burdensome because both the id and the super-ego leave Wilson’s ego in insufferable situations. The original Wilson’s id is evidently evil because it is what drove the original Wilson to murder his double; however, the super-ego can also be viewed as a “villain” (Sullivan 256). Although the super-ego is generally the policing agency of the mind, for the original Wilson, it proves to be harmful. As stated by Sullivan, the “heavily moralistic tone” of that tale shows that the super-ego is “effective in its sadism” and “masked in repentant confession” (256).

After the original Wilson murders his double, or super-ego, he comes to the realization that his double and he are one in the same. The narration of the tale is told by a third Wilson who is not dominated by the id or the super-ego. Sullivan suggests that the narrating Wilson “ego is dominated by the super-ego and retells the story of the part of the ego that was dominated by the id” (254). The narrating Wilson’s ego displays some of the moralistic qualities of the super-ego. For instance, Wilson judges the actions of the original Wilson as being “unpardonable” and “wicked” (Poe 314). Thus, notwithstanding the murder of the conscience or super-ego, the super-ego appears to have been reborn in the narrating Wilson. William Wilson proves to be a dynamic character because of the intense oppositions between his id and super-ego.

“The Tell-Tale Heart” focuses on the obsession the narrator developed for an old man’s eye. At first, his motivation for murder is unclear as the narrator states: “Object there was none.

Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me an insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye!" (498). The narrator is overwhelmed by a desire to murder the old man and he uses the eye as the reason to kill. "The Tell-Tale Heart" is one of Poe's tales that demonstrates his theory of perversity. Perversity is shown through the narrator's need to murder the old man, who is clearly helpless and partially blind. The narrator's role is that of a caretaker for the old man, yet he is consumed by the idea of murdering him precisely because that is the exact opposite of what he should do for the old man. Critic Arthur Robinson argues that the narrator's "drive is self-destructive," and this proves to be evident at the finale of the tale (369). The narrator's perverse desire to harm the old man leads to the narrator's tragic downfall at the end of the tale.

The narrator's obsession with the old man's eye is arguably because the eye symbolizes an imposition of surveillance for the narrator. Critic B. D. Tucker argues that the narrator's motivation for murder could be because he viewed the eye of the old man as an "all-seeing eye, peering at one, even during one's most secret moments" (95). Tucker also adds that the narrator "wished to be the seer, not the seen," which explains why the old man's eye made the narrator feel so disturbed (95). The narrator feels that the old-man's eye is aware of all of his thoughts and deeds, much like the super-ego is aware of the restricted desires of the id. The old man's eye is thus an external representation of the narrator's conscience, and the narrator's insistent need to rid himself of the eye is his attempt to overthrow his super-ego.

At first, the narrator is successful in ridding himself of his conscience. After brutally killing the helpless old man, dismembering his body, and burying him under the floor planks, the narrator smiles "gaily" and is filled with relief (500). His sense of satisfaction is short lived, however, as his conscience returns with an even stronger and more horrifying imposition. When

the narrator gets visited by the police officers, who also function much like the super-ego does, his sense of relief begins to crumble. The narrator is overwhelmed by the sound of the slain old man's heartbeat which was "*such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*" (501). The sound of the heartbeat becomes louder and louder until it is unbearable for the narrator. Filled with anxiety, guilt, and rage, the narrator dramatically confesses the murder: "Villains! [...] dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks! Here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!" (501). The narrator was overwhelmed by his guilt as his perverse deed comes back to haunt his mind through the delusional manifestation of his conscience.

In "The Black Cat," Poe more thoroughly describes his notion of perversity. In this tale, the narrator's perversity is often due to his excessive alcohol binges. His perverseness becomes very clear just before the narrator is about to murder his cat, Pluto:

And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of perverseness. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart—one of the indivisible primary faculties of sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgement, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such? (535)

Poe's narrator explains how he is perverse. By wanting to act in a way that he knows he should not, the narrator demonstrates that he still holds a set of values. However, his values are overturned by his fiendish desires. Critic Magdalen Wing-chi Ki states that, "Poe's story features a new ethics which operates in the domain of drives and shows a distinct *love* of unreason and displeasure" (570). This statement holds true in the tale when the narrator murders his beloved Pluto. He murders Pluto with "tears streaming from [his] eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at [his] heart" (Poe 533). He hangs Pluto with some regret, but the narrator makes it

clear that his remorse only makes the nature of his crime even more perverse. The narrator murders Pluto because he knows the cat loved him and because he was committing an unforgivable sin. The narrator's perversity is stronger than the affection he had even for his favorite pet and outweighs his respect for the moral law of reason.

After he kills Pluto, the narrator's conscience begins to play tricks on his ego by triggering a variety of illusions. The illusory forms his conscience assumes is a reaction to the acts of perversity committed by the narrator, such as gouging out Pluto's eye and eventually hanging him from the limb of a tree. In addition, another illusion is the image of the gallows on the splash of white fur that appears on the second black cat. Pluto's eye may also be symbolic of the narrator's conscience, as was the case of the old man's eye in "The Tell-Tale Heart," which is why he was motivated to remove it, as he was compelled by the same spirit of perversity. After killing Pluto, the narrator states that "for months [he] could not rid [himself] of the phantasm of the cat" (534). The second black cat also symbolizes the narrator's conscience as he begins to have "dreams of unutterable fear" only to be awakened by the "hot breath of the thing upon" his face (535). The narrator, filled with hatred, eventually resolves to murder the second cat, but the violent swing of his axe lands in the head of his innocent wife. The narrator ends up entombing her in the basement walls. After his murder of his wife, the narrator mentions that "the guilt of [his] dark deed disturbed [him] but little" (537). He is no longer plagued by illusions of his cat and the second black cat vanishes for the time being.

After the disappearance of the second cat, the narrator is overcome by a sense of freedom, as he can now "breathe as a freeman" does (537). His sense of freedom came as result of having rid himself of his conscience which the black cat had come to symbolize. The second black cat was clearly a constant reminder of the devilish deeds had done to Pluto. When the

narrator gets visited by police officials, his sense of freedom begins to fade. Yet, it is not because his conscience drives him to experience illusions again, but because of his perverse and unconscious desire to give himself away to the police. As the officials are about to leave his home, he stops them; by saying:

I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health, and little more courtesy. By and by, gentlemen, this—this is a very well constructed house.” [In the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all.] “I may say an *excellently* solidly put together”; and here, through the mere frenzy of bravado, I rapped heavily, with a cane which I held in my hand, upon that very portion of the brickwork behind which stood the corpse of the wife of my bosom. (Poe 537)

The same perversity that drove the narrator to murder Pluto resurfaces at the end of the tale when he gives himself away as the murderer. After rapping on the wall, the narrator begins to hear howling and wailing that came from behind the wall. The narrator believes that these delusions “might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation” (538). Of course, the narrator eventually realizes that he has walled the second cat in with the corpse of his wife. The religious language Poe employs once again aligns the cat with the narrator’s conscience, or in Freudian terms, the super-ego, which the presence of the police officials also reinforces in the form of the law.

These three tales show a similar pattern for the psychologically tormented narrators. The first is their yearning for a sense of freedom from an imposing super-ego. Secondly, their desire to behave diabolically or perversely for no other motive than to refute the moral law. Lastly, each of the narrator’s commit violent acts against an omniscient representation of their conscience. As mentioned previously, each narrator’s perverse actions result in the visitation of their conscience via external delusions. In “William Wilson,” the original Wilson experienced the delusion of his double. His double always appeared whenever the original Wilson was about

to partake in immoral activities. In “The Tell-Tale Heart,” when the narrator gets visited by the police officers, he experiences intense auditory delusions of the old man’s heartbeat. In “The Black Cat,” the brutal murder of Pluto resulted in the narrator’s visual delusions of the slain cat Pluto and the formation of the gallows on the fur of the second black cat. Regardless of their deep yearning for freedom from their consciences, the narrators’ egos are constantly plagued by reminders of their devilish deeds. The id was able to overcome the super-ego, but the moment is always short lived and followed by tragic repercussions. For instance, Wilson was able to rid himself of his conscience, but he dooms any possibility of hope in heaven and in the world. The narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” is overcome by the delusion of the old man’s heartbeat and kills himself (501). Lastly, in “The Black Cat,” the narrator admits that in hanging Pluto he has committed a sin that would “jeopardize” his “immortal soul” ... “beyond the reach of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God” (533). Poe’s portrayal of ridding oneself of the conscience comes with massive consequences that lead all his narrators to their immediate doom or downfall.

CHAPTER IV: NIETZSCHE'S APOLLO AND DIONYSUS IN POE'S TALES

For Nietzsche, the dichotomy between the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces are always in constant opposition with each other. This is because the Apollonian force is representative of those illusions, forms, and laws that drive individuals to keep living. The Dionysian force rebels against those notions of order and thrives on emotions, intoxication, and seeks to bring man to a state of nothingness. Nietzsche believed that human experience was essentially Apollonian, but it is illusory because human reality is undifferentiated from the images that occur in dreams and theatrical plays (119). These means that all immediate appearances—that is all shapes and forms—are illusory despite the pleasure they bring to people. Yet, Apollonian illusions continue to be and are central to human life since they encompass religion and morals, which motivate people to keep living. Nietzsche states that these illusions, specifically religious illusions, present a redeeming image for people that is only an aesthetic contrivance. In addition, maintaining a moral life, which is promoted by the conscience or super-ego born from the teachings of education, parents, and religion, is an illusion itself. Yet, it is these Apollonian illusions that most people accept as universal truths. Because the knowledge gained from education, parents, and religion is so ingrained in most human minds, it becomes impossible to eliminate these concepts. In attempting to rid oneself of morals, or a conscience, an oddity occurs. For instance, Poe's narrators in "William Wilson," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat," all rebelled against their consciences which then manifested into a form: the double, the evil-eye, and the black cat. Because these manifestations of conscience were only experienced by the narrators, they are then also delusional. This shows that even an extremely repressed conscience will be bound to return in an external form. Additionally, each narrator carries within them the primary illusion of conscience, and a secondary illusion of conscience

that is manifested as an Apollonian form. Poe's narrators live in a double illusion, or as Nietzsche would call it "an illusion of an illusion" just as dreams and theatrical plays are (39). The manifestation of the conscience as an Apollonian form is born out of each narrator's yearning to repress it. Despite the strong motive to kill this form, the end of each tale shows how each narrator was ultimately chasing an unreliable Apollonian illusion. Poe's narrators' insanity is not solely revolving around the Apollonian force, but also the Dionysian. The narrators in Poe's tales experience dreams and overwhelming emotions as a result of the Apollonian illusions. Each narrator's overwhelming emotions causes them to respond aggressively towards the forms their consciences assume. There are also minor motifs within the tales that exemplify the Dionysian force such as their yearning for self-indulgence, sexual freedom, and wickedness—which are all preformed with the intent of going against the moral law that is imposed by their consciences or super-egos. These Dionysian desires revolving around self-pleasure exemplifies how the narrator's egos are greatly influenced by their ids. Their consciences are temporarily suppressed by their instinctual Dionysian impulse that seeks a lawless world. Poe's narrator's show how they are clearly mad because of the illusions they experienced and driven to violence. These Apollonian illusions are symbolic of Poe's narrator's attempt to suppress their consciences, which then leads to and is the central reason why the protagonists lean towards insanity.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche analyzes the internal conflict experienced by Shakespeare's protagonist Hamlet through the dichotomy of the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces. Nietzsche states that Hamlet exemplifies what it means to be a "Dionysian man" who truly understands the "eternal essence of things" and who feels repelled to act within his chaotic world (39). Hamlet's world became chaotic after he realizes that his father has been unjustly

poisoned and killed, and his mother Gertrude is to marry his uncle, Claudius. Yet, there is nothing he can do to reverse the disgusting series of events that have transpired before his contemplation of suicide. Although Hamlet became a man of Dionysian wisdom, he also demonstrates how he was much more Apollonian. This is because Hamlet chooses to remain alive even though that means he must continue to endure the pains of his cruel life.

Hamlet's internal conflict is similar to the experiences that Poe's narrator's face in the tales "William Wilson," "The Tale-Tell Heart," and "The Black Cat." However, Poe's narrators are motivated to act in order to kill the illusion conscience provides, which is ironically still giving each narrator motivation to act. Poe's narrators could be viewed as Dionysian men of wisdom because they yearn for a life that is lawless and free from social constraints. Some could argue that Poe's narrators understood that life is inevitably chaotic, therefore, they choose and desire to embrace chaos. However, this choice is difficult to maintain since the conscience is manifested by plaguing delusions for Poe's narrators. The plaguing delusions drive the narrators towards violently ridding themselves of these manifestations that represent the moral law. Poe's narrators differ from Hamlet in that they are extremely diabolical; however, they are similar because they both use their illusions as their source for action. Poe's narrator's yearn for Dionysian chaos, and by participating in actions that are immoral—such as intoxication, sexual freedom, and wickedness—they show how a life without law and order is desired. Although Poe's narrator's all found a way to kill that which was a manifestation of their conscience, in other words to make the Apollonian illusion fall, they all find that it is inevitable to live without the conscience since it always returns with a much greater force.

In Poe's "William Wilson," the original Wilson had a lifelong struggle with his double who is the manifested Apollonian form of his conscience or super-ego. This manifestation took

the form of an individual, his double, which the original Wilson vehemently believed was not only a figment of his imagination. Aside from having the exact same name, they also resembled each other in actions and in words. In terms of appearance, Wilson and his double were indistinguishable. In addition to this Apollonian visual delusion is an auditory delusion of the whispered words of Wilson's double. It was a whisper that was identical but also "*grew the very echo of [his] own*" (Poe 320). The original Wilson's life is a blur, specifically because it can be argued that his entire life was not even real, or perhaps just a dream. In the opening lines of the tale, the original Wilson makes a rhetorical question as to whether his life has been all a dream: "Have I not indeed been living in a dream? And am I not now dying victim to the horror and the mystery of all sublunary visions?" (Poe 314). As dreams are illusions of illusions, it then does not become surprising that the original Wilson's life was constantly filled with the delusions of a double. Wilson's delusions often appeared when the original Wilson was about to behave in ways that were wicked. Some significant moments in which the double appears in this tale are during an unfair gambling game, during various instances of intoxication, and during moments of sexual desire or wickedness. Wilson's double torments him by exposing his malicious intentions and by stalking him wherever he travels.

One significant behavior of the original Wilson is his addiction for alcohol, which Nietzsche related to the Dionysian force. This behavior is significant because it demonstrates how the original Wilson attempts to free himself from the sobriety of the moral law. In addition, Wilson's intoxications are exemplification of that which is Dionysian by demonstrating a continuous search for a lack of self-control. As Robert Coskren states, Wilson's "intoxication suggests release" from his suffering brought about by the double's presence (180). One instance that showed Wilson's release from his super-ego was during his stay at Eton. Years after

attempting to prank his double, the original Wilson plans a “secret carousal” at his chambers where “wine flowed freely” within the company of “the most dissolute students” (Poe 322). The fact that the party was a secret, and that his guests were all people of licentious character, shows how the narrator enjoys participating in behavior that is immoral. Additionally, the alcohol that freely flowed also shows how the narrator seeks a frenzied mental state, much like Nietzsche’s Dionysian man. Nietzsche states that “under the influence” of narcotic, a joyful sensation arises and “Dionysiac urges are awakened” (17). The aims of intoxication are to “forget the self” (17). As the tale progress, the original Wilson’s various attempts to rid himself of his double prove unsatisfactory and his inclination to consume alcohol becomes even greater. The original Wilson admits that he had eventually “given [himself] up entirely to wine; and its maddening influence upon my hereditary temper rendered me more and more impatient of control” (328). Wilson’s alcoholism perpetuates his desire for a lawless life, while enabling his instinctual urges. Lastly, the original Wilson’s stay in Rome during a masquerade party is when he indulges “more freely than usual in the excess of the wine-table” (328). He then begins to pursue the wife of Neapolitan Duke Di Broglio in an “anxious” manner (328). John M. Rist states that “Eros” is a “synonym for Dionysius” which holds to be true for Poe’s sexually driven protagonist, specifically in this tale (237). The original Wilson’s attempt to seduce Di Broglio’s wife is prevented by the visitation of his conscience, his double.

The original Wilson’s lifelong internal struggle with his double in some sense portrays what Nietzsche described as the opposition and struggle between the Apollonian and the Dionysian forces. As Eric W. Carlson states, the drama within this tale revolves around the narrator’s “decadent public self and a decent inner being” (186). In other words, the original Wilson represents much more of a Dionysian decadent man, or the id, while his double, which

limits his debaucheries, symbolizes a decent Apollonian man, or the super-ego. Even though the original Wilson was driven his whole life to rid himself of the Apollonian form his conscience assumed (the double), there is a point within the tale when he can but avoids it due to fear. The original Wilson resolves to prank his double, only to become extremely startled by the countenance of his sleeping double, which does not match up to his expectations:

[...] when the bright rays fell vividly upon the sleeper, and my eyes, at the same moment, upon his countenance. I looked;--and a numbness, an iciness of feeling instantly pervaded my frame. My breast heaved, my knees tottered, my whole spirit become possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror. Gasping for breath, I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face. Were these—*these* the lineaments of William Wilson? (Poe 321)

The original Wilson resolves to vanish from the school and to never return. Coskren adds that “this confrontation is the discovery that Wilson is not some external, other being, but rather his own alter-self” (179). The original Wilson was likely viewing another person in the chambers he visited, yet he still encounters the illusion of his double as his source of plaguing terror as the tale progresses. By the end of the tale, the original Wilson realizes that his double was only an illusion, and because of this he is filled with “astonishment” and “horror” (Poe 329). The original Wilson’s feelings correlate with Nietzsche’s view on how men are filled with “tremendous dread” when they lose their understanding of “cognitive forms of appearance” (16). The feeling of terror arises within the original Wilson when he realizes that his double is only a figment of his imagination, and not the external form he had vehemently believed.

Nietzsche understood that finding truth consisted in “the activity of struggling against it” because “the truth is absolutely horrible, and the only possible authentic relation to it” is fighting against it (Bennett 124). Wilson’s double served as the Apollonian “illusion of an illusion” which motivated the original Wilson to act even though that meant to kill the one thing that brought him to act. As Nietzsche states, the term “illusions of illusion”, Raphael’s painting

Transfiguration, depicts two levels of illusions—that of religion and the redeeming image (25-26). It is the image of the “radiant” angel that constitutes the redeeming image for those religious followers, bound to primal suffering (Nietzsche 25). Nietzsche felt that it is only through a world of suffering that man can create such a redeeming world of appearances or illusions. However, the original Wilson’s suffering did not come because of the sin or evil in the world, but rather it came from his inability to freely act evil without his conscience eating away at him. The original Wilson’s redeeming image could arguably be his profound belief that his conscience could be destroyed. Considering that the original Wilson had already managed to create a mental illusion of his double, or an illusion of an illusion, which essentially separated his ego’s super-ego from his ego’s id, shows that serious he was about ridding himself of his conscience.

In Poe’s “The Tale-Tell Heart,” the narrator is plagued by an old man’s vulture-like eye that poses a threat to him because it is the manifested form of the narrator’s conscience. The form his conscience assumes, which is the old man’s eye, seems appropriate since eyes symbolize sight and awareness. This sight and awareness resemble the purpose of the super-ego, since its function in the human psyche is to always be aware of the actions and thoughts of the ego. It is the old man’s eye that fills the narrator with the motivation to act against it, thus the old man’s eye is that Apollonian illusion which drives him to act. The eye repels the narrator and fills him with an abundance of emotions such as terror, fury, and vexation—only furthering his desire to rid himself of it (Poe 498). Additionally, the eye belongs to a helpless old man, as it is uncommon for people to desire to murder a helpless old man, the narrator shows his perversity through this desire. It is not only perverse for the narrator to seek such a murder, but in seeking to eliminate his conscience altogether is perhaps the most perverse act of all. This is because

attempting to remove the conscience is the equivalent to remove any social order or moral law. It could also be thought of as an ego completely dominated by the primacy of the id that seeks to become a primitive and lawless man. The narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart” shows that he does not want any social order because of his desire to rid himself of the eyeball which symbolizes the narrator’s conscience in an Apollonian form.

In “The Tale-Tell Heart,” the narrator is primarily motivated to act because of the illusions and delusions he experiences. Some of the delusions the narrator experiences take the form of a sound, for instance, the old man’s heartbeat after he is dead. Yet, the narrator describes his “acuteness of the senses” to justify his sanity (Poe 498). In the opening lines of the tale, the narrator demonstrates how he experiences Apollonian illusions regularly. Even though the narrator’s sense of hearing is stated to be exceptional, the varying sounds he claims to hear are humanly impossible to perceive, therefore they are illusions:

True!—Nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Harken! And observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (Poe 498)

Being able to hear all sounds of heaven, earth, and hell is impossible, yet the narrator’s claims that he can hear all these sounds shows how he rationalizes his day-to-day life. This then proves that the narrator’s “acuteness of the senses” are merely delusions he is experiencing. He then uses these delusions to justify his actions and insist upon his sanity. As for all people, the senses help us to understand the world of immediate forms around us. The narrator’s delusional hearing this exemplifies Nietzsche’s concept of an “illusion of an illusion.” The narrator faces an illusory world, which for him also consisted not only of everyday illusions, but a second layer of illusion, which is the one that was revealed by his “acute” senses.

The beating of the old man's heart proves to be another example of an Apollonian illusion. There are two instances in which the narrator believes that the old man's heartbeat can be heard by others when it apparently cannot. The first is when he is planning the murder and is overlooking the old man who lays on his bed. The narrator's auditory delusions heighten his paranoia:

And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating great louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! (Poe 500)

The “hellish” sound of the old man's heartbeat overwhelms the narrator so much that it compelled him to murder the helpless old man. However, the heartbeat returns at the ending of the tale when the narrator is visited by the officers. Here the narrator begins to hear the heartbeat from under the floor planks. The narrator contemplates that “the noise arose over all and continually increased” growing “louder—louder—*louder!*” (501). The narrator's sense of hearing proves to be delusional and exemplifies how the Apollonian “illusion of illusion” drives him to the peak of his madness.

Although the narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart” uses an Apollonian illusion (the old man's eye) as his basis for acting, he also demonstrates how he is at heart very Dionysian. The narrator's excess of emotions, a Dionysian quality, is the central driving force of the tale. The eye elicited the narrator to become an excitable man, filled with impulse. Upon violently attacking the old man, the narrator's madness is at full disclosure and the altercation brings him satisfaction. The narrator “smiles gaily” for having the “wild audacity” to complete the murder (Poe 501). Edward Quinn states that the Dionysian “represents the spontaneous” and “irrational” aspects of life, which is evident in the narrator's actions and mental state (1). Poe's narrator in

this tale is clearly irrational for resolving that the old man's eye was reason enough to murder him. After the narrator is finally able to rid himself of the old man's eye, he is again revisited by another delusion: the old man's heartbeat. After hearing this heartbeat, the narrator is consumed by "raving" agony and derision (Poe 501). The Dionysian inclination and overabundance of emotion is evident in "The Tell-Tale Heart" as a reaction toward the Apollonian forms and delusions his conscience manifests.

In Poe's "The Black Cat," the narrator's struggles with his reality because he suffers from alcoholism. Like "The Tale-Tell Heart," the narrator begins by saying "mad am I not—and very surely do I not dream" (Poe 531). Although the narrator states that he does not experience a life of illusions, he later admits that he is doomed by the disease of "alcohol," which clearly makes him delusional in various points of the tale. When the narrator is under the influence of alcohol, he becomes moody, irritable, and violent to all animals and even his wife, sparing at first only his favorite cat, Pluto. The narrator's alcoholism brought him to maddening lengths, but it is both with or without the influence of alcohol which brings the narrator to behaves in ways that are perverse and go against the moral law. For instance, murdering his wife was the most inhumane actions he did without the influence of alcohol. However, the narrator's alcoholism corresponds with Nietzsche view of Dionysus. Nietzsche describes Dionysus as a force that is "immediately understandable [...] in the analogy of *intoxication*" (17). In this analogy, Nietzsche explains how Dionysian intoxication aims to completely forget the self, and in retrospect, Poe's narrator in "The Black Cat" forgets himself and has a "radical alteration for the worse" because of his alcoholism (Poe 532). The narrator's alcoholism then leads him to experiences Apollonian illusions such as bad dreams and metamorphic images.

In “The Black Cat” the Dionysian force is apparent through the narrator’s intoxication, and it is this intoxication that brings about his first perverse behavior of gouging out Pluto’s eye. In losing his “tenderness of heart,” the narrator becomes a victim to the poison of the bottle. Ironically, the narrator’s tenderness continues to lurk within him as he still wants to approach the afflicted Pluto. The narrator states himself that he “had so much of [his] old heart left,” but Pluto still feared his presence (Poe 532). His violence is born out of his alcoholic disease, but in this case is born out of retaliation, which also reveals the true nature of the narrator: a man that seeks to diminish and “violate” the *Law* (Poe 533). The narrator is unable to redeem himself from his crime against Pluto. In a Nietzschean sense, it could be argued that Pluto served the narrator as a redeeming illusion symbolizing docility and tenderness—concepts the super-ego instills in the mind. However, Pluto’s fear of the narrator’s approach shows how the narrator has no hope for redemption or goodness, as he states himself after hanging Pluto:

I knew that in doing so I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it—if such a thing were possible—even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God. (533)

The narrator acknowledges his crimes are unforgivable, but his spirit of perverseness drives him to do otherwise. Even as he hangs Pluto from the tree, he does so with tears coming out of his eyes. The narrator clearly holds on to some of his conscience even during a diabolic deed. In time, the narrator encounters another black cat with a splash of white fur which he takes home. Again, the narrator begins to hold on to the illusion that the new cat signifies, a fresh start from his perverse deeds. However, the second black cat begins to disgust him and his perversity returns.

The narrator in “The Black Cat” shows a lack of restraint with violence, specifically towards Pluto, the second black cat, and his wife. The “barbaric” Dionysian force that represents

lack of restraint is clear quality of the narrator of this tale (Nietzsche 19). For instance, when the second black cat accidentally gets in the way of his household errand, the narrator does not think twice about murdering the poor creature:

The cat followed me down the steep stairs, and, nearly throwing me headlongs, exasperated me to madness. Uplifting my axe, and forgetting, in my wrath, the childish dread which had hitherto stayed my hand, I aimed a blow at the animal which, of course, would have proved instantly fatal had it descended as I wished. But this blow was arrested by the hand of my wife. Goaded, by the interference, into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead on the spot, without a groan. (Poe 536)

The narrator is clearly frenzied, and his mention of “childish dread” shows how he has gained a sort of primitive mental state. There is the reoccurring motif of madness and impulsivity that correlates with the Dionysian force. Additionally, the impulsivity of chaotic action is also apparently Dionysian. This reaction stems from the narrator’s overwhelming emotion of fury towards the moral law that the cats and his wife symbolized.

In “The Black Cat,” the narrator suffers from various “illusions of illusions.” Some of these illusions are dreams and others are images that he believes have metamorphosized on their own. The narrator is a dreamer who momentarily believes that what he is experiencing is real because it resembles what his life, or the primary illusion, looks like. Moreover, the dreams he experiences fill him with “unutterable fear” and visions of the cat (Poe 535). The “incarnate Night-Mare” of the black cat afflicts the mental state of the narrator, and especially the memory of Pluto which he “for months” could not rid himself of (534). The “phantasm” of the cat, which is a delusional experience by the narrator, makes him obsess and seek another identical cat. This notion of appearance, that is, of one thing resembling another, is a paradox in appearances. The narrator’s lack of logic in murdering Pluto is apparent; however, he continues to seek the same

vexing object of a cat he destroyed. This could be because the returning object of the cat can serve as a redeeming image for the narrator as a chance to start over.

Overall, the Apollonian illusions of conscience are the central motivating factor for all of the narrators in Poe's three tales. The Apollonian mostly presents itself through illusions and dreams. As for the Dionysian, it presents itself through the narrator's intoxication, violence, and sexual frustrations. The Apollonian illusions bring about a reaction from the narrators. In all cases these actions are violent and frenzied, which is much more Dionysian. Additionally, another Dionysian quality that the narrators demonstrate is their overemotional and overwhelming madness that came about as a response to the Apollonian manifestations or forms that plague them. It is through these manifested Apollonian illusions that elicits a drive toward action. Neither the Apollonian illusion nor the Dionysian wisdom was able to salvage the narrators from their downfalls. These tales are examples of tragedies that show the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo within the mind of the protagonists. Each narrator was unable to become a master of his fate because of the Dionysian impulse to subdue the Apollonian manifestations of the conscience proved to be impossible. Even though these Apollonian illusions appeared to be the truth for Poe's narrators. Nietzsche believed that the truth about the human condition is that it is bound to inevitable suffering, or "primordial pain" (25). Redeeming images provide the illusion that individuals need to find purpose in life. Poe's characters believed that the illusions they witnessed, which were endless tormenting them, were what they needed to kill to find freedom of law. To forget the self in a Dionysian state and to free themselves of the Apollonian conscience was their entire purpose. In the end of all three tales, it is the Dionysian force that alas compels the narrators to realize the horrible truths of their lives:

and that is that the conscience is an inescapable mental construct, and the attempt to eliminate it will only end in failure.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

After analyzing the theories of Nietzsche and Freud and applying their views to Poe's tales, there is a clearer understanding as to the similarities between both of their dichotomies. Nietzsche and Freud both have depictions of human life that are fundamentally split between two various extremes. Yet, the opposition between both extremes, is necessary in finding truth in life. Discovering the truth for Poe's narrators required their egos to rely on both their id and super-ego, as well as the aesthetic dichotomy between Apollo and Dionysus. In addition, both Nietzsche's and Freud's views were used to understand the motivation behind Poe's narrators' actions or the internal and external influences for these actions. There are three connections that can be made between both theories when applied to Poe's tales. The first entails the narrator's super-egos, or their consciences, and how their denial of the conscience leads each of them to experience a manifestation of their conscience in an Apollonian illusion. Secondly, each narrator's id reacts against these Apollonian illusions in a Dionysian frenzy that entails either intoxication, sex, or violence. The third is the apparent opposition between the super-ego and the id and the Apollonian and the Dionysian that results in a tragedy of the mind for the narrators because both dichotomies oppose each other, yet they rely on each other. To conclude the thesis, I will show how the super-ego is essentially Apollonian and the id is Dionysian in "William Wilson," "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat," and how the opposition of both theories also takes place in the minds of Poe's narrators which results in their tragic downfall.

In Poe's "William Wilson," the plaguing double is the representation of the narrator's super-ego. As the double Wilson always appears when the original Wilson is about to partake in acts of debauchery, it is evident that the double is his mental projection of his guilty conscience. In addition, the way in which the double appears throughout the original Wilson's life is clearly

an Apollonian illusion. Furthermore, the double's is an "illusion of an illusion" because he is twice removed from reality. Wilson's conscience is an illusion because it is the super-ego functioning from learned behaviors about what is socially acceptable that is working on his ego. Wilson's double is then twice an illusion because he is not real, but only a figment of the original Wilson's imagination, or his suppressed conscience manifested into form. The original Wilson's double thus functions much like dreams do, which for Nietzsche are only illusions of mere illusions.

Additionally, in "William Wilson," is the equivalence between the original Wilson's id and the Dionysian force. The id, which contains aggression and sexual desires, correlates with the Dionysian. The original Wilson is the embodiment of the id because he is found at various instances to be partaking in acts of instant gratification and sexual indecency. An apparent lover of drunkenness and indulgence, the original Wilson also shows his degeneracy by chasing after a married woman. Lastly, the original Wilson's violent attack upon his double is perhaps the ultimate representation of the aggressive id at play. This is because trying to rid oneself of the conscience goes against everything the conscience represents. As a result of his violence, the original Wilson's psyche becomes Dionysian: chaotic and frenzied. It could be argued that the narrating Wilson, who is the third entity born out of the climatic ending, is the Dionysian man of understanding of the horrible truth. This horrible truth being that removing his conscience, is impossible, and in attempting to do so he suffers the consequences of a hopeless future.

Lastly, it was the Apollonian illusion of his double that motivated the original Wilson to act. This is where it can be seen how the opposition between the super-ego and the id, and that of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, ultimately rely on each other despite their apparent contrasts. The original Wilson, who was morally degenerate, firmly held on to the illusion of his

double, or his Apollonian illusion. Even though the original Wilson yearned for a life without order, his means in attaining that end relied much more on the Apollonian force. The interference of Wilson's double, his "illusion of an illusion", motivated his final action which was to rid himself of his double.

In "The Tell-Tale Heart" the narrator's conscience becomes imbedded within the old man—specifically his eyeball and then his heartbeat. Nietzsche's ideas about Apollonian illusions and how they motivate action again hold true in this tale. In the opening lines of the short story, the narrator contemplates his need for acting, or murdering, the old man. He resolves that the appearance of the "evil eye" is the reason why he needed to kill. After he murders the old man, his super-ego begins to reveal itself through the sound of the old man's heartbeat. It is the illusory sound of the heartbeat that is a representation of the narrator's guilty conscience. The narrator's final predicament brings about another symbolic representation of the super-ego. While the narrator is face-to-face with the police officials, who enforce the law, his psyche's policing super-ego becomes triggered. As a result, the narrator begins to experience an Apollonian illusion of sound, or rather a delusion.

The Dionysian within "The Tell-Tale Heart" becomes clear through the narrator's reaction towards the Apollonian illusions that his conscience assumes. The narrator demonstrates his madness through his obsession with the old man. This obsession stems from the fact that the narrator seeks a conscience-free life, and the old man's eyeball symbolizes the all-seeing and all-knowing super-ego. He is often overwhelmed with emotion by the old man's eye, and because of this, it becomes instinctual for him to murder the old man. The murder ensues quickly, filling the narrator with emotions of instant gratification and relief. The narrator's madness results in the violence, which shows how the narrator's id is Dionysian.

Lastly, the narrator's reaction towards the heartbeat of the dead old man results in his immediate feelings of discomfort and paranoia. As a result of these emotions, the narrator reacts impulsively and confesses his crime in a complete state of agony.

"The Tell-Tale Heart" also shows how the narrator is much more reliant on the Apollonian realm, despite his Dionysian inclinations of madness and violence. Because he uses the old man's eye as his central source for motivation, this tale does not exemplify how the narrator becomes a Dionysian man of understanding since he remains a player in the Apollonian world of illusions. The narrator found the old man as his motivation towards action, so much so that he even does the action of confession due to his firm belief that the delusion of the heartbeat is part of his reality. Even up to the ending of the tale, the narrator remains a much more Apollonian character.

In "The Black Cat," the narrator's Apollonian illusions are exhibited through the narrator's dreams, and the altering second black cat. Again, Poe's narrator demonstrates how his guilty conscience is manifested in "illusions of illusions." Even though the narrator does not whole heartedly admit to feeling guilt, the mental images of cats plague him and prove that he is mentally disturbed by the vile actions he committed. The narrator's dreams are vivid nightmares of "unutterable fear." This is an illustration of the narrator's conscience working on him even as he sleeps. The second black cat plagues him because of the changing shape of its "splash of white fur" that resembles the gallows. The cat's fur is a form that begins to alter itself and reminds the narrator of the atrocity he visited upon Pluto.

The Dionysian in "The Black Cat" is present through the narrator's aggression and intoxication. In his overindulgence of alcohol, the narrator reacts to his cat Pluto in an impulsive fit of rage. The fact that the narrator does not think about the consequences of his actions is an

exemplification of the id's qualities, as the id reacts impulsively to its surroundings. The narrator's alcoholism is one of the main reasons why he spirals towards insanity and aggression. Yet, his temperamental attitude is also something that is inherent within him. The second black cat's meaningless interference between the narrator's legs instantly results in his outrageous violence. Even after he buries the axe in the brain of his wife, he is still driven by an aggressive drive to murder the second black cat (Poe 536). The narrator is dominated by his id.

Another exemplification of the id in "The Black Cat" is the concept of the death drive through the attention the narrator gives to the walls of the cellar. The concealment of the corpse was done so well and without any traces of suspicion. However, the narrator's insistent need to continue babbling with the officer's indicates the unconscious need of the death drive. In the ending of the tale, as the police officials are just about to leave, the narrator makes it a point to mention the sturdiness of the basement walls. Out of an urge of perverseness, the narrator states how he had "a rabid desire to say something easily" and knew not what he said at all (Poe 537). Whilst the narrator continues to brag about the wall's sustainment, he evidently reveals the scene of the crime. He taps right on the spot where his wife's corpse is buried, exposing the murder entirely.

Freud's views of the id and Nietzsche's views of Dionysus comes to a disconnect when trying gain the horrible truth. Nietzsche believed that the Dionysian force exposed the truth about life, which is that life is filled with suffering and pain. However, Freud's view of the id is not identified as having the capability of wisdom. In addition, this disconnect continues through the actions of all narrator's in Poe's tales. All their actions are based on Apollonian illusion; however, their actions of violence reside in what is Dionysian. This proves to be contradictory because the Dionysian man finds no need to act in a world that he knows is chaotic, yet Poe's

protagonists continue to act. This contradiction could demonstrate how the Apollonian and the Dionysian will always be a part of the other even though they are oppositional forces.

Overall, Poe's narrators demonstrate a delusional perception of their reality through the objects that surround them such as a doppelganger, an evil eye, and a black cat. These objects symbolize for each narrator the concept of the super-ego or the conscience. As a result of these Apollonian illusions, the madness and destruction of the Dionysian realm are provoked. The narrators' ids react aggressively combined with their ongoing and growing mental madness. Poe's tales show how the conscience is an inevitable. Even when it is removed, it will return as an illusion that will plague and bring each narrator to their downfall. However, their downfalls are brought about through an equal force of mental opposition. Neither the super-ego nor the id was able to give the narrator peace of mind. The id attempts to murder the super-ego, the narrator comes to an understanding that their actions gave a temporary relief in eliminating their conscience. But when the narrators understand that their actions have changed nothing, they now understand that their Dionysian actions were in vain because there can be no elimination of the Apollonian conscience. After Poe's protagonists kill what they believe is their conscience, they realize that their conscience still thrives. They are compelled to confess or expose their crimes, which only perpetuates the idea of how ingrained the conscience is in the mind—even in individuals as diabolical as Poe's narrators. All in all, Poe's characters demonstrate how neither their instincts nor their reason had superiority. In fact, both parts of the psyche were responsible for bringing them to their tragic downfall.

The conscience will always be a part of the human mind, even though it is learned behavior which is imbedded within the mind as social normative. No amount of human violence against the conscience will prevent the mind from abandoning moral laws. Poe's narrators, who

functioned almost completely immorally, still experienced the rebirth of the moral law in delusional appearances. The super-ego, although learned from parents and society, is as inherent to people as are the instincts, or the id. Poe's tales show how righteousness is a behavior that can never be erased or annihilated. Being an individual of moral principles is just as natural to us as it is to be a instinctual animal. What Poe, Freud, and Nietzsche reveal is that the human mind is set up for a tragic fate. People will never be truly content with themselves because neither the Apollonian super-ego nor the Dionysian id will be indefinitely satisfied in its existence without the other, which ultimately creates the tragic tension of the human condition.

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