



A STUDY OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS RELATED TO THE SUICIDE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN PAULO COELHO'S *VERONIKA DECIDES TO DIE**

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Abstract

Suicide, one of the most common problems in modern and postmodern societies, is a socio-psychiatric phenomenon existing in every society or culture. In the past, the study of suicide was mainly included in psychiatry; however, with an increasing awareness of some social factors behind suicide, it has now been tackled from a sociological perspective. In the second half of the twentieth century, changes in relationships and lifestyles of modern society began to be more apparent in postmodern culture. Expectations for the future dramatically decline in this period. The notion of absolute nothingness is now clearly seen in every aspect of human life. All these elements affect humans' inner peace and cause physical, mental, and psychological deterioration. *Veronika Decides to Die*, written by Paulo Coelho in 1998, deals with the psychological journey of a young woman who loses her motivation to live and attempts suicide. Basing on his own life experiences, Coelho, reveals the psychological transformations of the main character Veronika, whose suicide attempt fails. Therefore, both the conflict between life and death and the conflict between self and society are highly significant to analyze some possible reasons for the suicidal behaviors of Veronika. In this respect, this paper intends to analyze the novel from the psychoanalytic perspective of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis. The psychological and external motivation behind the suicide attempt will be clarified with theory of life (Eros) and death (Thanatos) instincts, and their relation to id, ego, and superego.

Keywords: Life instinct, Death instinct, Id, Ego, Superego.



PAULO COELHO'NUN *VERONİKA ÖLMEK İSTİYOR* ROMANINDAKİ ANA KARAKTERİN İNTİHARINA İLİŞKİN FREUDYEN PSİKOLOJİK UNSURLARIN İNCELENMESİ

Özet

Modern ve postmodern toplumların en yaygın sorunlarından biri olarak kabul edilen intihar, her toplumda veya kültürde var olan sosyo-psikiyatrik bir olgudur. Geçmişte intihar çalışması başlıca psikiyatri alanına

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girerken; intiharın altında yatan bazı sosyal faktörlerin farkındalığıyla birlikte, artık sosyolojik bir perspektiften de ele alınmaya başlanmıştır. Yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısı ile birlikte modern toplum ilişkilerinde ve yaşam tarzlarında meydana gelen değişiklikler postmodern kültürde daha belirgin hale gelmişti. Geleceğe yönelik beklentiler bu dönemde önemli ölçüde azalır. Mutlak hiçlik kavramı artık insan yaşamının her alanında açıkça görülmektedir. Tüm bu unsurlar insanın iç huzurunu etkileyerek fiziksel, zihinsel ve psikolojik bozulmalara neden olur. 1998 yılında Paulo Coelho tarafından yazılan *Veronika Ölmek İstiyor* adlı roman, yaşam motivasyonunu kaybeden ve intihara teşebbüs eden genç bir kadının psikolojik yolculuğunu konu alıyor. Coelho, kendi yaşam deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak intihar girişimi başarısız olan ana karakter Veronika'nın akıl hastanesinde geçirdiği psikolojik dönüşümleri gözler önüne seriyor. Bu sebeple, hem yaşam ve ölüm arasındaki çatışma hem de benlik ve toplum arasındaki çatışma, Veronika'nın intihar davranışlarının bazı olası nedenlerini analiz etmek için oldukça önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, romanı psikanalizin kurucusu Sigmund Freud'un psikanalitik bakış açısıyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. İntihar girişiminin arkasındaki psikolojik ve dış kaynaklı motivasyon, yaşam (Eros) ve ölüm (Thanatos) içgüdüleri teorisi ve bunun id, ego ve süperego ile ilişkisi ile açıklığa kavuşturulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşam içgüdüleri, Ölüm içgüdüleri, İd, Ego, Süperego.



Introduction

Entrapped in an alienated society, modern man is penetrated into many problems and suffers from loneliness caused by the loss of human relationships. Despite major innovations, especially in technology and science, which enable people to lead a more comfortable life, the new man gets into a tragic dilemma as a result of this comfort (Taylor, 2004, p.1). Modernism, which initially began with the enlightenment in the nineteenth century, puts reason at the center of human life and replaces the old with the new to establish a civilized society and human model. It is, nevertheless, accepted as a period that resulted in disappointments. The hope for the future has been plunged into the darkness since the enlightenment. Modern man has lost his balance among the traumas, psychologically being fragmented, perplexed, and detached. In other words, "there is a wide gap between what an individual professes and what he practices, between what he is and what he should be. The breach between what the individual aspires for and the hard reality of what he achieves has mercilessly crushed his life, leaving a treacherous effect on his inner being" (Sundari & Rashila, 2020, p. 40). Modern man is particularly vulnerable to this period, in which he is forced to question and doubt his existence, which makes mental and spiritual disorders inevitable. The digital age increasingly transforms people into robots that will destroy human beings and the whole world. It means that life becomes increasingly meaningless, and existential trauma, which makes individuals feel powerless both physically and mentally, becomes unavoidable. The perception of time and space is now completely converted, pushing the individual into a deep hole. Life is disrupting its normal flow and evolving into abnormal, which leaves great imperfections on the human soul and affects inner peace.

From the second half of the twentieth century, modernism, which was gradually extending and getting stronger, has yielded up its place to postmodernism. The term "postmodern" was first coined by an English historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, in the 1950s. This period is supposed to be detached from

modernism because of the prefix ‘-post’. However, it is not a disengagement from modernism but rather a reaction to it that serves as a continuation and questions all its ideas and norms. Toynbee describes this age as one of “social unrest, world wars, and revolutions” (Calinescu, 1987, p.134). While this definition accentuates an optimistic side of modernity, it is possible to say that the prefix ‘post’ shows a pessimistic side, namely the state of depression. The complexity of the modern era, the blurriness of the postmodern era, and the destruction experienced in the post-war world drive people to paranoia and push them to new searches, which results in a rapid change in societies and a search for a new order. Therefore, the Second World War is considered to be the beginning of change and the postmodern era. Postmodern society is the society of the computer and information age which is still happening. The definition of postmodernism cannot be sharply narrowed, but it includes scepticism, fragmentation, and ambiguity at its core (Şimşek, 2014, p.8). Society, human relations, individuals, and habits are subjected to considerable change as the main components of this period. It separates time from ‘past’ and ‘future’, putting ‘now’ at the forefront, so that postmodern man now lives the moment without depending on historical roots. Fluctuations or doubtfulness largely dominate this period unlike the certainties of the modern period. There are also many changes in different fields, including philosophy, art, culture, photography, architecture, cinema, theater, and particularly literature. Although technological developments have offered better communication opportunities, the destruction brought about by wars could not prevent individuals from being alienated from their environment and themselves. People began to question the existence of God, lost their social values, and the concept of reality gradually faded away in the twentieth century. Nietzsche, who has had a prominent influence on postmodern theory, put forward the concept of nihilism, which means to deny everything in substance, and he declared the death of God. Modernism created an inconsistent God, replaced by reason; that is why Nietzsche objected to the deification and certain impositions of reason by killing God metaphorically. Reason not only emerged as power but even surpassed God in the modern era. Nietzsche’s whole struggle is directed against reason-centered man, and he pioneers postmodernism by removing the veil that separates man from existence. Despite the advancements in knowledge and technology, the deification of reason underlies the fact that people are more depressed, lonely, alienated, and paranoid in the postmodern era, as mentioned above. The individual’s isolation, introversion, and excessive subjectiveness also raised Nietzsche’s awareness, prompting him to coin the term “Age of Nihilism”. The post-war destruction and the rapid and continuous changes in society since the modern period shook the individual at his core, which pushed him to complexity and disappearance. The individual suspected the existence of both God and himself, resulting in a state of intense ambiguity that dominated the postmodern period. Trying to keep up with the changes and pressure of modern and postmodern societies, people who still continue to search for self-identity experience feelings of loss or perplexity because of increased stress levels. They are unable to attribute meaning to life and even find their purposes or motivation to live. “This alienation and automatization lead to ever-increasing insanity. Life has no meaning, there is no joy, no faith, no reality. Everybody is “happy” –except that he does not feel, does not reason, does not love” (Fromm, 1991, p.352). As a possible consequence of such feelings of loss and identity crisis, the number of those who put an end to their lives by committing suicide because of the loss of motivation for life in this period cannot be underestimated. The dramatic increase in suicide rates in the modern and postmodern periods compared to the past is clearly reflected in the literary works of the period. The meaninglessness and blurriness of

individuals are also evident in the works, both as a structure and as a theme. Just like the sameness of the period, postmodern literature reacts to the "new" and "originality" in narration and claims that the works will be a repetition or imitation of each other in terms of theme; so, postmodernism makes a splash with its radical changes in literature as well. Among the most well-known writers of the postmodern era, Paulo Coelho also clearly reflects the existential traumas, complexity, and alienation of modern and postmodern individuals in his works.

The novel was first published and translated into English from Portuguese in 1998. In this novel, Coelho describes the world of asylums and the relationships of the patients both physically and spiritually based on his personal experiences. He illustrates that asylums are, in fact, good places contrary to popular belief and that even some people personally prefer to stay there. The novel directly addresses that people can suffer from severe depression even if they have all the things needed for material comfort. Some circumstances or changes encountered in daily life can make people feel desperate, anxious, worthless, or melancholy. As a result of these mood disorders, depression, which is very common and inevitable for any person, appears as a life-threatening condition. Psychoanalysis, from this point, is of critical concern in performing character analysis to identify the fundamental factors underlying suicide. Character analysis is not only enough to determine suicide itself, but it is also highly important in terms of learning about the psyche of the individual exhibiting suicidal behaviors. In this respect, this study aims to elucidate the main character's emotional state, which prompts him to attempt suicide, from the psychoanalytic approach put forward by Sigmund Freud. The "depression" in the novel will be analyzed in detail using Freud's psychoanalytic terms 'Id, Ego, and Superego' and 'life (Eros)-and-death (Thanatos) instincts' derived from the id.

A. FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

The psychoanalytic theory was put forward at the beginning of the twentieth century by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, which is one of the most significant sub-branches of psychology, systematically examines personality and forms a basis to understand the conflicts of an individual. It helps the individual get to know and understand himself by revealing the reasons for the tensions in the human psyche and facilitates self-treatment by transferring the unconscious facts to the conscious level. According to Freud, personality is structurally composed of three systems as id, ego, and superego. Our actions and thoughts are predetermined by our instincts and happen with the impact of the unconscious mind. The id, which is the most primitive part of the mind and human personality, includes our instincts and innate unconscious impulses. "The id is the mind we are all born with, a seething mass of wholly selfish desires and the impulses aimed at the immediate and complete gratification of those desires" (Rennison, 2015, p.38). It operates depending on the pleasure principle and aims to achieve pleasure. "This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start" (Freud, 1989a, p. 23). The ego and superego differentiate from id.

Regarding the ego which is known as the conscious part of the human personality, it is the executive organ between the id and the superego. It controls the paths leading to action, chooses which objects to associate with, and decides which instincts in what form should be satisfied. The ego serves as an organized part of the id, draws all its power from it, and cannot exist without the id (Geçtan, 1998,

p.46). Due to its obligation to protect itself, the ego must dominate both internal (the id) and external (the superego) stimuli and maintain a balance between them. The ego, known as logic, common sense, and defense tool, is associated with the reality principle, unlike the id's persistent desire for pleasure and satisfaction. The purpose of the reality principle is to delay the release of tension until a suitable object is found to satisfy the need, temporarily blocking the pleasure principle. The reality principle investigates whether experience really exists, while the pleasure principle deals only with whether an experience is painful or pleasurable. Realistic thinking prevails in this process. "Regarding internal drive stimuli, it attempts to control the demands of the instincts by judiciously deciding the mode of satisfaction, or if satisfaction is to be had at all. Indeed, the ego attempts to harness instinctual libidinal drives so that they submit to the reality principle" (Lapsley & Stey, 2011, p.6). The ego is equipped with some impulses to stabilize the two other parts of the personality. These impulses are respectively as follows: perceiving impulses such as hunger and sexuality; being aware of the conditions of the external world (where and how to get food); predisposing the impulses to the conditions by the pressure of the superego (e.g., it must be paid to buy bread, not stolen), and; putting the voluntary behavior into action. The ego perceives not only external but also internal stimuli; that is, it distinguishes between what comes from inside and outside as a quality of the developed self.

Another and the last part of the personality is the superego, also called the 'morality principle'. It is the internalized aspect of moral and social oppression of personality. It is also possible to call the superego 'conscience'. Freud hypothesizes the superego "as a separate entity in his new conception of the psyche" (qtd. Fancher, 1998, p. 37) and constructs it according to traditional values and social ideals or rules. It represents the ideal rather than the fact and desires to achieve perfection rather than delectation. The main concern of the superego is deciding whether something is right or wrong and acting concerning criteria approved by society or its representatives (Rennison, 2015, p.40). The formation of the superego begins with meeting the parents. The rules of parents and society develop and shape the superego. The individual is under the control of the superego in all actions and decisions. "The superego is derived from the id's first object cathexis (in the oedipal situation), the superego remains close to the id" (Lapsley & Stey, 2011, p.7) and "can act as its representative" (Freud, 1989b, p.49). It introduces the impulses sent by the id to the concept of morality, and accordingly, it covers up the demands that would be deemed inappropriate by delaying or ignoring. If the superego fails to suppress the organism, the individual does what the id wants, and the phenomenon of social morality disappears. Conversely, if the superego becomes too dominant, the organism becomes tense and cannot reveal its own personality. Neurotic disturbances occur. A new-born baby has no familiarity with the concepts such as sin, shame, prohibition, or injustice, and he acts only with primitive motives (the id). In course of time, he is punished by his parents for inappropriate social behaviors, and he creates the superego by internalizing the norms that he sees as inappropriate through his family. When the child reaches adulthood, the systems he internalized integrate the concept of morality to him even without his parents. To state the matter differently, this means that the power of the superego lies not in biological needs but in social pressures in individual experiences. A baby creates moral values with concepts such as sin, shame, injustice, taboos, or norms, depending on the social behaviors he has seen in his family and environment. In substance, the superego suppresses and inhibits the impulses from the id, particularly those sexual and aggressive

impulses, tries to persuade the ego to pursue moral rather than realistic goals, and strives to be perfect. It tends to oppose the id and ego and direct them to the order they want. The ego delays the satisfaction of instinctual desires, while the superego tries to block these desires altogether.

According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the id, which represents the unconscious, consists of two separate instincts, life (Eros) and death (Thanatos). These two are also called as sex and aggression, and there is an endless struggle between these two principles, which means the destiny of both the individual and the civilization. "But sex is not an instinctual impulse that exerts constant pressure but is rather like an "appetite" that shows a measure of periodicity. Aggression is not even an appetite but is rather an ego reaction to a threat to the personality" (Lapsley & Stey, 2011, p.7). In Kleinian theory, "destructiveness is an innate propensity which each individual ego is fated to wrestle with within himself from the start. It is thus fundamentally intra-psychic" (Rayner, 1991/2020, p.85). Both of these instincts are innate universal impulses and feelings, and every person has instincts and certain repressed emotions or thoughts in substance. This means that human beings have no need for any asset from the outside to drag them into life-or-death instincts because instincts naturally develop in humans. Eros, also called the sexual instincts, corresponds to all our vital needs such as food, water, health, accommodation, or self-preservation and preserves the future of mankind (having sexual intercourse to continue our species to increase) (Hall, 1954, p.58). These life instincts produce the energy called 'libido' (Tuzcuoğlu, 1995, p.276), which is primarily related to sexuality because Freud assumed sexuality to be the headmost need of the human being. He also thought that sexuality underlies all human behaviors and its desires are of first priority in comparison with all others. Later on, psychoanalysis had to relate sexual instincts "less closely to reproduction", and "the sexual instinct was transformed for us into Eros, which seeks to force together and hold together the portions of living substance" (Schupper, 1964, p.4). For it contains not only the real unrestrained sexual instinct and the impulses derived from it but also the instinct of self-preservation, which should be assigned to the ego (Freud, 1989b, p.37). Later, Freud reveals the death instinct, which appears in aggression as the opposite of the life instinct, which manifests itself as sexuality. He treated death instincts, which he described as destructive instincts, more implicitly than the life instincts. "Once again Freud drew on his knowledge of medicine and biology to draw the parallel between the birth and death of cells to the plight of all mankind" (Miller, 1999, p. 5). He believes that the ground state of matter is an inorganic state; therefore, instincts have a tendency to return to this inanimate state. In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), he acknowledges the existence of the death instinct, which struggles to revert organic matter back to the inorganic state. One's aggressive attitudes and direct or indirect physical harm towards himself cannot be explained as behaviors belonging to the pleasure principle. In this respect, Freud introduces the "death wish" which corresponds to damaging behaviors in addition to the impulses which bring happiness and support living. "This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside Eros and which shares world-dominion with it" (Freud, 1989a, p.69). This instinct is also referred to by some emotions. These are emotions such as fear, anger, and hatred, and they can be directed inside or outwardly towards other people. "The death instinct is the individual's tendency to destroy himself personally, whereas the inclination to aggression is directed, at least initially, toward other members of the species" (Barnhart, 1972, p.9) and is "more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it

overrides" (Freud, 1955, p.17). The dual nature of life and death instincts, the two most basic instincts in humans, creates tension and conflict in the psychic apparatus. This conflict is the source of its dynamism. Man, on the one hand, wants his own death, on the other hand, he fights for survival. That is why Eros and Thanatos need to work in balance for life motivation and meaning.

B. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The main character, Veronika, is a beautiful young girl who has everything she wishes for, such as a job, a family, and friends, but she feels nothing but dispassion toward her life because life is never as it seems from the outside. She thinks that life is unbearable and meaningless to exist in, and it destroys her hopes for the future, so she makes a decision to end her life to achieve eternal freedom. She does not attribute the aggravating factors underlying her decision to serious distress because "she was not killing herself because she was a sad, embittered woman, constantly depressed, constantly depressed" (Coelho, 2006, p.6), or "she wasn't killing herself because of a lack of love. It wasn't because she felt unloved by her family or had money problems or an incurable disease" (p.9). Veronika lives her life by a single standard that neither goes above nor below. She already has everything she could wish for, but it is just that everything in her life is always the same. Veronika believes that the following years will not offer her anything different from what she has now; life will not provide her anything and will only increase the possibility of suffering even if she survives. Veronika is dominated by an impulse to destroy herself, with no feeling of attachment to her life. From the perspective of the death instinct, her aggression is not primarily a reaction to others, but to herself. The death instinct is an uninterrupted stimulation stemming from the structure of the human organism. Freud states that every person actually has an unconscious desire to die inside them, but their life instincts suppress this desire to a great extent (Freud and Edmundson, 2003). Her decision to die shows that her life instincts are not assertive enough to subdue her death wish.

Veronika completely loses her motivation to live (life instinct) at the beginning of the novel. Being a lonely and introvert person estranges her from the outside world. Veronika forgets such feelings as love, sexuality, and happiness that still exist somewhere in her and focuses entirely on the monotony of life. "Everything in her life was the same and, once her youth was gone, it would be downhill all the way...She would gain nothing by continuing to live; indeed, the likelihood of suffering would only increase" (Coelho, 2006, p.7). Life, continuing in a vicious circle, gives her nothing but irreversible pain to her that drifts her into a melancholic situation. The predictability of the forthcoming years and the monotony of life completely eradicate her hope for living. In addition, "She was aware of what was going on in the world. Everything was wrong, and she had no way of putting things right" (p.7). Everything is wrong in society, and she is not capable of fixing them, which breeds her feeling of being completely helpless against the world. Isolated from the world, Veronika desires to reach serenity too much to cope with prominent problems. The monotony of life drags her into deep questioning about life and death. Also, the fact that society is dragged into an inextricable falsehood makes her feel powerless to solve all corruption. Self-pity from helplessness fills him with a peaceful death wish. She accepts that the sole solution to monotony and misconceptions is to achieve real pleasure through committing suicide. "Veronika was almost certain that everything ended with death. That is why she had chosen suicide:

freedom at last. Eternal oblivion" (p.8). Dread of death shows that one cares more about life than death, but Veronika perceives death as a means to achieve infinite pleasure rather than running away from it. Thus, it turns out that one of the most important reasons for the fear of death is the life instinct, which she lacks. Having beauty, a good profession, family, money, or boyfriends are actually subsidiary components for maintaining the life instinct but Veronika overlooks all of these and does not choose even one as a source of motivation for her life. This point is a representation of the death instinct, which is a destructive or aggressive urge. All these components are not actually positive things to include her in life, on the contrary, they are just nothing more than boring routines. She seems to be aware that her life will be repeating itself over and over, but she has no intention of choosing one of them and taking root in this world as a tree. Veronika's desire for death (death instinct) penetrates her whole self, and the desperation and sameness of her life lead her to make a destructive judgment. She is almost sure that everything ends with death, and instead of rooting, she determines to achieve freedom and eternal insensibility.

Making a pessimistic decision as the easiest way to get rid of the monotony of life is evaluated as her loss of motivation to live, even if she has no experience with any negative or heart-breaking emotions or occasions. "I've never been depressed, never felt great joy or sadness, at least none that lasted. I have the same problems as everyone else" (Coelho, 2006, p.35). The feeling of lack in her soul from not having fully experienced pain and love, which are the primary sources of life instinct, can be seen as a precipitating reason for her suicide. Veronika remarks that her primary justification for suicide is the sameness of life, but what pushes her to this concern is that she does not live her life the way she wants or by revealing her emotions. She experiences the awareness of this fact in the process of being in the mental hospital, which is then too late for her. She discovers that she has never experienced feelings such as real pleasure, real love, real friendships, or living life like mad without hesitating, with the bitterness of not fully melancholic even the basic requests from her id. These are the basic needs of the individual, including mainly survival, pleasure, and generation, and these are necessary for the individual to survive. Self-preservation, which belongs to the ego, is also one of the essential motives for life. However, "she had overcome her minor defects only to be defeated by matters of fundamental importance" (p.67), as a matter of fact. Even though everything seems to be fine in her life, Veronika chooses to repress her feelings up to this age, which is the easy way out for her. She has many conflicts in her unconscious mind between the id and superego, but she does not reflect this ambivalence and loss of self in her own behavior and demeanor. Avoiding and suppressing even the slightest of emotions turns into huge issues and inner distress that may have bad consequences later in life.

The psychoanalytic theory suggests that the basis of psychological problems in adulthood is associated with the negligence or incorrect fulfilment of the impulses that arise in childhood. Considering that the id operates according to the pleasure principle, it expects the immediate fulfilment of its needs and desires. The fact that "Veronika had known since childhood that her true vocation was to be a pianist" (Coelho, 2006, p.94) corresponds to a wish coming from her id, which she desires to fulfil. Her only dream of being a pianist is suppressed by the pressure of the superego, that is, by the refusal of her mother, who believes that being a pianist will not make a good living and asks her to study law. The superego, which is the inner representative of the rules given by the family during childhood, tries to implement them in

their most ideal and perfect form. However, we act with great enthusiasm and desire to do something we sincerely desire, and if the needs of the id cannot be fulfilled, the individual suffers from high emotional stress. Veronika grants her mother's wish because of the unconditional love of her mother and the feeling of guilt derived from this unrequited love. This abnegation due to not feeling guilty about love has a dramatic effect on her current emotional state. In an attempt to protect the person, the unconscious mind, which is the source of all emotions, suppresses unresolved and negative emotion-laden memories. It is inevitable for these repressed memories to manifest themselves by creating symptoms in the following years. "That dream was now buried in the depths of her memory, although sometimes it was awoken by a concert or by a beautiful record she happened to hear. Whenever that happened, though, the feeling of frustration was so intense" (2006, p.94). Trying to find a logical solution by building a bridge between the superego and the id, the ego sometimes applies some defense mechanisms such as repression, displacement, projection, etc. Veronika unconsciously puts forward these psychological strategies to protect herself from feelings and thoughts that are difficult to accept. She feels anxiety and guilt over her mother's opposition, and her ego develops defense mechanisms to protect her from the emotions arising from the conflict between the id and the superego. Thus, she represses her dream of becoming a pianist to be able to get rid of this conflict that is challenging to deal with. Repression, which is a frequently used defense mechanism, does not offer an individual a long-term defense because the person begins to experience anxiety by pushing disturbing desires, ideas, or memories into the unconscious. Repressed feelings, thoughts, and desires are revealed through subconscious ways in the following years of life, just like with Veronika. "It was precisely because she had found everything so stupid that she had ended up accepting what life had naturally imposed on her. In adolescence, she thought it was too early to choose; now, in young adulthood, she was convinced it was too late to change" (2006, p.43). With a sudden awareness, she discovers many feelings or actions in her own life that she has not noticed, tried, or ever experienced. The feeling of emptiness caused by not being able to achieve her dream causes Veronika to isolate herself from the outside world and lose interest. She lives her whole life without any expectations, dreams, or desires for the future since the repressed emotions capture her entire life. This is the main source of her monotony and reluctance with her actions.

Veronika commits suicide on November 11, 1997, by taking too many sleeping pills. Immediately after losing consciousness, she wakes up in a mental hospital called Villette. As Freud mentioned in his theory of instincts, aggression, self-destruction, and death drives tend to recur in individuals. Veronika still sees death as a means of obtaining pleasure, and the dominance of the death drive is still very fresh in her mind. "She would not leave Villette alive. It was best to put an end to everything now, while she was still brave and healthy enough to die" (Coelho, 2006, p.24). The repetitive ideation of suicide is an indication of the predominant "death wish" or "death instinct" from the Freudian point of view.

| 1454 | Veronika's unconscious mind (her id) surpasses her superego again, with the death wish leading to her pleasure. This means that Veronika's ego is still not functioning properly to keep the balance between her id and superego. A person who experiences many conflicts in her unconscious mind tends to reflect this tension through aggression, either towards herself or others (Herpertz, 1995). Self-destruction occurs in two ways, either as a tendency to pleasure or to avoid displeasure (Freud, 1989a). The individual, who

takes either one into account without considering the other, has a tendency to harm oneself. This aggression occurs when destructive motives become more dominant than life-giving motives. In the novel, Veronika is observed to reflect this aggression on herself by attempting suicide. Desiring to get rid of the monotonous situation and reach eternal serenity, Veronika again desires the way of avoidance, namely self-destruction, with a belief in taking pleasure. However, she is unaware that the news she receives and the few days she spends there will make her alive again. She is informed by Dr. Igor that she will live for at most one more week since her heart is irreversibly damaged. That is, in fact, nothing more than a psychiatric experiment conducted by Dr. Igor to help Veronika get rid of her death instinct and discover the meaning of her life because "he knew that failed suicides tend to repeat the attempt sooner or later. Why not use her as a guinea pig to see if he could eliminate the Vitriol, or Bitterness, from her organism?" (Coelho, 2006, p.208). He creates artificial symptoms of a heart attack by administering a medication called Fenatol to Veronika over the course of a week. Veronika feels deep fear, knowing that she is approaching death and undergoing the symptoms of it with a series of attacks. This is an adequate period for her to reconsider and observe her life for one week because "an awareness of death encourages us to live more intensely" (p.208). Dr. Igor succeeds in his experiment, and Veronika has cleared all the vitriol, or bitterness, from her body, which means she probably will not attempt another suicide. The events, friendships, and love she encounters at the asylum will boost her motivation to live and reintroduce her to Eros, namely the life instinct.

Villete, full of madness, offers her a completely different environment that is much newer than before. People act as they wish here, and no one judges each other for their actions. This new environment makes Veronika feel threatened because "everything here seemed so normal, so nice" (p.40) to her. "Veronika stood looking at the mountains beyond the walls of Villete. A faint desire to live seemed about to surface, but Veronika determinedly pushed it away" (Coelho, 2006, p.40). This is because she gets the opportunity to act freely without caring about the judgments of others while living as an insane person in Villete. The ego, which represents the reality principle and is based on reward and punishment, is unable to control the behaviors in the asylum due to the fact that the insane people are not punished for their actions. The superego is also unable to dominate the actions in Villete, and that is why all madmen are free to destroy the ethos without being bound by moral codes and feeling guilty. For instance, being scorned by an old man, the leader of the Fraternity, makes Veronika experience injured feelings, and she slaps the man's face in a reaction that is anomalous for her. According to her normal, "She didn't get angry with anyone, because that would mean having to react, having to do battle with the enemy and then having to face unforeseen consequences, such as vengeance" (p.44). She already has a deep regret over the incident, not because she is afraid of the man's reaction, but of herself. She is concerned that doing something different than normal will make her believe that life was worth living. Having always suppressed requests from the id by the moral principles of the superego, she is inevitably attracted by the madness and free spirit of Villete.

Veronika, as an introverted person, has always been terrified of taking risks and the repercussions of these risks. She always takes the easier path because the thought of everything turning upside down frightens her. The friendships she made in Villete and the feelings she experienced serve as a tool for her to find her life energy or motivation. Her friendship with Zedka and Mari teaches her what the

phenomenon of "madness" means, which brings her one step closer to life. "Imagine a place where people pretend to be crazy in order to do exactly what they want...She had never done anything crazy" (Coelho, 2006, p.40). She exhibits without hesitation, under the guise of insanity, whatever she has never experienced or suppressed before coming here while in the Villette. She despises herself because she has lived a life that has been hollow and worthless up until now. However, her friendships reveal portions of herself that have been suppressed for far too long and literally change her attitude towards her surroundings. Even if someone scorns her in her previous life, she has no habit of mistreating anyone or crying in front of anyone until now, but now a wish to live (eros) develops inside her. Trying to be "insane" or "abnormal" by protesting social values only serves to maintain the individual's real self. Veronika, experiencing getting mad, pushes people to be abnormal to protect their true selves, suggesting a positive view of insanity. The character's evolution toward a better emotional state in the mental hospital makes people question the true meaning of insanity and justifies individuals who oppose the norms of society. From this point of view, in a life where madness is freedom and every new day is a miracle, we continue every day at the risk of our lives, and the more we feel close to death, the more we concentrate on the moment we live.

Her friendship with Eduard, who is a schizophrenic patient, is another insanity that contributes to her change and transformation through love. "I've only known you a week, so it would be far too early for me to tell you that I love you, but since I probably won't live through the night, it would also be too late. But then, the great craziness of men and women is precisely that: love" (Coelho, 2006, pp. 192-93). Veronika strives to live the rest of her days without fear and limitations. Knowing she stands to lose nothing, she expresses her strong love for Eduard and even masturbates in front of him without worrying about being judged. Mari advises her to masturbate to see how far she can go beyond the limits while she is still alive. Veronika eventually lets herself go and achieves orgasm, the ultimate pleasure, at its peak. Living with the knowledge that there are no boundaries breaks down the superego's moral conventions, norms, and taboos, allowing Veronika to realize the freedom she has always desired. Veronika, now experiencing love, just wants to exist in the present, neither in the past nor the future. Veronika is filled with such an instinct for life that she discovers that she has postponed every emotion or action and held them back throughout her life, and she really longs to live. Sexuality and love, which serve as the best manifestations of the life instinct, arouse the two conflicting emotions: pain and pleasure. Love makes the person feel both happiness and sadness at the same time, and happiness can only be meaningful if sadness is also felt. Veronika falls in love with Eduard in the mental hospital, and her motivation for life is found again with this balance. "Why did I never do that before? If I'm free, if I can think whatever I choose to think, why have I always avoided imagining forbidden situations?" (p.135). She wants to carefully examine the beauties of the world and enjoy them to the fullest. She has led a life without purpose, meaningless and with many suppressed emotions until this awareness. She realizes all life functions, self-actualization, and social needs are repressed by the death instinct that exists within her. Therefore, she regrets all the words and feelings that didn't come out and the actions she avoided. Her self-actualization is encouraged by a state of insanity or indifference in a mental hospital, unlike in real life. Based on this quote, it can be said that the environment and family play a critical role in the psychology of the individual.

Veronika is unable to see the meaningful and valuable side of life until the tendency to commit suicide, for society and moral codes make even usual or natural things look wrong. Adhering to this, she is unable to live her life the way she wants due to the pressure of her superego and has a desire to end her life due to destructive impulses from her id before the failed attempt to commit suicide. "During those days in Vilete, she had felt things she had never before felt with such intensity – hatred, love, fear, curiosity, a desire to live" (Coelho, 2006, p.102). She fails to fulfil her self-actualization needs, which means achieving her full potential, and she is not capable of taking action except to meet her basic needs, which are at the lowest level, including food, water, breathing, sex, etc. The involvement of her friendships in her life has a positive impact on generating self-esteem, self-actualization, and motivation to live. Her friends teach her not to be afraid of being different or anomalous. Veronika now decides to carry out her actions in her own way without fear of being judged. Veronika feels the energy in her soul and desires to behave freely in all her actions. Veronika discovers her true identity, a side of herself she loves, living deep within her, with all her suppressed emotions released. "We are all brought up only to love, to accept, to look for ways around things, to avoid conflict. Veronika hated everything, but mainly she hated the way she had lived her life, never bothering to discover the hundreds of other Veronikas who lived inside her and who were interesting, crazy, curious, brave, bold" (p.68). Veronika had decided to die because this superior harmony and striving to please others had exhausted her enough, she had nothing left she wanted from life, and her existence seemed meaningless to her. She lost against life by suppressing her feelings, and without a fight or struggle for a living in order to maintain parental love, she gave up on many of her wishes on her own, took no risks, remained helpless in the face of the world's wrongs, got a job in the public library of the city where she lived by refusing to work on the law, and so on. She now feels deep regret in realizing that the emotions she suppressed in her past years are actually the main triggering factor in her becoming this way. Though she is initially disappointed by her unsuccessful suicide, as the days pass, she finds herself experiencing life more fully than ever before because she has nothing to lose anymore.

When I came here, I was deeply depressed. Now I'm proud to say I'm insane. Outside I'll behave exactly like everyone else. I'll go shopping at the supermarket, I'll exchange trivialities with my friends, I'll waste precious time watching television. But I know that my soul is free and that I can dream and talk with other worlds that, before I came here, I didn't even imagine existed. (Coelho, 2006, p.163)

The troubles related to society and one's inner world are considerably difficult to discover and solve rather than normal. The suppression of one's wishes (id) by society and moral values (superego) causes individuals to limit themselves in many ways, which is particularly common in modern societies because of leading individuals into desperation. When repressing emotions and actions and not fulfilling the basic instincts necessary for life, it may not be possible for individuals in that society to be in a healthy mental and emotional state. Throughout her life, Veronika suppresses requests from the id and succumbs to her superego under the pressure of family, society, and conscience. The environment and love serve as the triggering factors that make her life meaningful, and fear, on the other hand, is the main force that connects her to real life, instilling her life instincts again. She fills the great void in her life by feeling pain and love at the same time, and Veronika now knows who she really is and that life is limited with an inspiration to follow her dreams. The superego keeps her from going crazy and expressing her

feelings without hiding, the id gives her the opposite advice as she has nothing to lose, and the ego, as a decision-making mechanism, responds positively to the wishes coming from the id this time. In this way, the id, which represents the death instinct (Thanatos) and the life instinct (Eros), reaches fulfilment and pleasure to the full. Counting her last days without knowing about the experiment, she begins to discover her true identity and motivation to live. Her inclination toward the action of suicide with a suicidal depressive mood transforms into a high motivation to live as a life-oriented person.

Conclusion

In the context of the enlightenment, modernism brings about many changes by putting the mind and the human being at the center. Despite the positive aspects of the changes that modernity has created (urbanization, scientific improvement, technological comfort, etc.), it also generates the emergence of new troubles such as alienation, meaninglessness, and social disintegration. Modern people are usually psychologically exhausted and isolated as individuals who have been detached from their past and purified of values. Being incrementally pointless in life propels individuals into a deep hollow, causing both physical and mental deterioration. Life goes off its normal course and leaves discernible traces in human nature. In the 1950s, postmodernism emerged as a continuation of modernism, not as a rejection of it but as a reaction to its ideology. Individuals and societies were transformed by the two great world wars of the modern and postmodern periods, which pushed them into a state of deep complexity and uncertainty. The destructive traces of these two periods and the psychology of the individuals are reflected in the literature. In his book, *Veronika Decides to Die*, Paulo Coelho also conveys the loneliness of the individual and the falsehood of society to the reader. The novel explores the psychological transformation of a young woman who is driven to suicide despite everything going well in her life. This study elaborated on the emotional state of the main character based on Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

As a conclusion, the emotions that Veronika suppressed in her past by rejecting requests from the id can be regarded as the main reason for the monotony or sameness of her life. Her id, which represents basic desires and drives, is suppressed by the moral and social rules of the superego throughout her life and leads her to a life of displeasure. Veronika gives up on her dream of being a pianist without even going against her mother's desire because she does not want to feel guilty under her unconditional love. This is due to the fact that our conscious experiences of judging ourselves, setting ideals, and blaming ourselves when we do something wrong are all strictly related to the superego. Her ego, as a control mechanism, cannot maintain a balance between the id and the superego and resorts to defense mechanisms; thus, it temporarily pushes the wishes coming from the id to the subconscious through repression. These sorts of feelings, which were suppressed in the past, reappear in different ways in the coming years. Being opposed to her wish, which she has always dreamed of, breaks his motivation for life and creates trauma in her. Her id's failure to achieve pleasure without meeting its needs intensifies its destructive death drive. Her death instinct overtakes her life instinct, which gives her basic life motivation, and it deprives her of emotions such as survival, pleasure, socialization, love, pain, etc. The process she goes through in the mental hospital and the experiment she is unaware of, regains her instinct to live. Through her friendship with Mari and Zedka, she realizes that the concept of insanity is a motivating force that can bring people back to life. Without being overwhelmed by internalized moral

and conscientious rules and adhering to the principles of pleasure, Veronika enjoys her life to the fullest and finds her motivation for life. Her feeling of love towards Eduard serves as a manifestation of the id, which increases her motivation and makes her discover her real identity through powerful feelings. To summarize the above in general, the ego, which is the control center of the id and superego, loses its functionality for the main character, and it is unable to maintain the balance, causing her to suppress some of her emotions. The analysis findings demonstrate that negative emotions that are pushed into the unconscious and suppressed prevent the individual from transitioning to love and belonging, self-esteem, achievement, and self-actualization stages. Veronika almost completes her needs such as love, friendships, self-confidence, and sexual intimacy in the asylum, all of which restore her to life as motivation for life. Veronika experiences a new emotional state for her actualizing her life without pretending to be a different person rather than she is, suppressing her emotions and being concerned about judgment from others. Feelings repressed by the ego only provide a temporary defense, and even the slightest negative emotion from the past can affect one's current life. In the case that the basic impulses of love, self-defense, pain, sexuality, and sociability are satisfied, it strengthens the individual's life instincts and clings him to life; otherwise, it pushes the individual to a destructive death drive.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization, person related to our article titled "A Study of Freudian Psychological Factors Related To The Suicide of The Main Character in Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides to Die"



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