



## Fear Mechanism in Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Tell-Tale Heart*

Abdalahdi Nimer Abdalqader Abu Jweid<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Assistant professor of English literature, Faculty of Educational Sciences & Arts / FESA / UNRWA, Amman, Jordan.

\* Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

This article studies anxious psyche in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart.” The study is going to examine the story’s main character who suffers from bewilderment and anxiety. In the course of the story, there is an implicit mystery that makes the reader perceive the events in an unexpected way. Poe builds his story’s events on a narrative manner that make the reader suspicious. He gives the reader the opportunity to interpret the story according to the expected events. Yet, the story does not end in according to the reader expectation. According, the current study will analyze the events from a psychological way. It will employ the concept of anxiety to discover the main character’s agitated psyche. The character meet unusual and abnormal coincidences ate the same time. These coincidences make him anxious. Here, my analysis will set out to discuss the gradual phases of the character’s anxiety. Additionally, my analysis will examine the character’s deteriorated psyche by using the concept of anxiety.

**Key words:** Anxiety; Paranoia; Poe; Psychoanalysis

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### INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a psychological detrimental disease. Therefore, anxious people suffer from unstable psyche. Anxiety

constitutes “not only amusements but whole ways of live have been cultivated that alleviate the restlessness or unease that any intimation of a spiritual destiny” (Habib xxii). The spiritual unease is caused by some turbulent agitations in life experienced by some people. Anxiety comes out “in the course of investigations that are little more than propaedeutic, one sometimes finds the word ‘reconciliation’ used to designate speculative knowledge, or the identity of the knowing subject and the thing known” (p.15).

The symptomatic features of anxiety develop further “when sin is drawn into aesthetics, the mood becomes either frivolous or melancholic, for the category under which sin lies is contradiction and this is either comic or tragic” (Kearney, p.19). Furthermore, melancholic idiosyncrasy appears “as soon as sin is actually posited, ethics is on the spot and now follows every step it takes. How it came into being does not concern ethics, except insofar as it is certain that sin came into the world as sin. But still less than any concern with the genesis of sin is ethics concerned with the still life of its possibility” (p.28).

Sin, therefore, could be one determinant attribute of anxiety. There is a modifying measurement of anxious feelings defining “the modification of symptoms and the alleviation of suffering through redescription” (Phillips, p.3). Furthermore, anxiety compromises “merely that nothing in our lives is self-evident, that not even the facts of our lives speak for themselves, but the facts themselves look different from a psychoanalytic point of view” (p.4). The self-evident example of anxiety is “there might be other ways of finding life impressive, other pleasures that might sustain us” (p.5). As such, anxiety is a term initiated by Sigmund Freud to refer to “what we are suffering from,” and the ways in which “we have of avoiding our suffering” (p.5). Anxiety is thus a result of certain kind of suffering. Therefore, this essay will use the Jungian concept of anxiety to analyze the narrator’s anxious psyche in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) is studied in many critical fields. Andrea Schaumlöffel argues that the story's rhetorical structure gives it a new structural technique. That is, Poe experiments with the latent structural elements of the story to describe the psychological features of the narrator (p.24). The narrator suffers from anxious behaviors which make him deeply anxious. Then, the narrator becomes more anxious because of the "hallucinations" made by his sin to commit a crime (p.26). Yet, the story rhetorical structure provides the reader with a suspense quality by which the reader does not understand the true murderer (p.29).

Marta Miquel, on the other hand, tackles the thematic elements of the story. Miquel contends that Poe tries to critique the sense of "social exhaustion which was dominant in the American society at the time" (p.133). The American society suffered from social disintegration and chaos that left their negative imprints on the behaviors of people. According, people's social relations became worse; and they brought undesired problems, such as crime and unfaithfulness (p.134). The result is that people become more psychologically anxious than before (p.134).

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In Poe's story, the narrator appears anxious from the begging when he describes his abnormal feelings. These feelings are accounted "the most inherent characteristics of anxiety are the critique of society, the relative vision of anxiety in literary texts, and the experimental "virtuoso" with individuals' psyches. In the literary tradition, anxiety "is used to describe certain characteristics of psychoanalytical fiction (depending on, for instance, on psychic symptoms, paranoid feelings, agitated persons, etc.) and a representation of the anxious inner feelings" (Sharma and Chaudhary, p.189). In the light of this assumption, the narrator, again, is paradoxically portrayed in the story. Poe offers us with a vivid picture of his psychological agitation which is considered a real depiction of society in the eighteenth century. The narrator is not at ease. Instead, he becomes suffering from anxiety and unrest.

Furthermore, the congruent relationship between psychological anxieties as society is fittingly inextricable. I believe that the productive circuits tracing this relationship are accentuating the latent peculiarities of psychoanalysis. Therefore, "anxiety fiction, such as psychoanalysis as a critical discipline, is difficult to define and there is no specific features on the particular characteristics of anxiety, scope, and importance of anxiety literature. However, unifying features often coincide with Carl Jung's conceptualization of anxiety "anxiety" and "psychoanalysis" (p.102). As such, in "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator's tells us about his

feelings and how he becomes anxious when he thought of committing a crime: "It is impossible to say how the idea first entered my head. There was no reason for what I did. I did not hate the old man; I even loved him. He had never hurt me. I did not want his money. I think it was his eye. His eye was like the eye of a vulture, the eye of one of those terrible birds that watch and wait while an animal dies, and then fall upon the dead body and pull it to pieces to eat it" (p.64).

According to Karl Jung, the radical discrepancy between anxiety and feelings fiction delineates both fictional presentation of "meaning" in literary texts. Anxiety, on the one hand, accredits the presence of agitation. Yet, this thematic attributes emphasized by psychoanalytic critics. They express the textual anxiety in a turbulent periphery to forge the "psychic quest for anxiety in a chaotic world" (p.189). On the other hand, feelings abandon anxiety paradigmatic pattern of meaning. Instead, it provides a lively attitude towards anxious meaning. As such, it "playfully" includes anxiety "quest" for rest which psychoanalysis often disregards the possibility of anxiety, and the "psychoanalysis often parody his quest" (p.189). To link this to "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator and his feelings are described meticulously in the story. The following excerpt provides us with ample example of his agitated feelings:

Every night about twelve o'clock I slowly opened his door. And when the door was opened wide enough I put my hand in, and then my head. In my hand I held a light covered over with a cloth so that no light showed. And I stood there quietly. Then, carefully, I lifted the cloth, just a little, so that a single, thin, small light fell across that eye. For seven nights I did this, seven long nights, every night at midnight. Always the eye was closed, so it was impossible for me to do the work. For it was not the old man I felt I had to kill; it was the eye, his Evil Eye" (p.65).

To illustrate, Jung discusses the ideological dichotomy between anxiety and paranoia; "anxiety is also incredulous toward paranoia that purports to recount upset feelings" (p.11). In addition, anxiety response to truth on this view is a "compelling story told by persons in positions or power in order to perpetuate their way of seeking and organizing the natural and social world" (p.11). This world is presented properly by Poe in "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), when the narrator becomes paranoid of the old man's presence in the room: "and every morning I went to his room, and with a warm, friendly voice I asked him how he had slept. He could not guess that every night, just at twelve, I looked in at him as he slept. The eighth night I was more than usually careful as I opened the door. The hands of a clock move more quickly than did my hand. Never before had I felt so strongly my own power; I was now sure of Success" (p.65).

Anxiety "paranoid" features have got significance from the linguistic nature of narrative in a period with

exuberant literary theories because “given the centrality of anxiety and language in accounts of postmodern condition, it will come as no surprise to learn that some of the most important contributions to anxiety conditions which have come from the domain of literary theory” (p.13). Such anxiety conditions are, presumably, similar to the narrator’s anxiety because of the old man’s awareness: “the old man was lying there not dreaming that I was at his door. Suddenly he moved in his bed. You may think I became afraid. But no. The darkness in his room was thick and black. I knew he could not see the opening of the door. I continued to push the door, slowly, softly. I put in my head. I put in my hand, with the covered light. Suddenly the old man sat straight up in bed and cried, ‘Who’s there??!’” (p.65).

There is a psychoanalytic continuity with anxiety. There is an implicit relation between them i.e., psychoanalysis puts anxiety literary modes into practice. Just so, psychoanalysis synthesizes anxiety literary forms into thematic peculiarities. Stanley Rachman argues that “anxiety is it merely a matter of fashions; for the sense of psyches may express some upset urgency that partakes less of hope than fear” (p.3). This feeling resembles the narrator’s fear in “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843): “I stood quite still. For a whole hour I did not move. Nor did I hear him again lie down in his bed. He just sat there, listening. Then I heard a sound, a low cry of fear which escaped from the old man. Now I knew that he was sitting up in his bed, filled with fear; I knew that he knew that I was there. He did not see me there. He could not hear me there. He felt me there. Now he knew that Death was standing there” (p.65).

Anxiety, accordingly, encompasses a different representation of psychological forms. These forms can be exhibited in multiple ways of textual devices; whereby they represent the authentic individuality (Abu Jweid, p.538). Rachman, furthermore, writes on this representation in a double-faced view, “My point here is double: in the question of anxiety, there is a will and counterwill to emotional feelings, an unexpected desire of the mind, but this will and desire are themselves caught in a sudden moment of anxiety, if not exactly of disorder” (p.3). Being that so, in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the narrator’s feelings change and he becomes more anxious when he lifts the cloths: “Slowly, little by little, I lifted the cloth, until a small, small light escaped from under it to fall upon — to fall upon that vulture eye! It was open — wide, wide open, and my anger increased as it looked straight at me. I could not see the old man’s face. Only that eye, that hard blue eye, and the blood in my body became like ice” (pp.65-66).

Furthermore, Jung has gradually postulated avant-garde anxiety supplanted by the movement of initially peripheral “anxious” phenomenon towards the essence of critical genres. By the same token, he has described

“surpass” or “suppress” featuring reactionary fiction which involves the author and the text simultaneously. Therefore, the textual question poses central and overt exemplification of the relationship between reality and fiction; and the literary consequences of telling stories. In this sense, “anxiety sounds not only awkward, uncouth; it evokes what it wishes to surpass or suppress, feelings themselves” (p.4). Therefore, outer effects influence the individuals’ feelings. The killing of the old man, for example, is an indication of the outer effect which influences the narrator’s feelings:

Have I not told you that my hearing had become unusually strong? Now I could hear a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. I tried to stand quietly. But the sound grew louder. The old man’s fear must have been great indeed. And as the sound grew louder my anger became greater and more painful. But it was more than anger. In the quiet night, in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger became fear — for the heart was beating so loudly that I was sure someone must hear. The time had come! I rushed into the room, crying, “Die! Die!” The old man gave a loud cry of fear as I fell upon him and held the bedcovers tightly over his head. Still his heart was beating; but I smiled as I felt that success was near. For many minutes that heart continued to beat; but at last the beating stopped. The old man was dead. I took away the bedcovers and held my ear over his heart. There was no sound. Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His eye would trouble me no more!” (p.66)

Indeed, apart from the apparent aspect of anxiety, fictional forms can find their path within the confines of avant-garde anxiety in which “there is already some evidence that anxiety, and psychoanalysis even more, are beginning to slip and slide in time, threatening to make any diacritical distinction between them desperate” (p.4). Being so, anxious persons feel that they are mad. This example could be found in “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843) as the narrator describes his madness to kill the old man: “So I am mad, you say? You should have seen how careful I was to put the body where no one could find it. First I cut off the head, then the arms and the legs. I was careful not to let a single drop of blood fall on the floor. I pulled up three of the boards that formed the floor, and put the pieces of the body there. Then I put the boards down again, carefully, so carefully that no human eye could see that they had been moved” (66).

Within the limits of psychoanalysis’s innovative fiction is the appropriation of anxiety, or as widely accredited “psyche reflexivity.” This textual device allows a space for authors to discuss anxiety in their works. It breaks the traditional narrative structure and alludes to the authorial portrayal of anxiety in the text. In its ultimate premise as an authoritative fictional faculty, reflexivity can bring about “anxiety” elements. Rachman claims that “anxiety”

is a representative mode by which “psychological disorder” plays integral roles in the text; Rachman explicates this further: “in arguing that the anxiety of behavior is not a direct reflection of real psyches, they have therefore emphasized that it is essentially a competing representations of the psyche” (p.21). Consequently, anxiety makes persons behave in abnormal behavior. In “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), the narrator behaves in an abnormal way when he thinks of killing the old man: “As I finished this work I heard that someone was at the door. It was now four o’clock in the morning, but still dark. I had no fear, however, as I went down to open the door. Three men were at the door, three officers of the police. One of the neighbors had heard the old man’s cry and had called the police; these three had come to ask questions and to search the house” (pp.66-67).

Cheryl Winning Ghinassi also reasserts anxiety control over person’s feelings, as narrative structure switches in the text’s paragraph. This assertion implies a “technique” to express “an awareness of anxiety which should also lead to the recognition that even ‘postist’ styles of thought never completely transcend that which they ‘come after’ (the psychoanalytic paradigm of psyche sets the terms of feelings)” (p.35). A central insight to anxiety in the text, Ghinassi argues, has been that fictional perspectives are contingent “hence, even anxiety will inevitably be a token of anxious persons” (p.35). The anxiety of the narrator accounts to these feelings. He wishes to bring the police to catch the murderer though he is the true murderer: “I asked the policemen to come in. The cry, I said, was my own, in a dream. The old man, I said, was away; he had gone to visit a friend in the country. I took them through the whole house, telling them to search it all, to search well. I led them finally into the old man’s bedroom. As if playing a game with them I asked them to sit down and talk for a while” (p.67).

Psychological anxiety accentuates inherent problems in narrative texts (Abu Jweid and Sasa, 2014, p.164). Ghinassi’s proposal of the authorial intentionality goes concomitantly with the presumption that anxiety underpins the psychoanalytic stance towards agitated psyches (p.4). Anxious persons accuse themselves of committing something bad (p.4). Similarly, in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the narrator begins to feel his sin as a murder. Here, he appears very anxious: “My easy, quiet manner made the policemen believe my story. So they sat talking with me in a friendly way” (p.62).

This anxiety problem is caused by psychoanalysis monotonous reliance on the representation of anxiety in the text. This reliance, consequently, carries out the collapse of anxiety in the lives of anxious persons. Jung writes that “anxiety is more generally, on a certain level of narrative abstraction, than itself may be rightly assimilated to fear and suspicion which are related to the psychic agitation” (p.4). Anxiety relates to sickness (p.6).

This kind of agitation could be found in the narrator’s odd feelings that he is sick: “But although I answered them in the same way, I soon wished that they would go. My head hurt and there was a strange sound in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The sound became clearer. And still they sat and talked” (p.67).

In the context of fictional anxiety, psychological expose these feelings to pinpoint their “awareness” capacity for absorbing the cultural “impulse of the surrounding society” (Kearney 190). The literary element which psychological authors use is their “narrative” repertoire of fictional texts (Abu Jweid and Termizi, 2015, p.132). This brings about a “univocation” of the anxiety vision of human psyches. In the long run, “this distrust of totalizing anxiety extends even to the author and his own self-awareness; thus psychological writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ anxiety to undermine the author’s “univocation” (the existence of anxiety primacy within a text, the presence of a single all-powerful psychological authority)” (p.189). The anxious feelings appear suddenly in the lives of anxious persons. This anxiety is depicted by the author who controls the story events. The narrator, for example, becomes anxious and calm at the same time. But when he feels relaxed, he suddenly gets anxious. He becomes afraid of producing any noisy sound to avoid being suspected as the murderer: “Suddenly I knew that the sound was not in my ears, it was not just inside my head. At that moment I must have become quite white. I talked still faster and louder. And the sound, too, became louder” (p.67).

The mature ambivalence of anxiety writings and psychic disorders has been born out of the social and literary unity (Abu Jweid and Sasa, 2020, p.338). The various “high” and “low” aspects of culture are also determining in the succession of merging the “multiple genres” of “antecedent literature” (Jung, p.191). Consequently, “the distinction between anxiety and society is also attacked with the employment of psychology, the combination of multiple social elements including subjects and persons previously deemed fit for being anxious” (Jung, p.96). This is because the anxious persons do not feel at ease with their surroundings; and the author describes these surroundings to critique the bad features of society (Kearney, p.83). In “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), the narrator is afraid of the old man because he is concerned with the old man. The narrator’s fear of the old man exemplifies the fear of the real society: “it was a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall, a sound I knew well. Louder it became, and louder. Why did the men not go? Louder, louder” (p.67).

Additionally, constructing fictional anxiety is arguably connected to truth conceptualization (Abu Jweid, 2020, p.207). Psychoanalysis mentality places heavy emphasis on the “relative vision of truth” (Kearney 5). Viewing



truth from a subjective perception depends on the personal interpretation and “comprehension of what is going in the world” (p.5). Truth, likewise, is indispensable because the “anxiety mind refuses to limit truth to its rational dimension and thus dethrones the human behavior as the perceptive of truth. There are other valid paths to knowledge besides reason ... including the emotions and the intuition ... the psychological mind no longer accepts the life belief as objective” (Jung, p.107). To explain, anxious persons refuse to believe that they are alone. They think that they are watched and overseen by other persons. The narrator, for example, does not feel at ease. He thinks that other people watch him. Therefore, he walks quickly in order not to draw the attention of other people to watch him. He does not also produce any sound: “I stood up and walked quickly around the room. I pushed my chair across the floor to make more noise, to cover that terrible sound” (p.67).

The narrator's feeling is connected with anxiety. In its highly critical mediation on truth and anxiety, psychoanalysis is set on the “worldview” of reality which spreads through social and behavioral “facets of life” (Kearney, p.7). Notwithstanding, the most vital step for perceiving truth encompasses “the world is not simply an objective given that is ‘out there’, waiting to be discovered and known; reality is relative, indeterminate, and participatory” (p.7). Moreover, anxiety is a fundamental component of conceiving the essence of reality, or truth. In the same manner, “anxiety can be merely objective ... because the society is not mechanistic and dualistic but rather surrounding, relational and personal” (Ghinassi, p.8). That is, anxious persons suffer from schizophrenic behaviors. They are not stable (p.9). By the same token, in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” (1843), the narrator wants to be silent and calm at the beginning of the novel. Then, he talks in a loud voice. These different feelings are tokens of his anxious psyches: “I talked even louder. And still the men sat and talked, and smiled. Was it possible that they could not hear??” (p.67).

Anxiety has been studied in different fields. In *Freud, Religion, and Anxiety* (2007), Christopher Chapman claims that “anxiety is the result of repression and has a fundamentally pathological character whether it is present in the form of a simple worry or in the form of more debilitating generalized anxiety” (xiv). Anxiety, accordingly, occurs as a response to the internal anxious feelings. Chapman further adds that: “I would add to this that the effect of the signal of anxiety on the ego similarly does not depend upon the economic strength of the signal; the ‘mnemonic symbol’, or psychic representation of the feared situation, is the critical factor” (p.61). Such factor is found in the narrator's upset feelings. He is afraid of people who might hear him as he plans to kill the old man: “No! They heard! I was certain of it. They knew! Now it was they who were playing a game with me” (p.67).

Furthermore, the psychoanalytical explanation of anxiety begins with the persons' symptomatic formations (Abu Jweid, 2020, p.101). The psychological features of anxiety are the most relevant characteristics of interpreting the inner feelings. As such, Chapman argues that “the person's anxiety, whether realistic or not, must be understood as one of the essential roots of symptom formation” (p.61). In addition, anxiety leads persons to recognize their actual existence in life. Chapman says that “once there are actual expressions of existence the possibility of non-existence is salient to a person; anxiety then arises and detaches the person from the mode of purely existing and forces recognition of the possibilities of life” (p.84). This anxious recognition is similar to the narrator's sufferings that other people would see him: “I was suffering more than I could bear, from their smiles, and from that sound. Louder, louder, louder! Suddenly I could bear it no longer” (p.67).

Additionally, Freud is the chief theorist of anxiety. He postulated a lot of arguments about anxiety and its relations to psychological problems. In his book titled *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (2007), he connects anxiety with some inner psychological mechanisms. Anxiety springs from “repression” which deposits the external feelings in the internal psyche: “the problem of how anxiety arises in connection with repression may be no simple one; but we may legitimately hold firmly to the idea that the ego is the actual seat of anxiety and give up our earlier view that the cathetic energy of the repressed impulse is automatically turned into anxiety” (4253). The psychological anxiety is embodied in the narrator's paranoid feelings that he would be discovered as the true murderer. This is the reason behind his repetition of “loud” or “louder” in order not to draw the attention of other people.

In this regard, Freud discusses the process by which anxiety is formed. There are some internal and external conditions which control the formation of anxiety in human psyche. He ascribes this condition to the “undesirable” acts and their projection into the psyche. Furthermore, these undesirable acts gradually characterize the human behaviors “when an undesirable instinctual impulse is aroused by some external perception, and when it arises internally without any such provocation.... But the proactive shield exits only in regard to external stimuli, not in regard to internal instinctual demands” (4255). The narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843) is a fine example of human anxious psyches.

In a developing process, anxiety takes a final shape in its determining of the personal behaviors (Abu Jweid and Kaur, p.5). It is affected by repression and what it produces in the psyche. As a result, human behaviors become abnormal as they confront some inner repression and anxious feelings. But Freud argues that there is a mutual relationship between anxiety and repression. In

the final stage, they unite making a distinctive anxious personality: “the effect of anxiety, which was the essence of the phobia, came, not from the process of repressing agency itself... It was anxiety which produced repression and not as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety” (4268). In “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), the narrator develops anxiety throughout the story. He is not stable. He always suspects other people. In the long run, he suspects himself.

Anxiety is one aspect of repressions. Anxiety and repression develop into a psychological disorder. They are influenced by pre-existing psychological “disorders” which make them unified. They also reproduce these disorders by creating some problems, such as hysteria in the human psychology. Freud intensively deals with anxiety and repression and their production of such problems: “the anxiety which predominates in the picture of these disorders is now seen as a complication which obscures the situation. There are plenty of neuroses which exhibit no anxiety whatever” (4270). The narrator represses his agitated feelings in “The Tell-Tale Heart”; and he becomes anxious as a result of this repression.

In *Aesthetics of Anxiety* (2010), Ruth Ronen discusses the manifestation of anxiety in literary works. Ronen describes “anxiety as being embodied in literary experience, showing how its manifestations take many and varied forms. Objects not clearly defined as human or inhuman, occurrences of doubles, omnipotence of thought-these and others elicit anxiety” (p.8). Anxiety is therefore a result of certain experience where “the embodiment of anxiety-ridden experiences is extensive in art, and with this singular intensity, the uncanny constitutes an aesthetic experience that cannot be correlated with positive sentiments, nor simply equated with extra-artistic experience” (pp.8-9). In addition, “anxiety ... is not to be located in a specific feature of the object causing it, nor understood as automatically raised in every subject facing that object” (p.9). The object of anxiety is an experience because “anxiety is there yet not as a given but as something it is necessary to seek out. So the key to understanding the pictures (experience pictures) is anxiety” (p.9). Anxiety experience is evident in “The Tell-Tale Heart” since the narrator develops anxiety from the beginning of the story. This anxiety is a result of psychological repression.

Furthermore, Ronen explains that “anxiety for the subject has the status of a knowledge of an intimate experience that she or he possesses, even if exempt from it” (p.10). There is a central subject of anxiety through which “anxiety can never deceive, the affect of anxiety is not the product of interpretation or signification but rather is imposed on the subject as a subject of certainty” (10). So, anxiety can cause psychic problems because it “can be the cause of psychic events (such as repression) because it signals the presence of a real object. The real object,

which is in itself indeterminate, can be substituted by an imaginary replacement” (p.10). The subject of anxiety is murder in Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843). The narrator is caught in self-absorbing thoughts of killing the old man, then, he becomes the victim of his feelings. He becomes psychologically anxious.

Repression has another definitive feature connected with “splitting” which is a psychic example of anxiety (Rofé, p.95). Both “repression and splitting are two central mechanisms that organize the function of the psychic apparatus. Each one has its place developmentally, as well as in normal and pathological conditions” (Ronen, 2010, p.75). The observation of repression would lead to decide the cause of anxiety as “this observation was the crucial step leading to the fundamental theoretical formulation that intrapsychic conflict and its consequences were of great importance in the formation of neurotic symptoms” (p.75). Observation can also lead to normality behavior which “was conceptualized as the result of the repression of certain component drives and the subordination of the remaining ones under the primacy of the genital zone” (p.75). Normality, thus, defines the relationship between repression and anxiety; Ronen maintains that:

Repression is not present from the very beginning in the individual’s psychic functioning. Its appearance is associated with the emergence of the secondary process, the establishment of a sharp differentiation between conscious and unconscious psychic activity, consciousness being linked with verbal representation, and with a condition in which instinctual gratification has become more unpleasurable than pleasurable” (p.76).

Again, the repression of tragic feelings would create anxiety. In “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), the narrator’s problem is that he represses his feelings. His behaviors become anxious after that. This is because repression comes out of psychic “conditions” by which the appearance of repression” requires relatively advanced structural and energetic conditions of the psychic apparatus, such as the balance between primary versus secondary process and the status of agitated feelings. The narrator’s suspicion develops more than before. His repressed feelings make him believe that he is the real murderer: “I pointed at the boards and cried, ‘Yes! Yes, I killed him. Pull up the boards and you shall see! I killed him. But why does his heart not stop beating?! Why does it not stop!?’” (p.67).

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## CONCLUSION

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This essay has focused on the psychological disorder in Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843). The main analysis has emphasized the narrator anxious feelings. The narrator encounters an obscure situation at the beginning of the novel. Then, he represses his fear feelings. By time, he becomes psychologically anxious. His psyche becomes

more anxious. Anxiety negatively affects his behaviors. Therefore, he suffers from abnormal behaviors, especially when he hears of an old man's heart beats. The essay, therefore, has analyzed the killing of this old man as the main reason of the narrator's anxiety. Thus, he accuses himself as the real murderer. Such accusation is an indication of his anxiety.

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