

Driven Towards Death – A Psychoanalysis Approach In Interpreting The Novel Kokoro By Natsumi Soseki

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Abstract

This paper aims to attest the author's interpretation that Sensei's character in the novel "Kokoro" by Natsume Soseki, fits into the category of individuals who are driven to death. Through Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach, the writer is expected to prove his interpretation through an integrated analysis. Psychoanalytic elements contained in the novel include instincts, structure of personality and death drive. According to Freud, human instincts are divided into two: life instincts and death instincts. In Freud's structure of personality, the discussed topic will be focused on the id, ego, and superego. Id, ego, and superego will be the subject of how Sensei's character falls into the category of individuals who are driven to death. The method used in answering the research problems is by using close reading, focalization, and data collection. The novel "Kokoro" tells the characters of I and Sensei. I and Sensei are two people met just by chance, unrelated to each other. This paper focuses on Sensei's part where he tells his past to I. At the end of the contents of the letter, Sensei stated that he had committed suicide. The letter turns out to be Sensei's testament. The results of this paper are, in the novel "Kokoro", Sensei's character is an individual who: 1) has a life instinct and a death instinct in different periods of time, 2) has an id, ego, and superego which is proof that Sensei has the trait of being driven to death.

Keywords: death drive, id, ego, superego

Introduction

Kokoro is a novel written by Japanese author, Natsume Soseki, which was published in 1914. The title, translated literally means "heart". The word contains shades of meaning, and can be translated as "the heart of things" or "feeling".

According to Pradopo (1994) the literary work is as the picture of the world and human life, the main criteria that is putted on the literary work is 'truth', or everything that wants to be pictured by the author. Through that process, the reader of their literary work will be able to catch the characteristic of the author related with the world around him/her. In that matter, the writer believes that the interpretation that is going to be laid out in this paper will be able to reach the truth the author of Kokoro wanted, as close as possible.

The reason the writer chose to analyse Japanese literature is because of the personal interest due to the influence of early exposure to anime from childhood and reading Japanese comics. The Japanese culture itself also plays a big part on why the writer chose the novel Kokoro. One thing for Japanese people is that, they still hold the traditional gender roles and its personalities. There are two personalities of human that becomes socially constructed, masculine and feminine. Millet explained that a masculine

personality shows aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy; a feminine personality shows passivity, ignorance, docility, virtue, and ineffectuality (as cited in Saragih, 2016). The characteristics of masculinity and femininity are shown in the novel through the characterization of Sensei and his wife.

The writer chose to analyse the novel *Kokoro* because the novel has a deep characterization and has themes that the writer think are still relevant despite the old settings. The fact that the author of the novel also studied English Literature is a coincidence that motivates the writer to choose this novel in particular for this project paper. The writer also has a favourite line that resonates within his heart to find a meaningful lesson from this novel, especially from Sensei. The line is about Sensei, finally opening up to the character I, after keeping the big burden for himself throughout many years. The reason why the writer thinks that this part conveys so much is because of the turnaround decision of Sensei's life, that in a way, will finally free him from the shackles of guilt and responsibilities that he decided to keep for himself. It is also an important message to rely to the people around you, and how it has the power to change life.

The title of this paper is inspired through the character of the story named Sensei. This novel has two main characters, I and Sensei. The writer is going to be focusing on Sensei, because he finds this character has some depth to it, which provides a wide range of possibilities to explore from various aspects. In this case, the writer chooses psychoanalysis as the medium to analyse this novel, especially Sensei.

Kokoro by Natsume Soseki is one of the classic to be discussed in literary works. The writer, in checking the status of study found the result of various kinds of topics that are different between one another.

Patterns of opposition is one of the topic that the author found during the research (Nae, 2000; Christanda & Rosiandani, 2019). The most significant opposition is, the nature of life and death. The point is that Sensei sees life as a burden due to his conscience and the sin he bears, whereas death becomes, not only an escape but is also the expiation of life. The other one is binary oppositions of past against present, old against young, rural against urban, community against privacy, and family against individual.

Trauma and agony are also represented in the novel from the character Sensei (Nae, 2002; Ruhman et al., 2020). Trauma theory finds that Sensei an identity that are characterized by attributing cynical attitude, attaching guilt, and casting fear. On the other hand, agony is about Sensei who ends up suffering from the guilt of his own actions, after the betrayal he did to K, his best friend that lead to his death.

A spiritual discernment based on Buddhist doctrine, is also picked up (Wright, 1990). Buddhist affirms that a release from anguish of life is achieved only by the experience of *satori* (epiphany), and this experience, though it can be momentarily realized in life, is most perfectly accomplished by death. *Kokoro*, is one of another Soseki's manifestation of this notion especially in the part of Sensei's testament, where the true nature of man shows its colour.

The mention of Meiji Emperor and his death in the novel brought the topic about relevancy of Era to the characters involved (Fukuchi, 1993; Rauf et al., 2019). The general of Emperor Meiji, Nogi Maresuke, decided to end his life with *jinshui*, or ritual suicide, on the death of the Meiji Emperor. Sensei who heard the news, also decided to follow suit, doing the same ritual. The main idea is the correlation of historical facts and how the story with the particular settings is affected.

Based on the findings of literary works of *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki, the writer found that the approach of Freud's psychoanalysis has not been picked up among authors who share the same interest in analysing the novel. The writer believes this approach is able to give a better understanding the thought process of Sensei, and the theories following it.

The topic of this paper is based on Sensei's character, who seems to have lost the will to live, or rather, have nothing to look forward to in live. However, this is not his default trait. There was an accident where he lost his best friend in the process. Thereafter, Sensei has completely changed and appear to wish to follow his friend's fate, which is death. This thought process has shifted a bit after he met the other main character, I. He started opening up bit by bit, even the things that his wife had no clue of. This is also the turning point where he, at least, have something to look forward to before he meets his end, which he often casually talks about, and that is to unravel his secret to I.

Methodology

In this research, the writer used design of descriptive method which is a method of research that attempt to describe and interpret the objects in accordance with reality. The descriptive method is implemented because the data analysis is presented descriptively.

In obtaining the data, the writer used a close reading method. Starting from reading the collected data, note taking, as well as analysing to develop and construct a convincing argument, which is backed up by supporting evidences from the collected data. The main source of this research is the novel itself, *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki, because the approach of this study is primarily based on interpretation by analysing the obtained data.

The next step in order to answer the problems is by interpreting the findings, based on Freud's life and death instinct (1920) and his id, ego and superego (1923). And the final step is to draw conclusion based on the interpretations made.

Findings and Discussion

According to Freud (1920), there are two fundamental instincts that inherent in a person. They are the life instinct or Eros and the death instinct or Thanatos.

Life instinct in the most primal sense, humans' life instinct is survivability. One of the key in survivability is propagation of the species, or in other word, reproduction. This key is manifested through love and sex. Freud gave the name libido to the driving force of the life instinct that goes beyond sexual aspect. The urge and motivation that is driving human in the traditional libido, is also applied in love. And this libido believes in pleasure principle (the psychic force that motivates people to seek gratification, from all sorts of cause).

Death Instinct, opposite to the life instinct, seeks for destruction (not necessarily for life). The impulses for destruction is manifested through acts of aggression, cruelty and even suicide. This impulses is triggered when humans fail to fulfil their pleasure principle, gratification. If humans are unsatisfied, they will then resort to destructive measures from the frustration. The end result will end up harming others, or oneself.

Sigmund Freud suggested that the human personality is made up from three elements, id, ego and superego. These elements are meant to work together, and thus create complex human behaviour.

Id, according to Freud (1933), the id is unconscious by definition:

“It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality, what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the Dreamwork and of the construction of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego. We approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations... It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organisation, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle.”

Feist (2008), states that the id in nature is chaotic. Because its trait is unconscious, the energy it has to seek for pleasure principle overrides everything else. The id in humans is blindly guided by pleasure principle, unresponsive to the demands of reality.

Ego, functions as a regulator that keeps our id in check to prevent us from committing unlawful activities that are blindly guided by pleasure principles. If the id is unresponsive to the demands of reality, then the ego is the bridge to the reality. For example, instead of committing act of robbery to get what we want, the ego helps us to prevent that by saving money so that we can buy it.

Superego, contrary to the id, works in the opposite way. While the id wants instant self-gratification, the superego controls our sense of right and wrong with the help of guilt. What this does is what we consciously do all the time. In order to fit into society, getting us to act in socially acceptable ways. In that regard, we can tell that superego is developed through reward and punishment system. To avoid the punishment, we cling to the basic moral and ethics. The older we get, the experience of superego then manifests in other forms other than guilt, such as inferiority and anxiety.

The writer is going to put the findings in context, and discuss thoroughly why they matter. Through a proper analysis, the discussion will provide convincing views of how Sensei perceives life and death, and whether or not Sensei fits into the characteristic of Freud’s theory regarding death drive.

Life Instinct (Eros)

The life instinct in that is highlighted in the novel *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki is the love between the married couple. Through love, Sensei was driven to keep living for the sake of his wife. His wife also shares similar affection. Sensei was the only man, or human in that matter, that she could depend on. The relationship was mutual, they rely on each other like how normal married couple should.

“The affection I felt toward her bordered on faith. It may seem strange to you that I should apply this word, borrowed from the realm of religion, to a young lady, but even today I still feel this way. I’m firmly convinced that true love and religious devotion are kindred spirits. Every time I set eyes on this young lady’s face, I felt myself cleansed. Every time I thought of her, a rush of noble feeling washed through me. If this wondrous thing we call love has two sides, with spiritual connections on the high side and carnal desires on the low side, then my affections were surely anchored to its uppermost point. I was, of course, a human being embodied in the flesh. However, in the eyes that regarded this young lady, and in the soul that yearned for her, thoughts of the flesh were none to be found.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 86).

This is Sensei when he first met his wife, during his college days where they live in the same boarding house, with the wife being the daughter of the landlady. He was enchanted and his love was pure, as he stated that he had no sexual desire. Rather it was the genuine desire for her love within his soul.

“Let me accompany you on your way,” I offered.

With an immediate wave of his hand, he declined.

“It’s already late, go on home. I need to get home too, for my wife’s sake.” With those final words from Sensei, “for my wife’s sake,” a warm glow rose in my heart. Because of those words, I was able to return home and rest easy.

... In fact, Sensei once divulged to me the following. “There’s really only one woman in my world. Aside from my wife, the charms of no others entice me. My wife, for her part, treats me like I’m the only man in existence. We should be, by all accounts, the happiest of couples.” (Soseki, 2020, p.10)

The way Sensei emphasizes only one woman, it is not an exaggeration to say that it could not be replaced by any other human. She is the only reason of why Sensei was still able to keep his life together, until his meeting with I occurred. He also mentioned himself as the only man in existence in his wife’s life. This shows the self-awareness Sensei has about himself in the eyes of his wife. Sensei considers what would happen to his wife had he left the world, knowing fully well that it would make her extremely devastated.

Death Instinct (Thanatos)

The death instinct (Thanatos) in the novel *Kokoro* will be shown from its manifestation through the act of aggression, cruelty, and suicide. This will cover the case of Sensei who was capable of loving, was also capable of having destructive tendencies that harm other and himself.

“As I watched his mouth, I could tell that something was coming, but I had no idea what. Hence I was blindsided. Imagine my surprise when he opened his mouth and solemnly professed a heartrending love for the young lady of the house. I instantly froze, as though he’d cast a spell and turned me to stone. I emitted not a murmur. My mouth lost all faculty for speech.”

“You could say that my being was reduced to pure dread, or perhaps it was pure anguish. At any rate, I was reduced to a single emotion. Like stone or like steel, I went rigid from head to toe. I was too rigid to even draw a breath. Fortunately, I wasn’t long in this state. A moment later, I’d regained my sensibilities. The first thing I did was kick myself. I realized I’d been beaten.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 108)

The trigger of Sensei’s awakening to the side he never thought he had in himself, was when his bestfriend K, ended up falling in love with the same person as he does. Sensei who never once felt jealousy, was having a hard time swallowing the bitter pill. As it turns out, Sensei starts seeing K as a rival. He felt threatened and start treating their love as a competition. From there on, Sensei starts behaving in an uncharacteristic way, letting his unconscious instinct got the better hold of himself.

Agresion

The first destructive trait that Sensei felt was aggression. Sensei who finally realized the urgency and the looming threat, decided to confront K about his feelings. After K’s confession, Sensei lost himself in his thought on various kind of things, from agonizing the fact that he missed his chance to say it first (his feelings to the young lady),

to K's true intention behind his intention. Soon enough, realizing there was no point in debating with himself, Sensei decided to ask what K's next plan is, whether or not he wants to take it further or simply let it be. Unfortunately, at that time, K did not have the answer to that.

Surprisingly, later on, it was K's turn to approach Sensei. K who was raised with the religious background confide to him that he felt ashamed of his own weakness. Stuck in his quandary and had lost his way. Sensei saw this as an opportunity, and struck K with all his might without mincing his words. At this point, Sensei unconsciously regarded his own best friend as his enemy.

"I'd found him wavering, lost between ideals and actuality, and I fixated now on taking him down with a telling blow. In an instant I'd set my sights. I turned to him anew with a solemn and steely air. It was tactical posturing, of course, but there was enough tension in my mood to mask all sense of absurdity or shame. I let loose first with, "Those not seeking betterment of the spirit are nothing but simpletons.""

"These were the words K had spoken to me as the two of us traveled through Bōshū. I threw them back at him, in the same manner and in the same tone. This wasn't just retaliation. I'll confess that it was more. There was an undertone of cruelty. With these words, I sought to stamp out the spark of his affections." (Soseki, 2020, p. 113).

Sensei took advantage of K's background and upbringing and his own words and values against himself. This shows the aggression of Sensei towards K, and a hint of cruelty as Sensei admitted himself in the way he delivered his statement towards K. Sensei also mentioned stamping out the spark of K's affections, meaning to eliminate K's feelings of affection towards the young lady of the house.

"A simpleton," he finally answered. "That's all that I am."

"K came to a stop where he was. His eyes were cast downward. A chill ran through me. I feared I'd pushed him too far and braced myself for a backlash. However, I'd also noted the lack of any vitality in his voice. I wanted to read his eyes, but he didn't turn to face me. He slowly resumed walking." (Soseki, 2020, p. 113).

K had always spoken of his devotion, and Sensei took it, implying abstinence. That was why K mentioned him, being weakened, and ashamed of it. And it took no time for the result to show. K took the heavy blow, and Sensei was all eyes, witnessing it.

Cruelty

The next act of aggression from Sensei is cruelty. Despite acknowledging to himself that his attempt to remove K's feelings and tearing it down from the inside was despicable enough, Sensei took it even further. Sensei was agitated and insecure even after the inactivity of K on his advances towards the young lady has completely subdued. He then planned in his mind to tie the knot to solve the problem. And all of this, he planned on doing secretly, in order to get ahead of K.

"After a week, I could take it no longer and feigned illness. Okusan and her daughter, and even K himself, pressed me to get out of bed. I gave but cursory answers, and I stayed under my quilt till close to ten. I waited until K and the daughter were both gone, and the house was silent, and only then did I get out of bed..."

"... "Okusan, I'd like your daughter's hand," I said without further hesitation. This didn't seem to surprise her as much as I'd thought it would. Even so, she was momentarily speechless. She studied my face in silence. Having said what I'd said, I was in no position to fret over her scrutiny. "Please," I said, "I beseech you. Let me take her as my wife." Okusan, with her experience of years, was more composed than I was. "I don't see why not, but isn't this rather sudden?" she replied. "Sudden is what I want," I blurted back in

return. My answer was met with a smile. "Are you sure you've thought this through?" she asked me again to gauge my resolve. I answered emphatically that however sudden my supplication might seem, my thought process was nothing if not deliberate." (Soseki, 2020, p. 116).

This passage shows how blinded Sensei was by his love, and how he let his emotions reign over himself. He failed to realize the weight of actions and the consequences. He was putting himself before everything else, only to regret his late awareness of the immeasurable pain it would cause to K after he knows all this, having left him oblivious prior all that.

He did all of this very suddenly, as stated. On top of it all, he mentioned his thought process of asking the young lady's hand for marriage being deliberate. He is referring to his plan, in doing it secretly behind K's back. Sensei certainly had thought this through, shown in his decisive answer to Okusan's question. Down to the fact that he faked illness in waiting for that exact moment, so that he could execute his backstab.

Suicide

The last manifestation of death instinct from the destructive manner is suicide. There are two cases of suicide in the novel *Kokoro*. The first case of suicide in this novel is K's death, and the second case is Sensei's death.

"The contents of the letter were simple. They tended toward the abstract. K, by weakness of character, saw no hope of rearing his ambitions, and was therefore ending his life. After that, he'd added his thanks to me, in very plain language, for the assistance I'd provided. As one last act of assistance, he asked that I handle his affairs after his passing. The distress he would be causing Okusan was unpardonable, and I should by all means apologize on his behalf. He requested that I notify his kin back home. He touched briefly on all he needed to touch on, but there was no mention of the daughter. It occurred to me, after reading the letter through, that he'd purposefully avoided her. What pained me most of all, though, was the final phrase. He'd appended it, it appeared, to exhaust the ink in his pen. He should have, he wrote, died sooner. To what avail, he wondered, had he lived so long." (Soseki, 2020, p. 121).

Upon knowing that so much had been going on without him knowing, and to hear all of that from Okusan, and not Sensei, K definitely could not take it lightly. Furthermore, K also had been suffering from the thought of being a weak human being, that his lifetime devotion to his faith bore no fruit. It is also hinted there that K appears to have had the thought of ending his life, long before this decision came to fruition. K ended his life in his own room, with Sensei being the first to find his corpse, along with his suicide note.

The second case of suicide in this novel is Sensei's himself. He had lived so long after K's incident, struggling and fighting with his conscience that blames him for K's cause of death. He despised and cursed himself for this incident, and the fact that he was driven so far to the point he became the worst version of him that he especially hates all his life. His cowardly measures, his relentless offenses on K's most vulnerable state, and the fact he was able to do all this to his closest friend, just like how he resent his closest family who did the same to him, he hated himself to the very core.

There was no other way for Sensei, he who was fallen far too deep from the saving grace, only seek for the same fate as K as his retribution. He had in fact, considered to confide to his wife. It was also within his desire, to lift himself up from the curse he placed upon himself regarding K. Having said that, a side of Sensei to fancy his

wife past, untarnished, was much greater than to relief himself from the burden he had kept alone for so long. It is also the truth that he managed to keep on living for so long, all thanks to his wife. He was terrified by the thought alone, leaving his wife behind, and saw it as something unacceptable, especially having failed to confide to her, all due to his fear. Until he finally met I, a person he could confide in. Sensei was able to find the perfect vessel, who was sincere to confront him and ready for his past without a hint of hesitation, promised to I, and to himself, that he would not let his life end before he tells his story.

“Please understand that this is the way I lived. From our first meeting in Kamakura, to that day we strolled the outskirts of town, my sentiments were by and large the same. A dark shadow has stalked me all of my days. Only for the sake of my wife have I walked so long through this world. It was the same when you graduated and departed for home. When I promised I’d see you again in September, I was not insincere. I fully intended to see you. If autumn passed and winter came, and even if winter passed, I was certain I’d see you again.” (Soseki, 2020, p.128).

Due to unfortunate circumstances, Sensei was not unable to meet I, because he had to be by his father side in his death bed, along with the rest of his family members. Sensei had not intended to let go of that promise and was fully resolved to hold into it, until the news of Emperor Meiji’s passing.

He felt that his time, along with the Emperor was up, that they had no more business in this world for the upcoming new era. He even tried to tell his wife, only to be diminished. In her playful manner, she added that he could honour the Emperor through ritual suicide, accompanying to the grave.

It turns out that General Nogi not long after the death of the Emperor, followed the same end by taking his own life. Before his death, he had written, after losing his banner in the Satsuma Rebellion, had wished to die by way of atonement. General Nogi, apparently had waited for the right time to die, for thirty five years since the Satsuma Rebellion incident. Sensei was astonished by the fact of such a man as General Nogi was able to live for so long in anguish, and wondered to himself whether it was the thirty five years of living since the incident, or the instant death of the dagger piercing his flesh, bore the greater despair.

It was not long after finding out about the news, Sensei finally decided to find a day to end his life, in the same way General Nogi did. And Sensei, acknowledging the regret that he could not tell this tale in person, also believed that this suicide note served a better purpose in telling his life story to I.

“Ten days have passed since I decided to end my life. Please appreciate that the greater part of that time has gone into laying out my past for you on these pages. My initial thought was to talk with you face to face. However, once I started writing, I was soon satisfied that this is the better way to candidly set forth my life. I didn’t approach this task lightly. My past, the events that made me who I am, is part of the human story, and a part that no one else can tell. I believe that these efforts, to leave for posterity an honest accounting of my life, will not be in vain, but will serve both you and others in shedding light on the human condition. I was told the other day how Watanabe Kazan pushed off the hour of his death by a week in order to finish his painting “Kantan”. Some might dismiss this as vain effort, but there’s no doubt the man had his reasons, some pull on his heart that allowed him to do no less. My own efforts are motivated by much more than just my promise to you. It’s largely my own longing that spurs me on. That longing, however, has now been duly quenched. I’ve done what I needed to do. By the time this letter reaches you, I’ll be gone from this world. I’ll have already passed away.” (Soseki, 2020, pp. 128-129).

Sensei's struggle had finally come to an end. After fighting between the desire to live and to end his life, living a life as if he was already dead, he finally reached the finale. It is fair to say that the only thing he was looking forward in life, is death. He was barely able to keep going with his life with the presence of his wife, the wrongdoings she had never done to him, undeserved being left alone in the dark, not knowing whatever it is she was missing to complete Sensei's missing piece in life. That lone was not enough to keep him distracted from all the negative emotions and voices in his head, hence his routine visitation to K's grave, committed to keep it going once every month. One thing for sure, no matter what kind of circumstances Sensei had in his life after his marriage and K's death, he was resolved to carry his secret to his grave, unbeknownst to his wife. Had his encounter with I never happened, the result would have been the same. He wished not to taint his wife's memories, with his own, that is exceedingly bearable to live with for his standard.

Id

In relation to Freud's id, Sensei has the passion or libido in his mind (1923, p. 24). Feist also adds that "id, in nature, lacks the morality compared to superego. Its traits are unconscious, chaotic, and filled with energy to find the satisfaction of the pleasure principle" (2008, p. 33).

Sensei believed that he was not that wicked. He had first-hand experience of underhandedness from his uncle and the family for the sake of money and he never thought and never considered himself as someone capable of committing such devious act. Nevertheless, he did end up doing it, with his mind occupied of the young lady of the boarding house. For the love of his life, he ended up resorting to those tricks. He took advantage of K's virtue of his devotions to his beliefs and twisted it to tear down his values. Declaring that the feelings K has towards the young lady is contradictory to the devotions he often speaks of.

"As I've stated before, though, it was not my intent to tear down that which he'd worked so hard to build up. On the contrary, I wanted to see him to build it higher. Whether this led him to "the way," or whether it led him to nirvana did not concern me. I simply feared any abrupt swing in his worldview that would bring his interests into conflict with mine. In short, my words were purely self-serving." (Soseki, 2020, p. 113).

Sensei surprisingly admits that his intention, contrary to the result, was not to directly shaken K's devotion. In spite of that, he had to say it. K taking interest in the young lady, whom Sensei first laid his eyes on first, was the spark of conflict. He was driven by his instinctive impulse to eliminate any threat before him towards his goal, the competition he had in his mind in pursuing their love.

Ego

Ego, as stated by Freud, is the reason and common sense in human mind (1923, p. 10). Feist also adds that ego struggles to control the pleasure principle of id, which makes ego the reality principle (2008, p. 23).

Sensei, having lost himself to his id, finds himself in the verge of conscious and unconsciousness. Overwhelmed with guilt, Sensei was bound to have his conscience won him over. Struggling against his own ideals, which serve no more purpose in this life after he abandoned it to pursue his goal by sacrificing his best friend, Sensei also suffered the same fate as K did. The great disappointment in oneself bears an

overwhelming guilt, and the answer he could think of to pay the price of his sin is by death alone.

“I felt profoundly the flaws of humankind. It was this feeling that led me monthly to K’s grave. It was this feeling too that compelled me to care so for my wife’s ailing mother. And it was this feeling that commanded me to approach my wife with tenderness.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 126)

“At the same time, the thought of my wife left alone after my passing was equally unacceptable. She’d turned to me after her mother’s death and told me I was the only one in the world now on whom she could depend. This memory was ingrained in the depths of my being. I thus remained ever indecisive. There were times when, seeing my wife’s face, I was grateful not to have acted.

Only for the sake of my wife have I walked so long through this world.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 127).

The ego, plays the part where he is reminded of the reality. It was not easy for Sensei to continue living with the overbearing guilt he carries. Sensei was struggling a lot from the voices in his head that keeps driving him to fulfil the answer he came up with to pay what he did for K. However, his wife is always there for him. Even from their small interactions, to the small banter they bound to have at some point, Sensei is reminded again and again of how he still has someone who cares for him in this world that he finds overwhelming in solitude. For he has abandoned his ideals, even worse, betrayed them. In this life where he is unable to trust not even himself, his wife is there. Even if she is excluded in his great suffering (from Sensei’s own will), she remains unchanging with her love and loyalty to Sensei. That is how Sensei’s wife, who is left in the dark of his biggest struggle in life, at the same time also plays the biggest part in his life.

Superego

Superego is the moral censorship inside human mind according to Freud (1923, p. 18). Feist also states that “superego indicates moral and ideal of human mind which has no contact with reality. It stands as the moralistic and idealistic principles” (2008, p. 36).

In pursuit of love, Sensei became the very kind of person he hates the most. He strayed from the path he was resolved to stay in, being truthful. He chose underhanded methods to get ahead of K to get the young lady of the house to be his wife behind his back.

“After my uncle deceived me, I’d lost my faith in the world. While deeming the world flawed, I’d declared myself to be true. I’d held the conviction that, be the world as it may, I could hone in myself a shining example of humanity. That conviction was laid waste by K. The sudden realization that I was no better than my uncle was devastating. My disenchantment with others extended now to myself, rendering all effort futile.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 125).

Sensei who once lost trust in humanity, once again experienced the same feeling. However, this time, it was none other than himself.

“The clash of reality and ideals -- that too was inadequate. I finally began to suspect that K, just like myself, had felt himself utterly alone in the world and, with no other recourse, had acted. A shudder ran down my spine. From this point on, a foreboding that I was following in K’s footsteps would occasionally chill my breast, sweeping through like a draft of cold of air.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 126).

Sensei was through and through an idealistic person. He was committed to be different. He was ready to confront the world with the painful experience he had to go through growing up. When turned his back from his own ideal that he built carefully, he felt devastated. Similar with K, Sensei shared the same grief and disappointment in self from having descended so low as a human. The loneliness of the inability to trust anyone, even oneself, is pure despair.

“As my thoughts progressed further, I felt that it was I, not others, who should take up the whip and scourge myself. Next came the notion that scourging would never do. I had to destroy myself. Having no other recourse, I resolved going forward to live as though I were dead.” (Soseki, 2020, pp. 126-127).

“You should understand that even as we continued on in our quiet life, free from vicissitudes and complications, a bitter battle raged within me. For every time I upset my wife by letting it surface, I’d already upset myself a hundred times over. I realized, when I could no longer endure my personal prison, and when I knew I could never break out, that of the options before me, ending my life was the only practicable choice. Don’t let this shock you. That mysterious force, the force that gripped my heart and blocked my every endeavor, held open to me the path to my death. I could remain still, but if I chose to move, even a little, there was only this single path.” (Soseki, 2020, p. 127).

From then on, Sensei cursed himself that he would never be able to lead a normal life. He could wish for it, but wishing could only do so much without actions. He was prepared for the one true path he considers the only option for him. Sensei describes the mysterious force as some sort of rage. This force was born from his furious rage at what he had become, that the only way he could pay for his sins is by taking his life. It takes form in voices that keeps resonating in his head, to do what he ought to do. His pride, his ideal, and his consciousness kept him shackled to break free from this driving force towards death.

Conclusions

Sensei’s perceptions of life and death are heavily affected from the people around him. His perception of life kept changing from his childhood until college days where he finally met his wife in the boarding house. It went through a lot of changes, from the innocent and oblivious where only good things revolve around him, to the incident with his uncle after his parents died, until finally he found love after being distrustful to humans equally since the incident. That said, love turns out to be his biggest source of his life energy.

As for how Sensei perceives death and his death drive, it all began from the death of his best friend K. He knows that they both have suffered similar train of thoughts that lead to death. The harsh reality of their true self that completely cancels the ideals and beliefs they hold very dear, that is almost unbearable to live with. Later on, his conviction of this conjecture of why death is the answer, is reaffirmed by the death of General Nogi, who has led his life in carrying a big burden for thirty five years. The thirty five years countdown is started from the historical moment of his failure in losing his banner in Satsuma Rebellion. Sensei firmly believed that the general was only able to commit the ritual suicide after all these years, thanks to the death of Emperor Meiji, which must have given the general a strong reason. And Sensei, after obtaining more affirmation to his conjecture, followed suit.

Using id, ego, and superego, it is found that Sensei had gone through a process, reasonable to say the least, before he ended his life. His id was the catalyst that changes his life completely. His id, the striving to gratify pleasure principle, overpowered his ego and superego and led him astray from his path, which resulted in K's death. Having fulfilled his id, Sensei then changed and become an empty husk. His ego plays the biggest part to keep him alive while controlling his superego. His superego finds his entire being as unworthy to keep living, from betraying and violating the moral compass of his own to the point of becoming the kind of person he despises the most. He was able to suppress his suicidal drive for so long, until a new trigger comes out (death of Emperor Meiji and General Nogi). This incident allows him to gain control over his ego, and fulfil his superego, following the footsteps of General Nogi through a ritual suicide.

This paper is solely focused on Freud's psychoanalytic approach, the basic of human instincts (life and death) and the theory of personalization (id, ego and superego). However, the author believes there are other approaches of psychoanalytic that are possible to use in analysing the novel *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki. For example, the fact that Sensei refers his death impulses as voices in his head, means that mental health approach is open for discussion for this novel. Future research could further align the idea of individuals with massive amount of guilt as concern towards suicidal thoughts. These topics could certainly help in raising awareness and deeper understanding of traits and tendencies of people with death instincts.

The writer also realized that this novel is open to a lot of topics, for example individualism and post-modernism, structuralism, psychology, culturalism and a lot more that the writer unable to name one by one.

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