

Alaina Salas

Dr. Pennington

English 305: Essay 1 Draft 1

February 13, 2020

### Sigmund vs Edna:

Freudian Repression, [in](#) Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

Deleted: the

Thesis: Edna exemplifies Freudian repression → figure out a better way to say this later

\*Insert REALLY INTERESTING intro paragraph here

Commented [1]: I love this intro lol

One of Freud's topics that is most prevalent in *The Awakening* is the idea of the ego, superego, and id. In his book, *Paul Ricoeur*, Karl Simms describes Freud's psychological trio as follows:

Deleted: the

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

The id is... the unadulterated collection of primitive desires that have been forgotten by the conscious mind because they are repressed. The Ego is the conscious mind, sandwiched between the id and the superego. The superego is the conscience, which acts as a brake on the Ego by doing the work of repressing the id. Occasionally the id will out, however, as it does in dreams, jokes or flashes of wit (Simms 46).

The id, ego, and superego all function differently, but they all serve one main purpose--to distinguish between acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior. Edna's id, or her desire, wants her to seek out a relationship with Robert, but her superego, her conscience, says that this desire is unacceptable. When in discussion with Edna about her feelings for Robert, Mademoiselle Reisz asks, "What will you do when he comes back?" to which Edna responds, "Do? Nothing except feel glad and happy to be alive," (Chopin 104). Edna will do "nothing

except feel glad and happy to be alive” because while her id wants a life with Robert, her ego deems this desire unacceptable. Because Edna’s desire for Robert is unacceptable, seeing as she is a married woman, she represses the desire. In other words Edna’s unconscious wishes to hide it from her conscious mind.

The superego buries that which is frowned upon in order to put on a socially acceptable face for the world. Edna’s repression of her desire for Robert becomes clear when she is discussing her feelings for Mr. Lebrun with Mademoiselle Reisz:

“It seems to me if I were young and in love I should never deem a man of ordinary caliber worthy of my devotion”

“Now it is you who are telling lies and seeking to deceive me Mademoiselle, or else you have never been in love, and know nothing about it,” (Chopin 104).

In this passage, Mademoiselle Reisz suggests that Edna is in love with Robert, to which she responds that Mademoiselle must be “telling lies and seeking to deceive [her].” Her denial of these feelings indicates that she has repressed them because her conscious mind is unable to deal with the fact that she desires a man when she should not.

Freud believed that all repressed desires need an outlet. For Freud “libidinal desire is a natural instinctive inclination, leading to the worst form of neurosis and delirium,” (Bahroun 426) that is, of course, unless it has some type of outlet. For Edna, the outlet is her affair with Alcée Arobin. What she cannot do with Robert, she does with Alcée Arobin. For Edna, “Alcée Arobin was absolutely nothing to her. Yet his presence, his manners, the warmth of his glances, and above all the touch of his lip upon her hand had acted like a narcotic upon her” (Chopin 100). Alcee is not Robert, so she feels no love for him, but is simply using him as an outlet for her repressed feelings for Robert.

**Commented [2]:** Passive: Try "That which society frowns upon."

**Commented [3]:** Unnecessary "to be" verb: Just say "discusses" to make it more active.

**Commented [4]:** Another unnecessary "to be" verb: "but she simply uses him"

While the main function of the superego is to repress desires of the id deemed unacceptable, the id does sometimes win out, causing a person to give [in to](#) their desires. The ending of *The Awakening* is one such example. While swimming to what she knows is her death, Edna thinks, ““It doesn’t matter about Léonce Pontellier -- but Raoul and Etienne!” She understood now how clearly what she had meant long ago when she said to Adèle Ratignolle that she would give up the unessential, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children,” (Chopin 138). Edna’s superego [is telling](#) her not to kill herself because she would be harming her children by doing so; however, in the end, the [Id](#) wins out because “she would never sacrifice herself for her children. By swimming out to the sea and to her death, Edna [is giving](#) into her id and fulfilling her desires. While giving [in to](#) the desires of the id [is often seen](#) as the socially unacceptable choice, “Freud’s thinking on the other hand is that the world would be a better place if everyone allowed themselves openly to be guided by their passions,” (Simms 48). \*add some sentence to wrap up this [paragraph](#)\*

\*Insert stellar final paragraph here\*

Deleted: into

Commented [5]: Same thing: "tells her not to"

Deleted: D

Commented [6]: Gives

Commented [7]: Passive

Deleted: into

Commented [8]: I think that you've done a fairly good job with this paper so far. Unfortunately, Psychoanalytic theory eludes me and I can't offer too much on the content because I really don't know what it's supposed to be... But I think your argument is strong and from my understanding of Freud, I think it is using the theoretical approach well.

Commented [9]: Love this conclusion too lol

#### Works Cited

Simms, Karl. "Chapter 3: Psychoanalysis." *Paul Ricoeur*, by Karl Simms, Taylor and Francis, 2013, pp. 45–60.

Bahroun, Adel. "THE PSYCHICAL FRAGMENTATION IN THE PERSPECTIVES OF SIGMUND FREUD AND JACQUES LACAN." *Journal of Suleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1 Nov. 2018, pp. 421–431.

Extra notes for writing if you i need more

- Killing herself is her giving into the ID
  - Giving into the pleasure complex without thinking of others
  - Wish- fulfillment is an escape from repression and psychological despair. The subject sustains libidinal desire as a means of survival. (Bahroun 422)

These don't really fit with thesis, only use if necessary

- Stomping on wedding ring is conversion
  - Not trying to hurt ring, representative of disdain for her husband
    - "She carried in her hands a thin handkerchief, which she tore into ribbons, rolled into a ball, and flung from her. Once she stopped, and taking off her wedding ring, flung it upon the carpet. When she saw it lying there, she stamped her heel upon it, striving to crush it. But her small boot heel did not make an indenture, not a mark upon the little glittering circlet, "(Chopin 74-75).
      - Wedding ring represents her marriage, she did not make a dent in it
- Pleasure principle → reality principle
  - Robert → Leonce
    - she asked.
      - Edna won't do anything about it because while her pleasure principle says she wants a life with Robert, her reality principle says that that is not possible
- Eros and Thanatos
  - Eros life (driven by desire) vs Thanatos death
    - When she can't have her love she has death