

# Under the floor boards: the id, ego and superego essay sample



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What makes us act on impulse? What as human makes us decide wrong from right? Sigmund Freud, a famous philosopher had studied people and found that humans have three parts to them. The Id, the ego and the superego, these three traits help us decide wrong from right. The Id acts only on pleasure; it avoids pain and allows us to make poor judgments.

The ego makes distinctions between wrong and right, but makes decisions to please the Id. The superego is what tells us wrong from right and allows us to make the right decisions even if it causes pain or grief. In the story "The Tell Tale Heart" written by Edgar Allen Poe the narrator allows the Id and ego to take over and make decisions for him but what will happen when the superego goes against the Id and Ego?

The Id plays an important role in the story for the Id is what tells the narrator to go ahead and kill the old man because of his "evil eye". The narrator explains how once he got the idea he could stop thinking about it "It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived it haunted

Me day and night"(pg. 1) the Id kept this thought in the narrator's brain. It then continued to haunt the narrator to the point where he was finding was to kill the old man. "And every night, about midnight, I turn the latch of his door and opened it -oh so gently...And this I did for several long nights-every night just at midnight (pg. 1)" After plotting for several nights, the narrator finally decided to act. He then snuck into the old mans room, but made a noise which awoke him.

He then waited patiently for the man to fall asleep again but he didn't, the narrator had mentioned that when he was in his room in previous nights he could not kill him because his eye was closed. Now that the man was awake and his eyes were open he could not hold back, the Id took over because of the hatred the narrator had for the old man's eye, he looked into it and saw evil. He let the hate rise and then killed the old man. "The old man's hour had come! ...There was no pulsation he was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more (pg. 2)" He then proceeded to cut the body up and hide in beneath the floorboards.

The narrator is later confronted by three policemen about the "shrieking" heard by neighbors this is where the ego comes into action. The narrator simply states that it was him who was shrieking and that there was nothing wrong "The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man I mentioned was absent in the country. I took my visitors over the house. I bade them search. I led them at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed (pg. 3)"

This was the ego acting; it showed that the ego made him confident that nothing would happen to him, that he was safe from what he did. The ego made him so confident that he brought chairs in the room, and he sat as he had placed the mutilated body of the old man.

Sitting in the old man's room the guilt starts to set in; this is where the superego plays a role in the narrator's situation. As they sit in the room the narrator begins to feel guilty because of what he done (thanks to the

superego) and begins to hear unusual noises. " A ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted.

The ringing became more and more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness—until, at length, I found the noise was not within my ears" The narrator is now starting to believe that the man's heart is still beating because of the extreme guilt provided by the super ego. The narrator then begins to hear these noises louder and starts to question himself; the superego begins to drive him mad. " The noise steadily increasing..." hark! Louder! Louder! Louder! (pg. 3)"

The superego tells us what is wrong and what is right, the narrator had ignored the decision of the superego early but now that the police were seated in the room where the man was buried he began to feel bad. Now with the help of the ego, the superego begins to plunge the narrator into madness by making him hear the noises louder, and making him question whether or not they can hear it too or if they know what he has done. This goes on until he finally breaks down and admits to the police that he killed the old man. " Villains! I shrieked. Dissemble no more! I admit the deed! Tear up the Planks! Here, here! It's the beating of his hideous heart (pg. 3)"

The Id, the ego, and the superego all affected the choices the narrator made when it came down to if he was going to kill the old man. It had seemed that the Id and ego was going to control him, but the superego proved superior to both of them and lead him back on the right path.