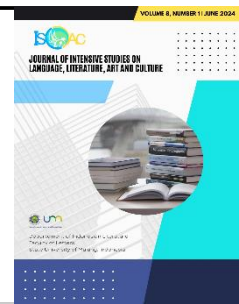

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SUICIDE AS A RESULT OF RELIGIOUS TRAUMA IN COPPOLA'S *THE VIRGIN SUICIDES*

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to examine the disproportionate id and superego that results in religious trauma, which is the trigger of the Lisbon sisters to commit suicide. To conduct this research, qualitative method was used to analyze *The Virgin Suicides* (2000) by Sofia Coppola. Following the investigation, the researcher identified five elements that contributed to the sisters' religious trauma throughout the film.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide ranks fourth among individuals aged 15 to 29, and it is one of the major causes of death (World Health Organization, 2021). Throughout the years, suicide rate amidst adolescence grows in a more concerning way. For instance, the rate of suicide among adolescents aged 15–19 years in England and Wales has annually escalated 7.9% per 100,000 adolescents between 2010 and 2017 (Bould et al., 2019). In *Suicidology* (2019), Maris defines suicide as “Intentional self-destruction resulting in your own death by your own action.” While in psychoanalytic understanding, suicidal behavior is driven by

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the patient's internal subjective experience and related conscious and implicit cognitive processes (Schechter et al., 2022). Before committing suicide, usually there comes a suicidal ideation, which is thoughts about ending one's own life. The occurrence of suicidal ideation is caused by the unbearable physical or psychological pain, hopelessness, thwarted belongingness, and emotional abuse that the patient has been experiencing (Allbaugh et al., 2018; Maris, 2019; Schechter et al., 2022). The Issue of suicide among adolescence has been discussed in a lot of different literary works, such in movies, books, journals, etc. One of the most famously and straightforwardly discussed as the main topic is in Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* (2000).

Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* (2000) is an adaptation from Jeffery Eugenides' *The Virgin Suicides* which was originally released in 1993. It is an American psychological drama and coming-of-age film that tells about five adolescent flawless Lisbon girls, set in Detroit during 1975. The story gets interesting when Cecilia, the youngest sister (13 years old), attempted suicide by slitting her own wrist in a bath-tub and failed, but managed to commit on her second attempt during the Lisbon's very first and only party held in their own house by leaping from her bed-room window, pierced by the spiked fence below. Then at the end of the movie, the rest of the sisters; Lux (14), Bonnie (15), Mary (16), and Therese (17) followed suit as a tragic closure for the movie. The boys around the neighborhood are extremely intrigued by the Lisbon girls and would do anything to get to know the Lisbon sisters better. For example, one of the boys named Parkie, got Cecilia's diary from a plumber who had found it in the bathroom. They read through the diary for the sake of getting information about the Lisbon girls. The movie also brings out the topic of religion, for Mrs. Lisbon is a very devoted Catholic and a very strict mother to the girls. Moreover, Cecilia was holding a card of the Virgin Mary during her first attempt at suicide. The Virgin Mary cards were also positioned in a few strange locations before the remaining sisters took their own lives. The movie surrounds itself within the dynamic of the Lisbon family, and the story develops intensely which leads to the tragic demise of the Lisbon girls.

Thus, religious trauma plays a significant role that results in the suicide of the Lisbon girls. It is the state that people go through when trying to escape a strict, authoritarian religion and dealing with the effects of indoctrination (Winell, 2011, as cited in Stróżyk, 2023; Ramler, 2023). Religious trauma can be brought on by three things. First, it stems from the victim connecting something to religion; second, religion is seen to have either positively or negatively

influenced the experience by supporting the behavior, encouraging the offender, or failing to forbid or protect from it; and third, religious objects or beliefs may cause certain post traumatic effects (Panchuk, 2020). In addition to feeling the constant need to be "perfect" in God's eyes to save themselves from the suffering of Hell—which may have been used as a threat since early childhood—this kind of spiritual abuse can leave the victim depressed, anxious, and self-conscious (Oakley & Kinmond, 2013, as cited in Stróżyk, 2023).

To study deeper the issue of the Lisbon sisters' suicide, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis of the id, ego and, superego is used. Many believe that psychoanalysis is only a matter that psychologists and any other who works in the mental health field concern, but it is way more than that. Psychoanalysis emphasizes human creation, interpersonal relationships, and mutual-understanding (Elliott, 2017). Freud separates human mental life (emotional, psychological, and social well-being) into three parts, id, ego, superego. Id or *Das Es* in German, operates on the unconscious level which is the instinctual drive of a human seeking for gratification and satisfaction. Ego, on the other hand, lies on the conscious level. Ego mediates between id impulses and superego inhibitions; consequently, it tests reality or the rationale to put it differently. Lastly, superego is the ideals and morals, derived through internalization of parental figures that it becomes the person's conscience (Bateman et al., 2021).

Several studies have analyzed the movie with Freud's psychoanalysis approach. A study by Hamza (2017) based on Eugenides' *The Virgin Suicides*, explores the Lisbon sisters' sense of entrapment and lack of ongoing parental love as a result of their strict mother and their father's emotional detachment. While Steffenon (2019) examined the ways in which trauma shapes the narrative and the ways in which psychoanalysis links trauma to suicide. Finally, Ikhsan (2016) traverses on Lux's frustration to gain emotional victory in life through psychoanalysis approach.

In contrast to earlier research, this study will explore in-depth on the Lisbon sisters' disproportionate id and superego caused by religious trauma as the main trigger committing suicide; how the superego's ideals and conscience prevailed over the id's impulses and willingness which relates to the choice of a particular religious figure, Virgin Mary in Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* (2000). Hence, this research will provide an understanding of how the suicidal ideation won over the moral ideals, and how one of the things that ultimately led to their death was their mother's imposition of a rigorous religious practice.

METHOD

The qualitative method was being used to conduct this study. The approach was appropriate for the study because it met the criteria of the qualitative method; it was expressed in plain language, used small samples, drew from cases selected in an opportunistic or purposeful manner, and concentrated on specific people, events, and contexts (Gerring, 2017). Therefore, this method was used to analyze and provide the understanding how the desire for suicide overcame moral principles and how the Virgin Mary was a contributing factor in the Lisbon sisters' death in Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* (2000). The primary source of data for this study was the film, which was watched and rewatched multiple times. Screen captures and dialogue from the film were used as primary evidence, and notes were made regarding noteworthy evidence that could be used in the study. Having said that, additional proof was required to support the analysis. Supporting references were taken from books, websites, journal articles, and other sources.

The research was conducted through a number of steps. The first step was watched and re-watched in order to comprehend the film better. Taking notes on the events in the film that would strengthen the analysis was the second step. Finally, the movie screen was captured in purpose to highlight the action not covered in a dialogue and the dialogue was also used that solidified the analysis. Furthermore, additional readings from books, journals, websites, and other sources were required to bolster the data. The information gathered was centered on the characters' actions, which were corresponding to Freud's theories of the id, ego, and superego, as well as the religious figure they chose as the embodiment of their religious trauma. The data taken were grouped, interpreted, analyzed, and then concluded. The research was strengthened and reinforced by these steps, which were carried out in a chronological order.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study gives a comprehension on how their mother's strict religious practices contributed to their death and how their suicidal thoughts ultimately triumphed over moral principles. Therefore, several findings regarding religious trauma were found. To discuss the findings, Sigmund Freud's theory of the id, ego, and superego was used to provide a comprehension of why these findings caused religious trauma and, thus, triggered them to suicide.

Findings

The Lisbon sisters in Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* exhibit a number of behaviors that point to the predominance of suicidal ideation, which ultimately led to their deaths, and their choice of the religious figure, the Virgin Mary, as an influence to commit, there are five findings regarding to religious trauma; which are Mr and Mrs. Lisbon's attitude towards Cecilia, Cecilia's attachment to Virgin Mary, Mrs. Lisbon's repressing attitude to her daughters, isolation, and the Virgin Mary laminated card as the way the Lisbon sisters communicate with the boys.

Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon's Attitude Towards Cecilia

After her first suicide attempt, Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon tried to look after Cecilia, yet without any effort to understand her condition, or the reason why she attempted in the first place. She also often feels like an outsider, for she is not able to meet the societal expectation, which is obvious during the party. The following findings are the evidence of Cecilia's parents' mistreatments against her.

No.	Time	Speaker	Source
1.	11:38	Narrator	<i>Following the doctor's orders, two weeks after Cecilia returned home, Mr. Lisbon persuaded his wife to allow the girls to throw the first and only party of their short lives.</i>

Table 1. Mr and Mrs. Lisbon's Attitude Towards Cecilia (Cecilia feels misunderstood)

The table above illustrates that Mr. Lisbon persuaded his wife to organize the one and only party of the Lisbon sisters in their humble abode. In contrast to his wife's repressive attitudes toward their daughters, Mr. Lisbon is a man who is willing to grant his daughters freedom, a trait he bases on his religious conviction to show forgiveness, compassion, and trust. However, given how recently the suicide attempt had occurred, it is extremely odd that Mr. Lisbon chose to plan a party rather than making an effort to truly understand what his youngest daughter was going through.



Figure 1. Mr and Mrs. Lisbon’s Attitude Towards Cecilia (The pressures of societal expectation)

During the party, Cecilia feels like she does not belong there. It is obvious, because she always sits in the corner, alone, with her expressions that indicate her uncomfortableness. Especially when the boys started to come over and surrounded her, which can be seen in the second picture of figure 1. As soon as she could take no more of the jokes the boys were making, she finally said to her mother, “May I be excused?” (Coppola, 2000, 16:21). Shortly after leaving, Cecilia jumped out of her bedroom window and got impaled by the fence below in order to end her life. This portrays her incapacity to follow social expectations.

No.	Time	Speaker	Source
2.	07:20	Doctor	I don’t think Cecilia truly meant to end her life. Her act was a cry for help. I know you’re very strict, but I think that Cecilia would benefit by having a social outlet outside of the codification of school where she could interact with males her own age.

Table 2. Mr and Mrs. Lisbon’s Attitude Towards Cecilia (Strong religious convictions from the parents)

Another thing worth noting is following a visit to the doctor and advice, Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon made the decision to invite a boy to dinner with the intention of making Cecilia to interact with him while still under her parents' supervision. Nevertheless, there were no interactions between the two. Being a devoted Catholic, Mrs. Lisbon forced her religious customs on her daughters, including forbidding them from dating or spending time with boys. It is clear that Mrs. Lisbon eventually gave Cecilia permission to socialize with boys due to the doctor’s advice, but because of her strictness, Cecilia is still supervised when she meets a boy.

Cecilia’s Attachment to Virgin Mary Figure

The connection between Cecilia and Virgin Mary could be seen throughout the movie,

indicating her constant need for reassurance from the religious figure. The Virgin Mary figure and Cecilia connection appear in the following evidence.



Figure 2. Cecilia’s Attachment to Virgin Mary Figure (Laminated Virgin Mary Card on The First Suicide Attempt)

Cecilia was carrying a laminated card of the Virgin Mary when she made her first attempt at suicide. She trusted in this figure to give her solace and solitude. Living with strict parents and in an untenable circumstance, the Virgin Mary represents her desperate attempt to find tranquility that would cling to the figure. The irony lies in the fact that suicide is viewed as a sin, despite the Virgin Mary being a symbol of purity.

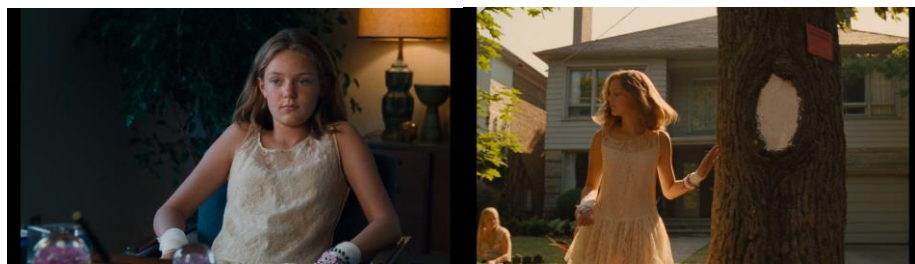


Figure 3. Cecilia’s Attachment to Virgin Mary Figure

The connection between Cecilia and the religious figure Virgin Mary can also be seen in the way she dresses. Cecilia is always dressed in a white wedding gown, which has a connection to the Bride of Christ. In Catholicism, the Church is the Bride of Christ, with Jesus as the bridegroom (Ephesians 5:23–32). Furthermore, the Church—which is the Bride of Christ—is pictured and governed by the Virgin Mary. Thus, the wedding gown Cecilia wears symbolizes the gown that is worn by the bride.

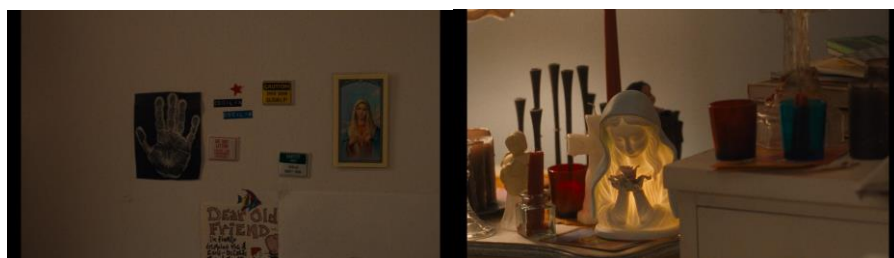


Figure 4. Cecilia's Attachment to Virgin Mary Figure

The Virgin Mary as a figure does not stop from a piece of card and the wedding gown. Cecilia also has the figure as a decoration in her bedroom. The first image displayed the card of Mary that is affixed to the door, while the second image features a miniature statue of Mary. This illustrates how Cecilia is a very religious person with the constant effort of seeking peace of mind by the presence of Virgin Mary in her bedroom.

Mrs. Lisbon's Repressing Manner Towards Their Daughters

The girls' mother's religious practices toward them are another factor contributing to their religious trauma. Mrs. Lisbon's application of her religious beliefs is extremely repressive and controlling; she dictates what they can and cannot wear, monitors them while they are dating, and will punish them profoundly if they disobey.

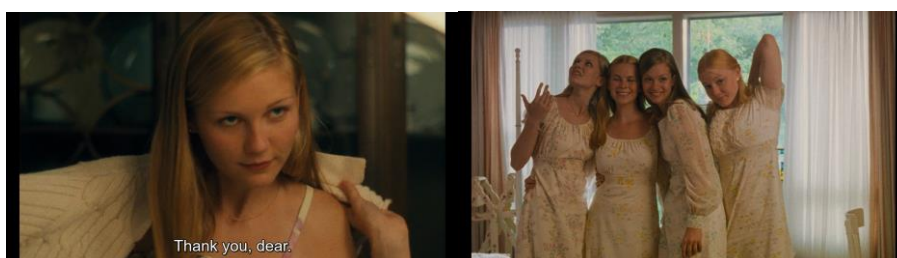


Figure 5. Mrs. Lisbon's Repressing Manner Towards Her Daughters (Way of Clothing)

Being a devout Catholic woman, Mrs. Lisbon has a distinct style when it comes to clothing. She does, however, impose her views on her own daughters. In front of a boy in the first picture, Lux was only sporting a sleeveless top, and Mrs. Lisbon told her to put on her cardigan immediately, saying "Lux, please. Put your shirt on this instant" (Coppola, 2000, 08:05).

No.	Time	Speaker	Source
3.	50:05	Narrator	<i>It didn't make any difference which pattern of their dream dresses the girls each chose. Mrs. Lisbon added an inch to the bust line and two inches to the waist and hems. And the dresses came out as four identical sacks.</i>

Table 3. Mrs. Lisbon's Repressing Manner Towards Her Daughters (Way of Clothing)

Later in the movie, when the girls were given permission to attend a homecoming and had to purchase a dress, their choices were limited to Mrs. Lisbon's preference. In Catholics, it is expected of women to cover their shoulders, avoid wearing dresses or tops with low cut sleeves, and have skirts that fall below the knee. This is portrayed in the second image of figure 5 and in table 3 number 3 above.



Figure 6. Mrs. Lisbon's Repressing Manner Towards Her Daughters (Controlling Lux on Her Date and Lux's First Rebellion)

During Lux's first date with Trip Fontaine, they were only allowed to go on a date under her parents' supervision. This shows the controlling nature of Mrs. Lisbon as it can be seen on the first image of figure 5, where she sat between the two to prevent them from having physical interaction. This controlling behavior led to Lux's first rebellion, where she sneaked out of the house after Trip Fontaine left, and went to his car to make out with him.

No.	Time	Speaker	Source
4.	1:05:22	Mrs. Lisbon	Where have you been? Whatever was—we've been sick!
5.	1:05:28	Mrs. Lisbon	Get in that house!

Table 4. Mrs. Lisbon's Repressing Manner Towards Her Daughters (Shouting and Using Physical Actions to Lux)

In the table above, it illustrates when Lux came home at dawn after the homecoming party, without her parents' consent. It can be seen in the film that Mrs. Lisbon was shouting and using physical actions right away to her disobedient daughter. Mrs. Lisbon harshly pushed Lux inside the house while shouting at her at the same time.



Figure 8. Mrs. Lisbon’s Repressing Manner Towards Her Daughters (Punishing Lux)

As a punishment, Mrs. Lisbon forced Lux to burn her rock music records shortly after they arrived home from a spirited church sermon on figure 8.

Isolation

Following the event of Lux breaking the curfew and being punished, Mrs. Lisbon locked them down inside their house, and only allowed them to go out to check the mailbox.

No.	Time	Speaker	Source
6.	1:06:33	Narrator	<i>Given Lux’s failure to make curfew, everyone expected a crackdown. But few anticipated it would be so drastic. The girls were taken out of school, and Mrs. Lisbon shut the house in maximum security isolation.</i>
7.	1:19:50	Mrs. Lisbon	I’m just perplexed.
8.	1:19:51	Lux	We’re suffocating.
9.	1:19:53	Mrs. Lisbon	You’re safe here.
10.	1:19:54	Lux	I can’t breathe here.

Table 5. Isolation

Resulting to Lux violation of the curfew, the Lisbon sisters were all placed under isolation and were not permitted to leave the house, not even for school. This is surely the major turning point for the Lisbon sisters, wrapped by the feeling of entrapment, and the longing of freedom. It is clear from their conversation that Lux and Mrs. Lisbon had very different sentiments. In the dialogue between Lux and Mrs. Lisbon on table 3, Mrs. Lisbon believed she was shielding the girls, yet what all the girls felt was suffocation.

Laminated Virgin Mary Cards

The last findings that indicate the sisters are suffering from religious trauma is when the last remaining sisters located the Virgin Mary cards noticeable to the neighboring boys. At the

end, there is no doubt that the other sisters will follow Cecilia. When Cecilia attempted suicide, she was holding the card of the Virgin Mary because she felt comforted by the image; the other sisters did the same.



Figure 9. Laminated Virgin Mary Cards

However, they placed the card in multiple locations, purposefully placing them in conspicuous spots, so that the boys could locate them, rather than holding it while they killed themselves. These cards were used as a cry for help, and the boys who lived nearby were invited to their home. The boys thought they were going to escape together with the girls, but in actuality, it was an invitation to the Lisbon sisters' last day of life.

Discussion

The Virgin Suicides (2000) explores the theme of the prevalence anxiety, insecurity, and depression of the Lisbon sisters that teenagers can identify to. The first sister that committed suicide was the youngest, Cecilia, which then the rest of the sisters had done the same by the end of the movie. They committed suicide because of religious trauma they suffered from. There is an explicit link between "authoritarianism coupled with toxic theology" and religious trauma syndrome (RTS) (Winell, 2012, as cited in Downie, 2022). According to Ramler (2023), symptoms of religious trauma syndrome include feelings of isolation or a sense of not belonging; feelings of depression, anxiety, grief, and anger; and a loss of a community (family, friends, romantic relationships). A study by Spruit et al. (2019) argues that youth depressive symptoms are predicted by attachment. These symptoms resemble the Lisbon sisters' behavior.

Depression as one of the symptoms of religious trauma is shown with Cecilia's depictions of feeling depressed as a result the strong religious convictions from her parents; by the way she feels incorrectly understood, the pressures of societal expectation, and her unwavering devotion to the Virgin Mary—even though these are not stated explicitly. These portrayals are interconnected with one another. Her parents strict religious practices is evident

by the way her parents still tried to hold her under their supervision when talking to a boy, even when they finally allowed a boy into their house. These controlling and demanding attitudes caused Cecilia to feel misunderstood. Particularly soon after Cecilia made an attempt on her life, Mr. Lisbon convinced his wife to throw a party without making an effort to comprehend what his daughter was going through. Consequently, during the party, Cecilia felt pressed by the societal expectations she had to meet. Eventually, she excused herself and committed suicide. These indications of traumatic religious experiences Cecilia suffered resulted in a fateful incident. Furthermore, Cecilia's sign of attachment to a religious figure also predicted her depressive state (Murray et al., 2021).

A few scenes demonstrate Cecilia's attachment to the Virgin Mary figure: the first is when she attempted suicide while holding a laminated card of the saint; the second is throughout the movie, she always wears a wedding gown that relates to the bride of Christ; and the third is when she decorated her bedroom door and wall with a laminated card of Virgin Mary. By having an attachment to the religious figure, she indicates the need for solace and solitude from the figure. Cecilia may cling to Virgin Mary who symbolizes innocence (purity) because she believes that by trying to end her life, she has lost it. Cecilia struggles to accept both physical and emotional intimacy given that she has an anxious attachment style, which is characterized by an inability to tolerate physical or emotional distance due to a persistent need for closeness and a fear of rejection (Brennan et al., 1998, as cited in de With et al., 2023). These actions are possibly a positive religious coping, which is having more charitable religious evaluations generally, as well as asking God or a higher power for spiritual guidance and forgiveness (Walker et al., 2022). Still, the sense of attachment to a spiritual figure caused her to become detached to the outside world, which made her consider the possibility of an afterlife.

Mrs. Lisbon's strict religious practice does not stop even after the death of Cecilia. She demonstrates her dominance over the sisters by restricting the girls' attire choices, prohibiting them from dating, and enforcing punishments. By imposing dominance, an authoritative and controlling religious figure may trigger someone to undergo religious trauma (Winell, 2011, as cited in Thomas, 2023), which is what Mrs. Lisbon had unconsciously prompted her own daughters to experience. Subsequently, Mrs. Lisbon enforced her religious practice with clothing in several scenes; first, During dinner earlier in the movie, Mrs. Lisbon orders Lux to wear her cardigan to cover up her sleeveless top because there is a boy sitting opposite her (**figure 5**, picture 1); second, when the girls are finally allowed to go to prom, Mrs. Lisbon

limits their choice of clothing to her own preference to avoid the girls from wearing shorts or other revealing clothings (**figure 5**, picture 2; **table 3**). This manner of forcing the girls to dress according to her will illustrates her controlling nature.

Another example of her authoritative behavior is when Lux went on a date with Trip Fontaine. She was only permitted to go on dates inside their home because Mrs. Lisbon fears that if she allows her daughter to go outside, Lux may be exposed to harmful influences. Figure 6's first image depicts it, showing Mrs. Lisbon sitting between the couple to prevent any physical contact. This demonstrates Mrs. Lisbon's strict parenting style, which frustrated Lux. By being frustrated, she rebelled against her mother in an opposing way (oppositional defiance) to cope (Petegem et al., 2015); she slips out of the house to make out with him while Trip is in his car before heading home.

Lastly, Mrs. Lisbon would discipline her daughters. In order to make a child a "saint," punishment can be used to promote desired changes in behavior or character; and religious trauma can be brought on by a variety of abuses, such as emotional, physical, as well as neglect and brainwashing. Harsh discipline or punishment, guilt-tripping, threats of eternal damnation, and emotional blackmail can all contribute to religious trauma (Panchuk, 2020). Table 4 shows how, after Lux returned home very late in the morning following the homecoming party, Mrs. Lisbon was yelling and shoving her inside the house harshly. Since Lux spent the entire night with Trip Fontaine, she breaches the curfew. Figure 8 illustrates another instance of Mrs. Lisbon punishing her daughter by making Lux burn her rock records. It may also suggest that rock music is seen as "rebellious," which is why Mrs. Lisbon forbids her daughter from listening to it.

After priorly experiencing parental repression from their mother, the sisters were imprisoned in their own house without being allowed to leave for any reason, not even school. Being isolated is strongly associated with anxiety and depression in adolescents (Almeida et al., 2021). Mrs. Lisbon isolates her daughters in an attempt to project her Catholic beliefs by maintaining that she was merely shielding them from the outside world to prevent the sisters from being exposed to any harmful influences. Nevertheless, the girls felt their freedom was being robbed (see **table 5**). These conflicting and accumulated emotions ultimately lead them to commit suicide, as depression is one of the most potent predictors of suicidal ideation (Klonsky et al., 2016).

However, before committing, the girls had a few interactions with the neighborhood boys. They would converse with each other using signals like morse code and listen to records over the phone. The girls began giving the boys the laminated cards of the Virgin Mary inexplicably but noticeably as long as they continued to communicate. Nonetheless, those boys could not seem to comprehend the meaning of the cards. The use of the religious figure could be interpreted as the need to be hopeful, yet the girls were unable to feel hopeful at the same time. They therefore, handed the boys the cards and invited the boys over to run away together, a gesture of hopelessness and desperation since hopelessness is a well-known predictor of suicide and suicide attempts (Klonsky et al., 2016). At the end of the film, after inviting the boys to their house, they took their own lives instead of fleeing with the boys.

The result of the study can be seen through Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis of the id, ego, and superego. Freud and the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society have given the understanding of suicide since 1910 (Friedman, 1967, as cited in Schechter et al., 2022). In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud discussed the idea that a melancholic may have an idealized "narcissistic identification with the object," to the extent that such identification occurs (Daly, 2016). He further discussed in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), the role that the superego, with its severe abandonment of the self, can take part in suicide (Schechter et al., 2022). The dynamics of melancholy and, by extension, suicide are significantly influenced by loss. The hostile aspect of loving and hating acts as emotional glue when an object is lost, making it more difficult to grieve and transition into new objects and to let go of the old one (Ronningstam et al., 2020).

The sisters behavior that characterized which one is the id, ego, or superego can be seen throughout the movie. The longing of freedom identified as the id. As previously mentioned, Lux slinks out of the house to approach Trip Fontaine, who is getting ready to head home in his car, after their first date in order to have a sexual encounter. Another case is when Lux and Trip leave the homecoming celebration early to carry out the same action in the football field which leads to Lux breaking the curfew and receiving punishment from her mother (Coppola, 2000, 1:01:27). These two instances are similar to the id, or unconscious level of the self, which is the need for immediate gratification of one's sexual desire (Rennison, 2015).

Cecilia's id, on the other hand, is perceived as her wish to be freed from emotional suffering, but there is contradiction with her superego, which is perceived as her attempt to conform to social norms. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud describes that the "normal affect" of mourning is brought on by physical or environmental factors. On the

contrary, melancholia is a pathological grief brought on by psychogenic factors. Freud asserts that "in grief the world becomes poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" because the two main psychogenic symptoms of melancholia are the loss of self-esteem and the internal impoverishment of the ego (Rhee, 2017). Consequently, *Mourning and Melancholia* might be connected to Cecilia's incapacity to cope with her feelings and the internal struggle between her id and superego, which made her feel depressed and ultimately took her life.

The authoritative role of Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon as parents, along with their upholding of cultural standards, religious practices, and control, all demonstrate the superego. By trying to control how her daughters dressed and by punishing them when they disobeyed her, Mrs. Lisbon was instilling moral ideals in her daughters. Additionally, she forbade her daughters to have any interaction with men, let alone dating. Despite this, Mrs. Lisbon continued to exercise control over Lux when she eventually gave Lux permission to date. The Virgin Mary, a religious figure, also functions as the superego. In the film, the figure demonstrates solicitude, discipleship, and hope.

The ego helps to mediate between the id and the superego, as seen by the girls' continued attempts to adhere to the directives of their parents in their home. One instance is when Lux said, "Gotta get back for bed check," while having intercourse with Trip in his car despite being aware of her parents' curfew (Coppola, 2000, 45:47). This demonstrates her conscience in allowing her to indulge her sexual desire while still abiding by her parents' wishes or moral principles. Furthermore, the strict upbringing of their parents and lack of understanding from their parents led them to feel abandoned. The withdrawal of libidinal cathexis (emotional attachment) of the superego from the ego is also one of the factors of the feeling of abandonment (Seng Choi, 2023). According to Freud's theory in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), the superego takes away the ego's libidinal cathexis when the ego feels abandoned by its defense mechanisms and gives up, eventually dying (Ronningstam et al., 2020). As a result, as the superego increases, the ego is attacked by the superego, which grows more ruthless and vicious. In this instance, suicide is an attempt to end agonizing feelings of loneliness, self-loathing, and murderous rage as well as the realization of the superego's sadistic forces (Ronningstam et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The Virgin Suicides (2000) movie by Sofia Coppola, tells the story of religious trauma that the Lisbon sisters suffer from which lead them to suicide. With the strictness of their devout Catholic mother, the sisters are under a constant controlling and authoritative figure. The rigidity of their mother can be found in Mrs. Lisbon's repressing attitude to her daughters, as well as when she isolated them inside the house. Other findings were found regarding the religious trauma, which are, Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon's attitude towards Cecilia, Cecilia's attachment to the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary laminated card as the way the Lisbon sisters communicate with the boys. As a result, this study reveals that the Lisbon sisters' suicide was caused by a discrepancy between their id and superego that resulted from religious trauma. The id and ego grow increasingly disproportionate as the superego advances, which causes the ego to launch sadistic attacks and ultimately commit suicide. This research then suggests other researchers to conduct in-depth study on literary works that discuss the issue of suicide as a result of religious trauma to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

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