

Harmonising the Mind: The Transformative Power of Music in Overcoming Death Drive (Gendered concerns in Psycho-Social Manifestation)

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ABSTRACT

"The mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water."

- Sigmund Freud

The Psycho-social aspects of human nature, commonly viewed through eclectic perspectives, has the high intriguing factors in understanding human behaviour and experiences. Most notably the concept of Sigmund Freud on the death drive or thanatos, which pose a mental health challenge. Alongside the mental health aspects, this study demands to acknowledge the presence of gender inequality intertwined with psycho-social dynamics. In the quest to deepen our understanding of human nature, we are taking a comprehensive approach on testing thanatos influenced by gender concerns, by comparison with eros or life-producing counterbalancing drive, and to enhance empowerment and well-being for sustainable life. To further strengthen our understanding, we latch on to allying music to aid mental health and wellness, which continues to captivate the researcher and practitioner in various fields. Uniting the power of music and its potential healing abilities, this topic aims to explore profound ways on how music can wield as a transformative force in assuaging the destructive tendencies associated with death drive. By investigating the influences of music on psycho-social dynamics, this study seeks to uncover novel vantage perspectives on empowerment and personal growth.

Keywords: Death-Drive, Life-Drive, Mental Health Challenges, Music and Wellness, Gender Perspective, Psycho-Social Aspects.

Introduction

The genesis of this call – out arises from the exegesis of the quintessential notion that – Is psychology an erudite discipline under the realm of "Science of the mind and Behaviour" or does it serve as a sophisticated conduit bridging the science and the art coalesce? This enigma has, nonetheless, led psychologists to diligently sought and substantiate their scientific credentials on psycho-social phenomena to address the complex nature of human psyche and social influence, also taking cognisance of gender inequality, that are perceived by an individual. Hereby considering the decent endurance and framework in which several social theories fits snugly into and posits a lucid understanding of the intricacies of human behaviour, especially in relation to gender dynamics. One of such seminal theory is the Sigmund Freud theory which introduced the concept of death drive – an instinctual force that impelling individual towards a precipice of self-destruction and an insidious proclivity

for aggression. To put forth the Freud's concept of death drive within psychology, offers a nuanced perspective on human mind and behaviour, acknowledging the societal structures, gender dynamics and the existence of unconscious impulses that can influence or goad a desire of self-annihilation and acrimonious tendencies through Clinical and observation research, philosophical and existential inquiry on nihilism, to understand the underpinnings of death – drive.

First let's understand the concept – drive or mental drive. Mental drives are psychological forces that motivate individuals to engage in various behaviours and achieve goals. It encompasses the internal desires and urges that propel individuals towards action, often stemming from deep-seated needs, instincts, and emotional states. Mental drive plays a crucial role in shaping personality, influencing decision-making, and guiding behaviour in both personal and social contexts. Within this framework of mental drive, two significant concepts emerged, they are – “death – drive” and “Life – Drive”.

What a fascinating topic! The death drive, also known as Thanatos, is a concept in psychoanalytic theory proposed by Sigmund Freud in his book "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920). It refers to the instinctual drive towards death, self-destruction, and the return to an inanimate state. Freud believed that alongside the life-affirming instincts of Eros, there exists a destructive force that compels individuals towards aggression, violence, and self-destructive behaviours. The Death Drive is seen as a fundamental part of human nature and is believed to manifest in behaviours such as risk-taking, self-harm, and destructive impulses.

Within this scholarly discourse, we aim to embark upon a comprehensive exploration of the intricate ways in which music harmonizes the psyche, enabling individuals to surmount emotional traumas and conflicts.

Understanding the Death Drive

The death drive is often perceived as a formidable adversary of the life force, or Eros, the relentless rile up the desires for vitality, affection, and pleasure, and self-preservation. While, Thanatos on the other hand, constitutes a primal force that propels individuals towards destruction, chaos, and negation. It's a potent driving force that inherent tendencies to unravel and destroy what has been created, rather than to nurture or sets it apart. In Freud's view, the death drive is not necessarily a conscious or intentional force, but rather an unconscious, instinctual drive that lurks beneath the veneer of human consciousness and awareness. It is believed to be a fundamental aspect of human nature, present from the moment of birth, and exerting an imperceptible yet permeating the fabric of thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

- **Research Question:** How can music serve as a crucial transformative force discerning mental drives, therewith boot in contributing to the restoration and maintenance of psychological equilibrium, while simultaneously highlighting the awareness of negative drives and its dire consequences, with an emphasis on gendered concerns within the realm of psycho-social manifestation?
- **Mental Mechanisms and symptoms:** Threats to psychological loom large amidst severe trauma, frustration or conflicts, prompting the mind to employ an array of safeguarding stratagems colloquially referred to as mental mechanism or dynamisms.

The Death Drive in Psycho-Social Manifestation

In this context, we're exploring how the death drive manifests in psycho-social ways, particularly in relation to gender. Some potential areas to investigate include:

- **Negativism:** A tendency of stubbornness, oppositions, defiance or may be any general negative attitude often manifests as a retaliatory response to notions of inequitable treatment and discrimination. Young individual subjected to unwarranted blame or unfairly aspersed as he/she may cultivate negativistic tendencies, refusing to cooperate or abide by elderly authority. Such individual possess a virulent antipathy towards the individuals present in that environment, specially, with the same age groups or peers. This can hinder the progress in interpersonal relationships, teamwork, or decision-making processes.
- **Gendered violence:** The death drive can manifest in gendered forms of violence, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, or other forms of aggression. These acts can be seen as attempts to assert power or dominance over others.

- **Societal expectations:** Societal expectations can also contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder). These issues can be seen as forms of self-destructive behaviour or a manifestation of the death drive.
- **Identification:** The struggle for identification and hero worship expression can be seen as a form of mechanism that replete with socio-psychological implications, which otherwise offers individuals the instrumentality to assimilate desirable personal attributes or assuage contradictory aspirations by associating themselves with compatible individuals or objects. Nevertheless, when this identification spills into the realm of impersonation, delusions entailing belief in being eminent personalities take hold. This resistance can manifest in various forms of creative expression such as always seeking opportunities to transmute coveted attributes and receive the aura of prestige one's own ego, if not achieved then this leads the individual towards self-destructive behaviour or sometimes might try to harm other individuals.

Music and Death Drive: Music as a Transformative Force

Music has been shown to have a profound impact on our emotional and psychological well-being. By exploring how music can harmonize the mind and help overcome the death drive, you may consider the following:

- **Emotional release:** Music can provide an outlet for emotional expression and release, allowing individuals to process and cope with their emotions in a healthy way.
- **Catharsis:** Music can offer a form of catharsis, allowing individuals to confront and purge their emotions in a safe and constructive manner.
- **Mindfulness:** Music can promote mindfulness and presence, helping individuals to focus on the present moment and let go of negative emotions and thoughts.
- **Community building:** Music can bring people together and create a sense of community, providing a sense of belonging and connection that can help overcome feelings of isolation and disconnection.

Key characteristics

- **Self-destructive tendencies:** The Death Drive is characterized by self-destructive behaviour, such as suicidal tendencies, aggression, and self-sabotage.
- **Destruction of life:** The Death Drive aims to destroy life, whether it's one's own life or the lives of others.
- **Aggression:** Aggression and violence are seen as manifestations of the Death Drive.
- **Unconscious motivation:** The Death Drive operates on an unconscious level, driving individuals to engage in behaviours that may seem irrational or self-destructive.

Theories and interpretations

- **Freud's theory:** Freud believed that the Death Drive was a primary drive that arose from the frustration of the Life Drive's aims. He saw it as a natural response to the inevitability of death and the decay of life.
- **Repression and denial:** The Death Drive can be repressed or denied by individuals, leading to various forms of neurosis or psychopathology.
- **Defense mechanisms:** People may employ defense mechanisms, such as repression, denial, or projection, to cope with the anxiety and fear associated with the Death Drive.
- **Existential implications:** The Death Drive can be seen as a reflection of humanity's inherent mortality and the fear of death.
- **Feminist Theory:** Feminist thinkers like Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray have critiqued the patriarchal society and explored the ways in which women's experiences are marginalized or erased.
- **Post structuralism:** Post structuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have challenged traditional notions of identity and subjectivity, highlighting the ways in which power operates through language and culture.

- **Psycho-Social Manifestation:** The concept of psycho-social manifestation suggests that mental health is influenced by social factors, including cultural norms, family dynamics, and societal expectations.

The Unconscious Mind

Freud believed that the unconscious mind plays a significant role in shaping human behaviour. He argued that many of our thoughts, feelings and desires are hidden from our conscious awareness, yet they still influence our actions. For example, Freud posited that repressed childhood memories and unresolved conflicts can manifest in adulthood as psychological issues such as anxiety, depression or phobias.

Methodology

- **Research Design:** This study comprises of a paradoxical mixed-method design, combining both the qualitative data analysis for addressing subjective aspects and quantitative methods of numerical and statistical data analysis, attempting to understand the tiniest smidgen of human instinctual behaviour towards the society so-called psycho-social perspectives, while looking through their gender lens to better understand, measure the drives and also to gain individual psychological observations. The study aims to address a potential contradiction or reconcile opposing perspectives in the research.
- **Qualitative Phase:** The qualitative phase include in-depth interactive interviews, observation, focus groups, and analysis of documents/texts and questionnaires. These methods are used to gather rich, descriptive data and to explore the subjective experiences, perspectives, and meanings individuals attribute to a particular phenomenon or topic. The qualitative phase helps researchers gain a deep understanding of human behaviour by examining the context, social interactions, motivations, and underlying factors that influence individual's actions and decisions.

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT FOR MENTAL DRIVES

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____ CIVIL STATUS _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

GENDER: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Not Listed ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

Street _____ Town/City/Suburb _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____

ADDRESS: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. The DOS is a standardized measure of death drive symptoms, which may include anxiety, depression and existential dread.

QUESTIONS:	RATING SCALE:				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Have you ever listened to high-tempo, up-tempo music, cranking up the volume while driving a vehicle?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What is your preferred volume frequency for listening to music?	Very Low	Low	Intermediate	High	Very High
Have you ever felt angry or aggressive towards others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have a fear of dying or a feeling of being harmed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you often have the feeling of sadness or despair?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever had suicidal thoughts or feelings of self-destruction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you use car headset or earphones to listen to music while traveling, walking or driving on the road?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever engaged in phone conversation while driving a vehicle or walking on the street?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How long do you typically listen to music for?	Less than 10 minutes	10-30 minutes	30-60 minutes	More than 60 minutes	Not listed
How often do you listen to music?	Only	Sometimes weekly	Occasionally	Regularly	Every day or every second day
What is your preferred genre of music? (Check all that apply)	Classical	Pop	Rock	Electronic	Jazz
How do you manage your stress and maintain your mental well-being?					
Can you rate your anxiety level yourself on the FAS Scale?					
					
Is there any specific song or album that resonates your mind and body and helps you feel relaxed, stress-free, and calm?					
Thank you for completing this survey! Your information will be kept confidential. Your valuable responses will contribute to our better understanding the link between music and mental drive.					

SCORE LEVEL:

10-20	6
20-30	5-7
30-40	4-6
40-50	3-5
50-60	2-4

- **Quantitative Phase:** The quantitative phase of the study involves the use of numerical data and statistical analysis to understand human behaviour. It consists of 10 participants who are identified as music listeners, and have consented to be a part of the death-drive survey. This phase often includes the collection of data through methods such as surveys, experiments, or the analysis of existing datasets. The data collected is typically in the form of numerical values or measurements, allowing researchers to analyse patterns, trends, and relationships. The statistical analysis techniques are then applied to derive quantitative insights and make generalizations about the population being studied.
- **Data Collection:** A close survey was administered to collect quantitative data from 10 participants. The survey includes questions based on a customised Standardized assessment for mental drive Scale, music Listening habits, and psychological well-being indicators.

Key Variables Include

MLF – Music listening frequency = 1-5

AL – Anxiety level – 1 – 10

SDT – Self-destruction thoughts – 0 = no, 1= yes

Gender, male – 1, female – 0

Table 1 Fig: 1 Standard Distribution Table

Standard Distribution Table				
Participants	MLF	AL	SDT	Gender
1	5	3	0	0
2	4	4	1	1
3	2	7	1	0
4	3	5	0	1
5	4	2	0	0
6	1	8	1	1
7	3	6	0	0
8	5	4	1	1
9	2	7	1	0
10	3	5	0	1

Descriptive Statistics

Calculating mean and standard deviation for MLF and AL

Mean of MLF:

$$\text{Mean of MLF} = \frac{5+4+2+3+4+1+3+5+2+3}{10} = \frac{32}{10} = 3.2$$

$$\text{Mean for AL} = \frac{3+4+7+5+2+8+6+4+7+5}{10} = \frac{57}{10} = 5.7$$

Standard Deviation for MLF

Calculate Variance:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Variance} &= \frac{\sum (MLF_i - \text{mean})^2}{n-1} \\ &= \frac{(5-3.2)^2 + (4-3.2)^2 + (2-3.2)^2 + (3-3.2)^2 + (4-3.2)^2 + (1-3.2)^2 + (3-3.2)^2 + (5-3.2)^2 + (2-3.2)^2 + (3-3.2)^2}{9} \\ &= \frac{(1.8)^2 + (0.8)^2 + (-1.2)^2 + (-0.2)^2 + (0.8)^2 + (-2.2)^2 + (-0.2)^2 + (1.8)^2 + (-1.2)^2 + (-0.2)^2}{9} \\ &= \frac{3.24 + 0.64 + 1.44 + 0.04 + 0.64 + 4.84 + 0.04 + 3.24 + 1.44 + 0.04}{9} = \frac{16.6}{9} \approx 1.84 \end{aligned}$$

$$SD_{MLF} = \sqrt{1.84} \approx 1.36$$

Standard Deviation for AL

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Variance} &= \frac{\sum (AL_i - \text{Mean})^2}{n-1} \\ &= \frac{(3-5.7)^2 + (4-5.7)^2 + (7-5.7)^2 + (5-5.7)^2 + (2-5.7)^2 + (8-5.7)^2 + (6-5.7)^2 + (4-5.7)^2 + (7-5.7)^2 + (5-5.7)^2}{9} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \frac{(-2.7)^2 + (-1.7)^2 + (1.3)^2 + (-0.7)^2 + (-3.7)^2 + (2.3)^2 + (0.3)^2 + (-1.7)^2 + (1.3)^2 + (-0.7)^2}{9} \\
&= \frac{7.29 + 2.89 + 1.69 + 0.49 + 13.69 + 5.29 + 0.09 + 2.89 + 1.69 + 0.49}{9} \\
&= \frac{36.2}{9} \approx 4.02 \\
&= SD_{AL} = \sqrt{4.02} \approx 2.01
\end{aligned}$$

Death Drive Score By Gender



Figure 1 Fig 2: Death drive Score by Gender

The fig. 2 this bar graph titled “death drive score by gender”, illustrates the understand and analysis of the data of death drive score findings, with a small sample size consisting of 10 participants across different scenarios or contexts, for close and in-depth understanding. It was examined through standardised assessment for mental drives questionnaire format, specifically designed by the author and her team. In this study we have analysed the relationship between music listening frequency, anxiety level, self-destruction thoughts, and gender among a sample of 10 participants. The participants were assessed on three key variables – MLF, AL, SDT, with gender being a factor and the information are truly valid and are kept with utmost confidentiality. The graph present the score of 10 participants who were interested in music and were interested to be a part of this survey. Overall, we can impart that there is an upward trend in anxiety level score in most of the participants except 1st and 5th participants. The blue colour represents which the male gender, has a mild growth in self-destruction tendencies among male gender i.e., whereas only few female participants – without the blue colour bar has less tendencies. This comparative study helps us to further acknowledge the context and information and provide a nuanced understandings of the concept of varies drives and specifically death-drive symptoms among individuals and the underlying causes and implications of these observed differences.

Inferential Data Analysis

- **Data Collection:** A survey was administered to collect quantitative data collection consisting of 6 variables – Anxiety levels, Self-destruction, depression symptoms, aggressive behaviour, isolation, and no symptoms, from 100 participants of both males and females.
- **Sampling Size:** A random sample size of n=100 is taken under study from the population.
- **Data Analysis:** As per the data retrieved, there are similar percentage seen in both male and female. So, by using chi-square formula, we can determine the significant difference in the frequency of the given key variables (anxiety Level, self-destruction thoughts, depression symptoms, aggressive behaviour, isolation, no symptoms) between males and females.

Using Chi-square statistical Formula: $\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$

Variables (Symptoms)	Male	Female	Total Percentage	Degrees	Expected Frequency
Anxiety Level	20%	25%	45%	162 °	22.5
Self-Destruction Thoughts	20%	35%	55%	198 °	27.5
Depression Symptoms	15%	30%	45%	162 °	22.5
Aggressive Behaviour	30%	25%	55%	198 °	27.5
Isolation	5%	5%	10%	36 °	5
No symptoms	10%	10%	20%	72 °	10

$$\text{Anxiety level: } \chi^2 = \frac{(20-22.5)^2}{22.5} + \frac{(25-22.5)^2}{22.5} = 0.55$$

$$\text{Self-Destruction: } \chi^2 = \frac{(20-27.5)^2}{27.5} + \frac{(35-27.5)^2}{27.5} = 5.45$$

$$\text{Depression Symptoms: } \chi^2 = \frac{(15-22.5)^2}{22.5} + \frac{(30-22.5)^2}{22.5} = 6.35$$

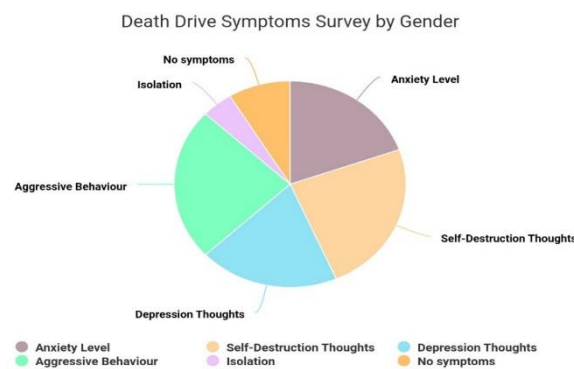
$$\text{Aggressive Behaviour: } \chi^2 = \frac{(30-27.5)^2}{27.5} + \frac{(25-27.5)^2}{27.5} = 0.35$$

$$\text{Isolation: } \chi^2 = 0$$

$$\text{No symptoms: } \chi^2 = 0$$

Overall, we can observe that based on this analysis, we can conclude that there are significant differences in the frequencies of self-destruction and depression symptoms between males and females, with females being more likely to experience these symptoms. However, there are no significant differences in the frequencies of anxiety levels, aggressive behaviour, isolation, and no symptoms between males and females. These findings suggest that females may be more likely to experience self-destruction and depression symptoms, which could be related to the death drive.

- **Limitations:** This study has several limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small as this conduct was finalised upon the consent of the every participants, which has limit the generalizability of the finding. Second, the study only examined the frequencies of different symptoms and did not control for other variables that may influence the relationship between gender and the death drive.
- **Future Research Directions:** Future researches will be focused to replicate these finding with a larger sample size and explore the underlying causes of the observed differences in symptoms frequencies between males and females.



- **Literature Review:** Freud's 1920 concept of the death drive posits that humans have an innate tendency towards self-destruction, which is in constant conflict with life drive, or the instinct of self-preservation. This drive is believed to be responsible for aggressive behaviour, anxiety, and feelings of guilt and shame. Lacan in 1977, later built upon Freud's work, introducing the concept of the "Real" which refers to the non-representable, non-symbolical, aspect of human experience that is closely tied to the death drive. Kristeva further developed the concept, highlighting the role of the death drive in shaping human emotions and behaviour, particularly in relation to the feminine experiences.

Sabina Spielrein, a Russian psychoanalyst, also made significant contributions to the concept of the death drive. In her book "Destruction as the cause of coming into being" she explored the idea that destruction is a necessary precursor to creation, and that the death drive is a fundamental aspect of human development. Her work laid the groundwork for later psychoanalytic theories on the death drive and its role in human psychology.

Wilhelm Stekel, an Austrian psychoanalyst, also wrote extensively on the death-drive and its relationship to human psychology. In his book, "death and death instinct", he explored the idea that the death drive is a fundamental aspect of human nature, and that it plays a crucial role in shaping human behaviour and emotions. Stekel's work built upon Freud's theories, and provided further insight into the complexities and multifaceted nature of the death-drive. Music and emotions: Music has long been recognised for its emotional significance, with research suggesting that it can evoke strong emotional responses, influence mood, and even alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. The psychological mechanisms underlying music's emotional impact are complex, involving the activation of the brain's reward system, the release of dopamine, and the stimulation of emotional memory. Music's therapeutic potential has been harnessed in various forms of music therapy, including music – listening, music composition, lyric analysis, and music improvisation.

- **Music and death drive linkage theories:** Freud in his book has argued that humans have an innate desire for destruction and self-destruction, which is connected to the fear of death or being harmed. Music as a form of creative expression can be seen as a way to sublimate the human negative drives or so called death drive symptoms, allowing individuals to experience catharsis and release pent-up emotions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrate the transformative power of music in overcoming death-drive and its psycho-social manifestations, specifically the context of gendered lens. The finding looks upon the gaps between the conscious and unconscious realms, thereby facilitating a more integrated and balanced sense of self. The result of this study have significant implications of our understanding of – how music can help us understand the personality traits, growth and emotional level of every individual. Furthermore, the gendered concerns that emerged from the study highlights the need for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the death – drive and aware the society and every individual to understand the concept of drives and it's positive and negative ends towards life.

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