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Sandbox Essay 3

### Sandbox Essay 3: Psychoanalysis of Porphyria's Lover

In *Porphyria's Lover* the narrator struggles between a normal desire of lust and a desire to murder. Porphyria is making him feel certain things and he doesn't know how to respond. He knows how she feels for him but he can't return that feeling. For example the line, "Be sure I looked up at her eyes Happy and proud; at last I knew Porphyria worshipped me; surprise Made my heart swell, and still it grew. While I debated what to do." With this example, the narrator seems to be exhibiting repressed emotion and looks at Porphyria's love for him as a way for him to take advantage of it. He is expressing his desire, but his desire isn't focused on sexualizing her as much as it is focusing on his own need to release, and he does so by killing her. This could have something to do with the oedipal complex, in which the narrator has felt things about his own mother that are inappropriate and is unable to love Porphyria in the same way, so he takes it out on her. An example of this could be the emphasis of her yellow hair and her marble skin.

Lacan's stages are present in this poem as they depict the spiral of the character. There's the imaginary period before he strangles her, he's experiencing joy. He's gaining something from the fact that she loves him so much that she's practically throwing herself at him. The mirror period depicts how even though she's dead, her physical body represents her being. The narrator has this self justification about the death, almost like it is a game. "No pain felt she; I am quite sure she felt no pain. As a shut bud that holds a bee, I warily oped her lids: again Laughed the blue eyes without a stain. And I untightened next the tress About her neck; her cheek once

more Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss: I propped her head up as before, Only, this time my shoulder bore Her head, which droops upon it still: The smiling rosy little head, ” He is relieved about the murder. The symbolic language used depicts Porphyria’s youth, it seems as if she is a child because she has this naivety about her situation. Also the narrator’s use of the word “little”, her little throat, her rosy little head, these adjectives allude to there being an age difference.

The poem definitely has a deeper meaning than just the narrator snapped and killed a girl. There’s underlying issues, be it mommy issues, the oedipal complex, an unconscious fear of rejection or loneliness. The way it is written makes you wonder if the author is describing an event or if it’s a dream. It is interesting that the narrator is struggling with the components of his mind. For example the “ID” takes over and he is overcome with the desire to go through with the killing after Porphyria has made him jovial. It doesn’t seem like he has too much “EGO” as to the reader this murder isn’t logical. However, it seems rational to him as he is harnessing his emotions about his mother and taking it out on Porphyria. “Superego” has forced the narrator out of himself, in the sense that he isn’t acting rational; he’s taking something innocent and pure, and defiling it in order to feel better. I think the narrator is looking for peace, and finds it only after Porphyria’s death. The line, “So glad it has its utmost will, That all it scorned at once is fled, And I, its love, am gained instead! Porphyria's love: she guessed not how Her darling one wish would be heard. And thus we sit together now, And all night long we have not stirred, And yet God has not said a word!” makes it seem that he is relieved to be absolved from her presence, from her youth and her sexuality.

