

Between Life and Death: The Psychological Dimensions of Yozo in Osamu Dazai's No Longer Human

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Osamu Dazai's *No Longer Human* through the lens of Freud's death drive and Bem's self-perception theory, exploring the psychological forces shaping Yozo's life. Freud's death drive highlights Yozo's self-destructive tendencies and pervasive despair, while Bem's theory explains how his understanding of himself and others emerges from observing his own actions. The analysis shows how Yozo's alienation, societal estrangement, and existential crisis intertwine, revealing the complex relationship between identity, perception, and destructive impulses. Dazai's narrative thus provides a profound psychoanalytic portrait of human behaviour, illustrating how distorted self-perception and isolation can culminate in psychological turmoil.

Key words: *death drive, Freud, self perception, pain of existence, No Longer Human, Yozo, Osamu Dazai, Bem.*

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Yaşam ile Ölüm Arasında: Osamu Dazai'nin İnsanlığını Yitirirken adlı eserindeki Yozo'nun Psikolojik Boyutları

ÖZ

Bu makale, Osamu Dazai'nin *İnsanlıktan Çıkmış* adlı eserini Freud'un ölüm dürtüsü kuramı ve Bem'in benlik algısı kuramı çerçevesinde inceleyerek Yozo'nun yaşamını şekillendiren psikolojik etmenleri araştırmaktadır. Freud'un ölüm dürtüsü, Yozo'nun öz-yıkıcı eğilimlerini ve derin umutsuzluğunu ortaya koyarken, Bem'in kuramı ise bireyin kendini ve başkalarını nasıl algıladığını, kendi davranışlarını gözlemlemesi yoluyla nasıl yapılandırıldığını açıklar. Analiz, Yozo'nun yabancılaşması, toplumdan kopuşu ve varoluşsal krizi arasındaki karmaşık ilişkileri ortaya koyarak kimlik, algı ve yıkıcı dürtüler arasındaki etkileşimi gözler önüne sermektedir. Dazai'nin anlatısı, böylece insan davranışına dair derin bir psikanalitik portre sunmakta; bozulmuş benlik algısının ve yalnızlığın nasıl psikolojik bir çöküşe yol açabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *ölüm dürtüsü, Freud, benlik algısı, varoluşun acısı, İnsanlıktan Çıkmış, Yozo, Osamu Dazai, Bem*

INTRODUCTION

The most significant interpretive theory among the post-war critical waves, psychoanalytic analysis is rooted in the distinctive premises of the mind, instinct, and sexuality articulated by the nineteenth-century Austrian intellectual Sigmund Freud. Through this framework, Freud emphasises the unconscious forces that underlie human instinctual behaviour, revealing how actions are often governed by drives beyond conscious control. Freud further proposed that the death drive (Thanatos) adequately characterises the motivation behind hazardous, destructive, and self-sabotaging behaviours directed either inward toward the self or outward toward others. As Freud contends, the death instinct represents an innate human predisposition toward repetition, aggression, and ultimately self-destruction, leading him to assert that “the aim of all life is death.” Together with the psychoanalytic approach, there exists a social-psychological approach that provides an alternate way of studying human behaviour. Among these theoretical approaches in social psychology is the self-perception theory offered by psychologist Daryl Bem, postulating a premise on self-discovery through observation of one’s behaviour and identifying the motivations behind these actions, which plays a crucial part in circumstances where there are no clearly defined internal attitudes.

These two theoretical models, although originating from different psychological streams, provide fruitful interpretations upon applying them to literary depictions of shattered identity and self-alienation. In particular, it should prove informative, as shall be demonstrated, in the context of *No Longer Human* (1948), which stands as a prestigious work of modern Japanese Literature, being semi-autobiographical. Written as a series of confessional notebooks, this novel depicts the life story of its main protagonist, Yozo Oba, as one who experiences an intense state of alienation against society and, more importantly, as someone who finds it well-nigh impossible, or indeed as impossible as being human, itself, to perceive his own identity according to this parameter. All these elements present intense synergies, as they replicate Dazai’s own biography. Often interpreted as a literary testament to post-war disillusionment in Japan, *No Longer Human* portrays the psychological consequences of societal expectation, moral collapse, and existential despair. Yozo’s reliance on performative humour to mask his inner emptiness, combined with his gradual descent into self-destructive behaviour, makes him a compelling subject for psychological analysis.

This paper argues that Yozo’s psychological fragmentation can be most effectively understood through a combined application of Freud’s death drive and Bem’s self-perception theory. While Freud’s psychoanalytic framework elucidates the unconscious self-destructive impulses that drive Yozo toward repetition and

annihilation, Bem's theory offers insight into how Yozo constructs his identity through observation of his own behaviour and social roles. Together, these theories illuminate how internal drives and external self-observation intersect to produce Yozo's persistent sense of non-belonging and despair. Having introduced Freud's theory of psychoanalysis and Bem's theory of self-perception, it is now necessary to investigate in greater depth how each theory functions independently before applying them to *No Longer Human*. The first section begins with an examination of Freud's death drive theory, as it forms the foundational framework for understanding the protagonist's relentless self-destructive impulses.

DISCUSSION

The notion of the death drive was first proposed in Sabina Spielrein's 1912 article *Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being*, which Freud later developed in his controversial essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). According to traditional Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the death drive is a desire for death and destruction that frequently manifests as behaviour, aggression, and self-destructiveness (Berne, p. 399-400). Freud's theories in his writings (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *The Uncanny*) also explain the death drive, which suggests people feel encouraged to relive unhappy or traumatic experiences, despite the fact that this type of desire seems to go against our impulse and principle of pleasure: "If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say '*The goal of all life is death* ', and, casting back, 'The inanimate was there before the animate '" (Freud, p.30)

Freud frequently drew analogical comparisons between the human psyche and processes observed in the natural world, using biological phenomena to illustrate rather than empirically prove his psychoanalytic theories. Central to this approach is the concept of the *death drive*, which Freud theorises as a psychological tendency toward a return to an inorganic state. This notion is not presented as a literal biological mechanism, but as a theoretical model intended to explain patterns of repetition, regression, and self-destructive behaviour within the psyche. According to Freud, instincts are fundamentally conservative, meaning they seek to restore earlier states rather than generate genuine progress. Because life itself emerged from inorganic matter, Freud speculates that instinctual life is oriented toward a prior condition rather than continual advancement. In this framework, repetition in behaviour is understood as a psychological manifestation of this regressive tendency, even when such behaviour appears externally directed toward development or change.

To support this speculative model, Freud draws on illustrative biological analogies, including embryological development and animal migration. He suggests—by

analogy—that the stages of human embryonic growth symbolically reflect a return through earlier forms, rather than representing linear progress. Similarly, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud points to the migratory patterns of birds and fish that return to ancestral breeding grounds, not as empirical evidence of the death drive, but as metaphors for an instinctual pull toward origins. These examples, Freud argues, help conceptualise a fundamental psychological compulsion toward regression and repetition, reinforcing the death drive as a theoretical explanation for self-destructive and repetitive human behaviour (Faulkner, 2005).

To fully appreciate the psychological significance of Yozo's character, it is necessary to situate him within the life and works of Osamu Dazai. Dazai's personal struggles with alienation, substance abuse, and repeated suicide attempts provide an important biographical context that informs his portrayal of Yozo. Understanding Dazai's background allows for a more nuanced reading of the novel's psychological depth.

While Freud's theory of the death drive offers a compelling framework for understanding Yozo's self-destructive impulses as the expression of unconscious instinctual forces, it primarily situates psychological motivation within the depths of the psyche. Such an approach emphasizes internal drives and latent desires that operate beyond conscious awareness. However, this inward-looking model does not fully account for how Yozo's identity is shaped through his observable actions and social interactions. To address this dimension, Bem's self-perception theory provides a complementary perspective by shifting the focus from unconscious motivation to the ways individuals construct their sense of self through the interpretation of their own behaviour.

Self-perception theory is counterintuitive; Common knowledge would have us believe that a person's personality and attitudes determine their behaviour, however, this is not always the case. It demonstrates, to put it simply, "we are what we do, ". This theory states that we interpret our own acts similarly to how we read others' actions, and that, contrary to what we may think, our behaviours are frequently socially influenced rather than the result of our own free will (Bem, 1972). Daryl Bem tested his hypothesis using volunteers who listened to a tape of a man passionately explaining a saddle task. According to one group, the man received \$1 for his testimonial, whereas the other group was informed that he received \$20. In comparison to how much the \$20 group thought he appreciated the job, the \$1 group thought he appreciated it more. The results drawn by the two groups were consistent with the emotions that the performers themselves conveyed. It was determined that the actors must have developed their sentiments by also studying their own behaviour because the participants were able to

accurately anticipate how the actors felt (1972). This experiment served as a prime example for the theory; as it reflected the initial idea of how a human's perception of other behaviours is made by predicting their own behaviours of said actions; reflecting the influence of their own thoughts and experiences on their judgments. This theory is based on the premises that the actors of the object are usually strangers; and serve no emotional bond or relationship to each other. While Bem's self-perception theory is supported by controlled experimental settings involving emotionally detached individuals, the dynamics of identity formation become more complex when applied to a literary character shaped by sustained emotional trauma and social alienation. In order to examine how self-perception operates within such a deeply personal and psychologically charged context, it is essential to consider the life and experiences of Osamu Dazai, whose own struggles profoundly inform the construction of Yozo's character.

To fully understand Yozo's psychological significance, it is necessary to situate him within the life and literary practice of Osamu Dazai. Dazai's personal struggles with alienation, substance abuse, and repeated suicide attempts provide an important biographical context that informs his portrayal of Yozo. These experiences do not merely parallel Yozo's suffering; rather, they are consciously reworked into the novel as psychological patterns of self-alienation, performative behaviour, and inward-directed destruction. Understanding Dazai's background therefore allows for a more nuanced reading of the novel's psychological depth, particularly in relation to Yozo's persistent sense of non-belonging.

Osamu Dazai, born Shūji Tsushima in Japan, was a highly creative yet deeply troubled writer whose confessional, first-person style drew heavily on his own life experiences. Like Yozo, Dazai repeatedly depicted himself as socially estranged and incapable of authentic emotional connection, a theme that recurs across his autobiographical fiction. His association with the *Buraiha* (or "Decadent") literary movement—known for its rejection of social conformity, excessive drinking, and engagement with society's margins—directly informs Yozo's rejection of societal norms and his reliance on alcohol as a means of escape.

Dazai frequently transformed personal crisis into narrative material, using the *shishōsetsu* ("I-novel") form to blur the boundary between lived experience and fictional representation. As a result, the author's persona is recognisable in many of his protagonists, including Yozo, whose emotional fragility and self-loathing echo Dazai's own psychological struggles. Dazai's characteristic use of dark humour, often bordering on self-mockery, is mirrored in Yozo's performative clowning, which functions as a defence mechanism to conceal inner despair.

Furthermore, Dazai's post-war works—*The Setting Sun* (1947), *Biyon no tsuma* (1947), and *No Longer Human* (1948)—adopt an increasingly bleak tone that reflects his intensifying inner turmoil. In *No Longer Human*, this turmoil is crystallised in Yozo's repeated suicide attempts and gradual psychological collapse, which closely parallel Dazai's own experiences in the years leading up to his death. After several earlier failed attempts, Dazai committed suicide in 1948, leaving behind an unfinished manuscript ominously titled *Goodbye*. This biographical endpoint reinforces the interpretation of Yozo as a literary projection of Dazai's sustained engagement with self-destruction, despair, and the limits of selfhood.

Consequently, as Dazai's writings depict his struggle with psychological instability, a negative perception of life and selfhood, and recurring self-destructive thoughts culminating in multiple suicide attempts, the death drive (often referred to as a death wish) emerges as a prominent theme within his literary imagination. Moreover, throughout the novel, Dazai employs a range of perspectives on others, the self, and society to intensify the melancholic tone and articulate the despair experienced by his characters, particularly in relation to solitude, existential crisis, and self-perception. To analyse these elements, this paper adopts Freud's theory of the death drive and Bem's self-perception theory as *theoretical frameworks* through which the text is interpreted, rather than as narrative features of the novel itself. Accordingly, this study examines how self-perception operates as a narrative concern in *No Longer Human*, using these psychological theories as analytical tools to further elucidate Dazai's exploration of despair and self-alienation. Having outlined Dazai's personal history and thematic preoccupations, the next step is to provide a structural and narrative overview of *No Longer Human*. This summary will clarify the key events of Yozo's life and prepare the ground for a focused analysis of his psyche through the lenses of death drive and self-perception.

A prologue, three notebook entries, and an epilogue divide the Japanese I-novel *No Longer Human* into five sections. The I-novel (*shishōsetsu*) is a confessional literary form that emphasises autobiographical truth, first-person narration, and the exploration of the author's inner life, often blurring the boundary between fiction and lived experience. The novel revolves around Oba Yozo, a deeply depressed young man who experiences sexual abuse, poverty, addiction, and repeated suicide attempts, and who perceives himself as fundamentally different from other people. The notebook's author later revealed to be the protagonist himself, Oba Yozo is presented through three images capturing his youth, adolescence, and middle age. The narrative is framed by an unidentified narrator, who recounts and contextualises Yozo's life in the epilogue.

The opening lines suggest that the journals are a form of confessional writing by Yozo, giving the impression that he is foregrounding his most painful and shame-ridden life experiences, as he states, "Mine has been a life of shame; I can't even guess what it must be to live the life of a human being" (Dazai, 18). Each notebook entry guides the reader through fragments of Yozo's life as he personally experienced them, filtered entirely through his own perspective. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes evident that Yozo is profoundly alienated from the outside world, including society, his family, and those around him. His "unique" interpretation of events is repeatedly presented as socially unintelligible, further isolating him and rendering meaningful integration into society impossible.

As a result, Yozo turns to "clowning" as a means of concealing his inner self. This behaviour closely aligns with Erving Goffman's concept of social performance, in which individuals adopt a public "mask" to manage others' perceptions and maintain social acceptance. Yozo's humour functions as a protective façade, allowing him to perform a socially legible role while suppressing his private despair. However, when his classmate Takeichi sees through this performance, the collapse of Yozo's constructed persona precipitates a psychological breakdown marked by loss and existential crisis.

The notebook later shifts to Yozo's adolescence, a period defined by misery stemming from poor decisions, a lack of self-awareness, and escalating substance abuse, alongside a series of emotionally detached relationships with women introduced by a so-called "friend." In the final sections, Yozo's repeated suicide attempts and eventual institutionalisation are depicted before the narrative returns, in the epilogue, to the unidentified narrator, who recounts acquiring Yozo's notebooks and photographs from a bar hostess he once knew.

With the novel's structure and major events in place, it becomes possible to examine Yozo's psychological development in detail. This section utilizes the above theories and applies them on Yozo's worldview, showing how his death drive and self-image combine to decide his tragic fate.

Yozo had a quite distinct sense of who he was even as a young child, which completely transformed how he perceived or interpreted other people. Yozo made a habit of trying to understand things in ways they were never intended to be understood. He gradually fell into a gulf of alienation every time he discovered an object's practical utility and exposed its innate meaninglessness, to the point when even the idea of "hunger" or sharing a meal with family lost all value to him. This detachment is particularly evident in Yozo's recollection of childhood meals, where he mimics socially expected reactions to food despite feeling no genuine hunger, later interpreting his own performance as evidence of his

fundamental difference from others. To expand further, one must understand that self-perception theory contends that individuals form attitudes independently of their internal cognitive or emotional states, instead inferring them by observing their own overt behaviour. In situations of uncertainty, individuals look to their actions as cues for understanding who they are and how they relate to the world (Robak et al., 2005). Yozo's ludicrous perspective on life thus had a significant impact on how he perceived other people's attitudes, making them appear increasingly illogical and inaccessible. By repeatedly observing himself perform social roles without emotional resonance, Yozo comes to perceive himself as inherently inauthentic and disconnected, reinforcing his alienation.

If one were to look intently and honestly at the world, Camus claims that the Absurd "may suddenly spring upon a person 'at any street-corner,'" revealing the pervasive irrationality of existence. When this realisation occurs, everyday life takes on a mechanical and pointless quality, producing a sense of shock and estrangement from previously held meanings (Wicks, 2003). While Camus interprets this confrontation with meaninglessness as an existential awakening, Freud's death drive offers a contrasting psychological explanation, framing Yozo's growing detachment as a manifestation of an unconscious impulse toward withdrawal, repetition, and self-erasure rather than philosophical revolt.

Yozo was raised as an observant child who attempted to understand human hypocrisy, yet these efforts ultimately caused him to distance himself from those around him. This complexity can be understood as a turning point in his perception of reality, as he was unable to recognise or adopt the protective social mechanisms that others rely on to navigate everyday life. Yozo's self-perception became increasingly destabilised when he realised that he did not conform to prevailing social "norms"; instead, he became conscious of what he perceived as his own "absurd" reality. Rather than developing strategies to reconcile this difference, Yozo increasingly adjusted his outward behaviour to align with social expectations, even as his internal sense of self remained fractured.

A person's perspective is often shaped by a variety of factors, including knowledge, society, and culture. In Yozo's case, his understanding of what it means to be human—and of himself—was heavily influenced by the social environment surrounding him. To expand further, belonging to a social group requires adherence to shared standards of behaviour, through which acceptance or rejection is determined. Social groups implicitly demand that individuals learn how to perform appropriate roles, regulate emotional expression, and conceal thoughts deemed socially unacceptable. Every social group therefore requires its members to learn how to "socialise" themselves and perform socially legible identities. As Erving Goffman (1959) argues, individuals develop social

“fronts” to manage impressions and sustain interactional order. In Yozo’s case, “clowning” functions as such a front a performative strategy designed to suppress his authentic perceptions and secure social belonging. However, this performance intensifies his alienation by reinforcing the gap between his public persona and private despair.

Yozo’s attempts to mask himself and adopt a socially acceptable exterior are repeatedly met with situations he is unable to emotionally process. For instance, in his interactions with young women, Yozo fails to interpret their intentions, instead perceiving their shifting behaviour as ridicule or emotional cruelty when others are present, followed by sudden intimacy in private (Dazai, pp. 48–49). Rather than reflecting an inability to comprehend “female thinking,” this misunderstanding reveals Yozo’s difficulty in navigating social cues, intimacy, and performative interaction across gendered expectations. As Goffman’s framework suggests, this breakdown occurs when a performed role no longer aligns with the expectations of the audience (Goffman, 1959). The women respond not to Yozo’s inner self, but to the socially constructed, clownish persona he presents one he neither fully understands nor identifies with. This misalignment between perception and performance further destabilises his sense of self and deepens his psychological isolation.

As a sensitive character, it is evident that Yozo's reactions are based on his own isolated perception of other s, which causes him to feel ‘disqualified from being a human being.’ For example, Yozo's reactions to how his ‘strange’ behaviours are met are rather subdued. His inability to cope with a ‘normal’ reality is clearly presented throughout the novel. He is sensitive to his environment because of society. Yozo’s absurd view of himself immediately results in his utter rejection of the world, hence, as a human being in his perception: “Again, I never once answered back anything said to me by my family. The least word of reproof struck me with the force of a thunderbolt and drove me almost out of my head. Answer back!” (Dazai, 27)

Being perceived as “strange” fundamentally altered how Yozo experienced ordinary situations, gradually eroding his ability to interpret behaviour according to his own instincts or desires. Although *No Longer Human* does not present Yozo as overtly antisocial, it consistently depicts his estrangement from others, portraying a man marked by chronic isolation and loneliness. While the novel offers no singular cause for Yozo’s withdrawal from society, his inability to perceive the world in socially “normal” ways and to interpret human behaviour with confidence emerges as a central factor in his childhood misfortunes. This persistent misalignment contributes to the development of his death drive as a psychological response to repeated rejection and alienation.

As Yozo matures, the influence of key figures in his life further reinforces his sense of isolation, allowing his “pain of existence” to become a dominant feature of his psyche. From an existential perspective, Jean-Paul Sartre associates such suffering with *bad faith*, which arises from an individual’s refusal to confront their own freedom and responsibility. Sartre defines bad faith as the denial of personal accountability that accompanies the recognition of one’s radical freedom (Wicks, 2003). Yozo exemplifies this condition through his persistent masking and avoidance of authenticity, strategies that prolong his suffering rather than alleviate it. By refusing sincerity, Yozo sustains the very despair he seeks to escape.

This pattern of avoidance also aligns with Freud’s concept of traumatic fixation. In his lecture *Traumatic Fixation: The Unconscious*, Freud suggests that some individuals remain psychologically bound to past trauma, rendering them unable to live fully in the present or orient themselves toward the future. In Yozo’s case, this fixation extends beyond childhood sexual abuse to include a sustained fear of social interaction, which becomes a long-term psychological constraint. His compulsive efforts to conform to an idealised notion of “being human” ultimately prevent him from achieving self-acceptance or freedom. As a result, Yozo’s repeated rejection of his authentic self-strengthens the dominance of the death drive, undermining the possibility of a life-affirming impulse and leaving him unable to envision a viable way to live.

Yozo confesses , as the narrative goes on, that he fled even after realising that he was free or rather, cursed to be free because he was too terrified to face his situation head-on. The depth of Yozo's ill faith was such that he entirely gave the world control of his life. He let his father, who was the most domineering person in his life, dictate his profession and entertainment interests: “When I hated something, I could not pronounce the words, ‘I don't like it.’ When I liked something, I tasted it hesitantly, furtively, as though it were extremely bitter. In either case I was torn by unspeakable fear” (Dazai, 30). This confession exemplifies Yozo’s profound state of bad faith, as his fear-driven refusal to articulate his own desires results in the abdication of personal responsibility. By allowing external authority—particularly his father—to dictate his choices, Yozo avoids confronting his freedom, thereby transforming it into a source of terror rather than possibility. His inability to express preference reflects not mere passivity, but an active denial of selfhood.

Furthermore, Yozo implies that he could not find within himself any qualities that could qualify him as a human being; therefore, he engaged in many self-destructive activities and substance abuse, leading to a connected sequence of miserable incidents and, eventually, his suicide attempt. Despite the fact that this

was a major element in channelling his depression, Yozo decided to write a letter to his family in his final days, admitting everything to them “with the exception... of my relations with women” (Dazai, 164). He hunkered down and decided to hide once more. This act of confession, followed immediately by concealment, reflects the persistent tension between Yozo’s desire for authenticity and his inability to sustain it. Perhaps it can be said that Yozo expressed his sincere desires in these two actions: first, through the partial confession that gestures toward honesty, and second, through his death drive, which emerges as the only remaining mode through which he can assert control over his existence and self-perception. Yozo’s death drive, in its essence, is rooted in his inability to exist as a ‘qualified’ human being.

Thus, as per Camus, one is confronted with several responses to the existential crisis: revolt, which Camus defines as the continuous confrontation with the absurd and a commitment to live without appeal; suicide, which Camus explicitly rejects as a solution because it abolishes the very consciousness that recognises the absurd; or philosophical suicide, the act of escaping absurdity through false meaning or blind faith (Camus, 1955/1991). In this light, Yozo’s suicide cannot be understood as a form of Camusian revolt, but rather as its negation. While revolt requires sustained resistance to meaninglessness, Yozo’s act represents a surrender to it, revealing the limits of his capacity to endure existence without illusion (Wicks, 2003).

Consequently, Yozo’s choice of suicide may be interpreted not as liberation in Camus’ sense, but as a final withdrawal from a society in which he cannot locate himself as human, nor maintain the self-awareness necessary for revolt. Therefore, Yozo’s death drive serves as a prominent example of an instinctual attempt to return to an ‘inanimate state’, aligning more closely with Freud’s conception of regression than with Camus’ philosophy of resistance (Freud, 1920/1955), allowing Yozo to escape the illusory identity he constructed in order to survive within society.

The application of Yozo's state of mind through the twin lenses of Freud's death drive and Bem's self-perception theory reveals a cyclical movement of alienation, hiding, and final surrender. These theories reveal how Yozo's distorted self-concept and inability to conform to social expectations increasingly drive him toward self-annihilation. Now that his psychological growth has been traced, these insights can be brought together to explore their broader significance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Osamu Dazai’s *No Longer Human* offers a striking exploration of psychological despair through the lens of Freud’s death drive and Bem’s self-

perception theory. Yozo's alienation, masking behaviours, and existential crisis reveal how distorted self-perception can intensify feelings of isolation and drive destructive impulses. His growing alienation from society and resulting suicide illustrate the dominance of the death drive over the life force, finally fulfilling Freud's notion of a return to an inanimate state. By integrating these psychological frameworks, this analysis highlights how Dazai's novel presents not only a personal narrative of one man's downfall but also a broader commentary on the human struggle to reconcile identity, belonging, and meaning in the face of an absurd world.

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