

**A Look into the Macabre:
A Psychoanalytic Study of Poe and His Selected Works**



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Spring 2021

A Look into the Macabre: A Psychoanalytic Study of Poe and His Selected Works

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of English and Humanities
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of BA in English

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Date of Submission:

May 2021

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arifa Ghani Rahman', is written above a horizontal line.

Arifa Ghani Rahman

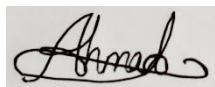
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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Dedication

*From all who are near
and all who are true,
I, including them,
My dear deceased Children of Palestine-
Dedicate this to you...*

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin with praises to Allah, the most beneficent, for allowing me the strength and will to complete my thesis. Following, my endless gratitude towards my mother, Rabiya Akter and my dear father, Mustafa Ahmad, for all their guidance, love and eternal sacrifice.

My sincere and heartfelt well wishes and thankfulness towards my supervisor, Head and Associate Professor of DEH, Ms. Arifa Ghani Rahman for her unmatched patience, unshakable faith, precise feedbacks, immense knowledge, parental care and tolerance. I cannot thank Arifa Ma'am enough for the massive support she had given me throughout my entire University life at ULAB - My eternal gratitude.

I am most gratefully incorporating my appreciation, gratitude and endless thanks towards Prof. Shamsad Mortuza, Acting Vice-Chancellor, ULAB; Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam, Professor, DEH; Prof. Shaila Sultana; Ms. Nishat Atiya, Lecturer, DEH; and all of the faculty members of the University of Liberal Arts of Bangladesh for their knowledge, support, positivity and endless trust in me. If not for their aid and recommendation, I would not have accomplished what I have done so far. A special thanks to Dr Sohana Manzoor for her constant literary and emotional support through tough times. Also, my gratitude to Khadija Rubaiyat Tasmia, Supervisor, The English Zone, for all her guidance and polished mentorship in ULAB.

Finally, I would like to thank my eldest sister, Tahmina Ferdouse (Sumappi), for all her aid during quarantine, my nephew and nieces, and all my closest friends, especially Muhammad Tareq Bin Atique (Pranto) Bhai for his support and positivity in many aspects of my life like a brother; Asif Imteaz (Peal) for being a positive beacon of hope, a great reason for livelihood and brother in my life. Last but not the least, I am most thankful to Umme Salma for her wholehearted support and endless encouragement that boosted me continuously. This paper would not have been completed without her invaluable input.

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Abstract

This research explores the elements of “fear” in the literary style of Gothic Literature, particularly in Edgar Allan Poe’s writings. It also identifies how Poe uses mediaeval settings and various situational and fictional anomalies to amplify mystery and horror, which affect readers on a psychological level. Allowing for the realisation, in turn, of Poe’s unique take on the horror genre and his own persistent shadow of the unconscious and desires in his protagonists in all their entirety. This work will utilise a psychoanalytic approach and micro-reading of four of Poe’s greatest works to determine how fear is used in Poe’s works. The selected texts belong to the Gothic Horror genre and an in-depth deconstruction and reconstruction will be done- not of the texts in their entirety, but the protagonists in each story. Using Freud’s Iceberg Theory, character development, history, needs and objectives, dominant emotions, and of course, fears will be dissected and compared. The results will provide a comparative-contrastive insight into the individuals and how they all connect within one intricate web of the various stages of neurosis. This will allow for revelations of similarities between the characters and Poe’s psychology, and in turn, help relate the pacing of the story arcs from beginning to end to reveal the various inflexions of Poe’s mind. This will solidify the theory that Poe indeed channels his inner struggles into his stories and characters, resulting in the fabrication of timeless works of fiction.

Chapter One: Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe was an American author, poet, reviewer, and editor who was most renowned for his vivid short tales and poetry that captivated readers all over the world. Modern detective fiction was born as a result of his inventive storytelling and tales of mystery and horror. Poe's works have become literary classics in many ways. Poe's life, like his writings, is cloaked in mystery, and the borders between reality and fiction have blurred significantly since his death. The horror genre of Edgar Allan Poe is familiar to an incredible number of people. The explanation is that Poe's short stories leave a mark on the reader because of their singular atmosphere: horror. In her thesis, Tereza Kašparová states that the exertion with which Poe built his works was focused on a solitary objective: creating an impact. She affirms Poe's focus on intriguing the reader, and on inciting whatever impact he strives for (Kašparová 7). Using Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this thesis will uncover how this atmosphere is constructed and what components comprise it in four of Poe's most noteworthy works: "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Imp of the Perverse," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and "The Fall of the House of Usher." Exploring the effects of horror, this research further investigates the extent of the fictional characters' ethos in reflecting and connecting to Poe's troubled mind.

The initial part of the research systematically explains the themes, the most noticeable parts that construct the horror atmosphere. It does not cover all the Gothic elements Poe profits from like ancient prophecies, omens, female characters in distress or metonymies of gloom. Instead, this thesis looks at four core elements of horror that appear most frequently in Poe's work: death, madness, violence, and the supernatural. These elements are similar in their shared subversion of the natural and rational order of things.

The second part of the thesis explores the settings in which the protagonists exist. The depictions of their psyche, motives, drives, and beliefs wherein the narratives happen significantly heighten the potential of the atmosphere, for they draw the readers into the story, and affect them quite strongly. This, coupled with the various affirmations of several psychological conditions, made clear by the theories of psychoanalysis, helps comprehend Poe's unique take on Gothic literature and how he channelled his trauma.

The third part of the analysis compares the protagonists who grew resigned to their fate against those who succumbed to theirs. This dissected discussion will explore and affirm the conditions of mirroring, the unconscious duplication of another person's nonverbal messages. Characters in literature who are mirrored have various features in common with the author or other characters, and they are utilized to complement and highlight each other's characteristics. Common mirror characters go on recurring motifs, sometimes to attain a single objective, which puts them to the test and shows their characteristics in unique ways. The discussions will also include the relation to split personality disorder monomania and how it sets in, as well as the Oedipus Complex and its extreme turn to murderous intent and libido – how the inner self crumbles due to it and its vivid portrayal. Referring to Freud, Maria Popova says, “How the writer accomplishes this is his innermost secret; the essential *ars poetica* lies in the technique of overcoming the feeling of repulsion in us which is undoubtedly connected with the barriers that arise between every single ego and the others.” This sheds a very clear light on the matters of Poe's inner duality and furthers Sigmund Freud's Iceberg Theory of self-projection. The protagonists can be linked directly to Poe through these affirmed conditions when they are closely studied.

The final part of the research details Poe's narrative style and his projection of self onto the protagonists. More precisely, the concerns are those parts of Poe's narrative style that co-create

and intensify the atmosphere of horror and the commonality of the psychological traits of his protagonists. Poe is known for his work with language which he used to make a singular impact. The impact of a harrowing tale should be fear, so, accordingly, the focus is on those systems that inspire this response in the reader and eventually, we come to an understanding of Poe's outlook on the inner demons of humanity. On this note, Ellie Quick argues and tries to disprove Rufus Griswold through her findings, stating that his *Memoir of the Author* (1850) – where Poe's deformities are told to have originated of character and not condition – was one of the many blatant lies claimed by Griswold. Moreover, these were the main data the public had about him. Since then, the reality of Poe and his life has been mutilated and a lot of it actually stays obscure (Quick 1).

Ke Xiong believed that the psychoanalytic theory alludes to literary analysis which, in strategy, idea, hypothesis, or structure, is impacted by the convention of psychoanalysis started by Sigmund Freud. The psychoanalytic theory is a literary approach where critics see the text as a sort of dream. This implies that the content stifles its genuine substance behind manifest content. The cycle of changing from dormant to manifest content is known as the "Dream Work," and includes tasks of concentration and displacement. Xiong dissects the language and symbolism of a book to reverse the cycle of the dream work and reach the submerged ideas (93). This leads us to the question of where Poe was heading with the discourse in his stories. It is, therefore, necessary to learn about Poe's relationship with his protagonists and equip ourselves with the writer's desire for a better understanding of his works. Having decided as much, we can ask several questions: what is Poe's relationship to his narrators in his stories and do they reflect the id, ego, and superego of Poe himself rather than being standalone figures in the settings? If all the criteria reflect the structure of the language of the mind and unconscious simultaneously, are Poe's fiction and reality

compatible in light of a Freudian analysis? How is Poe's subtle imposition of his self and inner torments to be understood clearly by literary critics? How ought we to orient ourselves properly for a reasonable understanding of the metanarratives? These are a few of the questions we may approach in this research on Poe's protagonists. The chosen tales, although well known for being Gothic short stories, demonstrate various elements of psychology and psychoanalytic aspects of Poe himself. These aspects and their effects on the protagonists will also be investigated to explain the extent to which we may call them psychoanalytical reports of the writer. The protagonists, identified by their traits as Gothic, are connected and also serve as binary opposites to some extent. The obsession with death will be represented by the killer from "The Tell-Tale Heart"; the narrator in "The Imp of the Perverse" as the insane; violence and anxiety represented by the protagonist of "The Pit and the Pendulum"; and the supernatural and libido represented by Roderick Usher from "The Fall of the House of Usher." These characters reflect Freud's findings on the "uncanny" and the familiarity of the unfamiliar, and combine with some real-life incidents that influenced Poe to write these masterpieces.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

There is no other enthusiasm than fear that can viably deny individuals from activities and thoughts. In Poe's works, we have a significant perception that all the horrific characters were inundated in the climate of the Gothic horror Poe had portrayed for them. The threat does not generally exist, yet Poe transformed them into reality with his creative mind and imposing narrative ability, and refreshed the degree of fright, so readers could not but feel terrified. Chunyan Sun quotes Paul Valéry in her analysis, who expressed that Poe was the individual who made the world, and the main writer who never committed mistakes, no matter what his method of clarifying things were (94). From the world perspective on Poe, he regarded unique solidarity with the darkness of the world as wonders of the Universe. This rule, reflected in his creation, plans to accomplish flawlessness in craftsmanship. All the symbolism and tension in his works left enough space for the readers, which made it feasible for them to encounter the enchantment of fear. Sun also speculated the first-person storytellers made the story all the more genuine and relatable to the readers. The reader can see the characters' stripped souls where they may see themselves. She also reveals how Poe in his writings, uncovered people's shock towards the super-natural, nothingness, passing, malevolence and breakdown of personality. The endeavour to exhibit that loathsomeness begins from the human spirit. By methods of symbolism, anticipation, first-person narrative, embellishment of climate and hostility to a conclusion, it is perceived how Poe made an honest effort to build an unblemished uniform, puzzling and shaking impact (Sun 98). Poe's fiction takes care of readers' tasteful enjoyment, in the representation of the insidious and the ghastly, are explored to see it accomplish the sublimation and sanitization of the human psyche. Through every one of these methods, Poe made an honest effort to develop a flawless and uniform impact. This

critique will be used to engage critically with the current discussion on Poe's Gothic fiction and lead the aforementioned hypothesis to an affirmed assumption.

Shamaila Amir states that "The Tell-Tale Heart" was written to investigate distrustfulness and mental deterioration. Avoiding subtleties assists with heightening the effect of Poe's fixation on explicit elements like the old man's eye, heartbeat and guarantee of his mental soundness. Pointed and captivating language contributes a lot to build up the relationship of language and topics (Amir 598). The story likewise features the mental inconsistencies that add to a murderous profile. Also, there is a strain between the narrator's love and contempt. This conundrum is clarified by Poe fifty years before Freud theorized his hypotheses of the mind and investigated the mental intricacies of the human psyche to understand that individuals at times hurt, indeed, even the people they love or need in their everyday lives. The narrator's morbid obsession with the old man which drives him and leads to a vicious murder also gives a nod to the Oedipus Complex, one of Freud's theories of incestuous tendencies towards parent figures. The words, the expressions and the sentences dissected a feature that the narrator has an exceptional capacity to narrate exactly and completely, and Poe utilizes his portrayal, his linguistic structure and plot development additionally, in an approach to contradict his narrator in his request to substantiate himself as sane.

The Gothic short story "The Imp of the Perverse" is approached by Fredrik Åslund in terms of the psychoanalytical analysis of Sigmund Freud's theory. His translation depended on the hypothesis socio-psychological impacts of "mirroring," and the estrangement of the self, as contended by Freud, to look at, dissect and interpret the short story from a psychoanalytical literary viewpoint, to check whether there exists a reasonable sign that the projection of the creator into the content could be expressed to convey his view and what is more, attitude toward the forbidden and forsaken (Åslund 4). The extreme narcissistic tendencies of the narrator may have stemmed

from Poe's issues of early estrangement and neglect. In writing this story Poe had effectively succumbed to the callings of his id and insanity more so than any of his other works. Through those focuses, it was demonstrated that there is a link between the damaging propensities of Poe and his printed work. A firm hang on his ruinous past was set up, and the query was thoroughly investigated with an affirmative closing.

Justine Shu-Ting Kao dissects the relationship between time and monomania upon the narrator of Poe's short horror "The Pit and the Pendulum". Poe connects and correlates the image of Father Time, with a razor-sharp pendulum, as the picture of Daemon in the profundity of mind, from which the hero cannot escape; Time controls the pendulum and terrifies the protagonist (Kao 52). The narrator, astonished by the pictures, regardless of whether they are real or dreams, goes through a quest for the profound domain in the mind. The added sense of the narrator being confined in a narrow prison enforces the sense of claustrophobia, and in turn, the inner anxiety and insecurities of Poe surface in the story. The close walls do not work to build closure, but only a sense of impending doom. For Poe, this was the effective fear of death's inevitability. Monomania is explained to uncover the problem of the man unequipped for conveying the spirit to the otherworldly domain because of his endurance. What is made clear is the want for salvation from the suspension of death, which does not exist.

Wenfang Pang, Diqiu Wang and Shanshan Hu, in their critique, claim that what Poe depicts about Roderick Usher is fundamentally the same as with Poe himself in "The Fall of the House of Usher". Assuming the validity of this claim, it can be decided that the function of the supernatural and libido in the story mirrors Poe's reality and psyche. Likewise, the explanation that the storyteller discovers everything inside his room in the text comprehends commonality and gives an outlook into Poe's own, inward world. He fears this sort of feeling and endures sharply by his

inner dread for the outcome which is brought about by his ghastliness and hidden sin, the repressed sexual desire and its limbo (Pang et al. 15). The fragility of the infrastructure of the Usher Mansion and its inevitable destruction acts as a lesson that Poe himself follows: projecting literary horror for the sake of releasing the suppressed evil. Poe seemed to inwardly acknowledge this notion to warn readers that if the inner darkness is not kept in check, all are doomed to fall, like the house of Usher. This morale and Roderick Usher's unique dread and suppressed sexual libido influences everything regardless of whether it is a primary concern and not, from the visitor and the house itself and the past. From a literary analytical perspective, the breakdown of the characteristics of Roderick Usher simultaneously gave rise to the explanation for the fall of his house. It is the uncommon breakdown of Usher's mind that made the real thing have a similar outcome.

Bakalářská Práce explores the horror atmosphere in the narratives of Poe and the cautious planning of his works intending to make an impact. Each segment that Poe embedded into a story had its foreordained reason. On account of the horror atmosphere, a definitive point of its segments is to incite dread in the reader. Topics speak to the primary constituent of effect. Death, which sets itself apart in different ways, marks the narratives in their most unnatural structures. The reader is given knowledge into mad minds and the differentiation between a normal individual and the curved vision of the Universe of the distraught (Práce 9). Práce explains how Poe does not use the portrayals of the setting all through the narratives, he uses them strategically to either present the general atmosphere or to enhance it. The reiteration of dark occurrences and words implying dread escalates generously the effect of the loathsome environment; dubiousness and absence of clarification are utilized to befuddle the reader.

Ellie Quick analyses the numerous speculations about Poe's mental state and why he was the way he was. She states that Poe is still an interesting individual to investigate today, essentially

because his life and his works are so strange to all. Poe incorporated characters with mental issues into his accounts to make psychological thrillers which make his accounts extraordinary, energizing and timeless to read (Quick 11). The conclusive way that Quick hypothesized that Poe intentionally leaves readers in a state of the dilemma of whether his protagonists are sane or not leads to effective cliff-hanger endings. This further increases the chances that Poe's sanity itself was questionable, depending on the way a reader pursues his contents. Furthermore, this also directs Poe's ego down a predictable path of chaos: his id blatantly seeps into his stories more than his superego.

While studying the influence of Poe's life experiences on his writings, Ke Xiong explores the relationship between psychoanalytic literary criticism and Poe's writings. He dissects the relationship between Poe's life and his abstract works. The study shows that the demise and insanity of the protagonists is the depiction of the author. Xiong sees the motive of writing literature as the sexual drive, when left unfulfilled, would attempt to communicate their sentiments by writing. This allows Poe to express his desperation and helplessness obscurely through characters like the narrator of "The Pit and the Pendulum" and Roderick Usher by constructing a nightmarish world around them that mirrored the way life tormented Poe himself.

After investigating the grotesque in Poe's writings, Clinton Bryant elaborates on the three components that make Poe's particular grotesque aesthetic: the affective reader, obsessive design, and haptic space which give a feeling of indeterminacy caught between agony and delight, excellence and fear, life and death (Bryant 5). Investigating Poe's messages, Bryant's proposal depicts these bizarre figurations and what these developments mean narratively and masterfully and how they inform the author's larger intellectual objectives. Thus, we see how the heinous attributes of the narrators in "The Tell-tale Heart" and "The Imp of the Perverse" can enchant and

penetrate the mind of readers to the unconscious level and make them see what Poe felt with vivid intensity instead of seeming repulsive.

Lin Xiaobin examines the element of death in the horror genre of Poe's stories using Thanatopsis as the guiding hypothesis. The hypothesis is death itself, founded by Sigmund Freud emphasising the internal "death drive" in humans. The hypothesis also conveys the idea that everyone who wanders the world has the same fate of returning to it, and this leads to an unconscious urge to bring self-harm through unexplainable behaviour. This viewpoint strangely fosters a feeling of connection and allows for the acceptance of death. The different forms of Thanatopsis, complicated, changing, and their cause in Poe's writings are explored (Xiaobin 176). Driving characters in Poe's works had a strong resistance towards death. The time of stories and background was weakened intentionally, so Poe can significantly examine the soul. To make the effect more exceptional, he had included death in his stories. Xiaobin summarized that for the individuals who had veered off the right course, death will be their completion even though they are more reasonable than customary individuals and easier to lose self-control, according to their Thanatopsis.

The approach in analysis and the selection of the short stories in this study being investigated is most similar to that of Bakalářská Práce and Ke Xiong's findings, given how both have chosen subjects that depict psychological aspects in comparison with the theme of fear, and how both of them have chosen the theories of psychoanalytic critics in their analysis. However, in comparison to the work of Práce, who has attempted to establish Poe's work as an early specimen of true Gothic literature, and also Xiong, who has attempted to demonstrate literary criticism as vital and its role in in-depth analysis, the proposed study takes a different approach. To reiterate, this study will attempt to seek in what ways the views expressed in Poe's fiction are Gothic and

reflective; and, whether an “unnatural” relationship between Poe and his protagonists, possible within psychoanalysis, may end up coming to the proposed conclusion of self-reference.

Chapter Three: A Look into the Macabre

Sigmund Freud invented the term “unconscious” almost fifty years after Poe's death, implying that Poe found parts of psychology that were still undiscovered in the nineteenth century. This is consistent with Freud's contention that poets and philosophers before him had unearthed the information that allowed for an investigation of the psyche. So interestingly, as can be observed in the study of his short stories, Poe, whose work mostly revolved around the particular fear of losing sanity, creates stories about individuals whose brains steadily degenerate or are warped by a greater force than themselves to commit evil.

Poe's gothic stories, which are filled with fascinating psychological repercussions, elicit cries at every turn. His gothic poetry and novels leave one wondering where he acquired his ideas and his legacy has left the impression that he was insane, which is maybe expected. Poe wrote about social and political situations that he was familiar with. He was no exception to the rule that writers are inevitably impacted by the society in which they live.

Thus, drawing inspiration for his creative writing from incidents in his lifetime, Poe used his short tale “The Tell-Tale Heart” as a reflection on the M'Naghten insanity defence, which was instituted in 1843. The narrative should be analysed as if it were being given to a psychiatrist by a possible insanity defence offender. In the realms of legal and psychiatric studies, the M'Naghten case was tremendously informative. Many people are aware that “the law has long recognized that criminal punishment is not appropriate for those who, by reason of insanity, cannot tell right from wrong,” but few are aware of when this basic right was modified by legislation (Shoptaw 1103). This is one of Poe's shorter pieces, created to explore hysteria and mental decline. The narrator's fixation with certain phenomena like the old man's eye, heartbeat, and proclamation of normality

is amplified by avoiding specifics. The use of precise and concise language helps to establish the connections between language and concepts. The narrative also emphasizes the mental inconsistencies that culminate in a homicidal personality. Furthermore, the narrator's love and hate abilities conflict; he loves the elderly man but despises his vulture's eye. Poe employs his narration, syntax, and narrative design to contradict his protagonist in his plea to show himself sane, as evidenced by the words, phrases, and sentences examined.

The narrator is clearly a murderer, and the action may even be considered premeditated, but the focus is on whether or not the killer is deranged and thus uses the insanity plea. Poe is focusing the narrative on the psychological world, ignoring everything that may be considered ethical. The narrator's fixation is to do with the old man's good and the evil linked with his eye, but Poe wants the reader to be focused on the ultimate force that produced the madness. The reader must follow along with the doctor as he tries to figure out what caused the insanity and if it was an "Evil Eye" or the excessively noisy thumping of the unravelling Instinctual lunacy. As Beauchamp states "Poe demonstrates this controversy through the premeditation to murder the old man and the potential to avoid the same consequences through the insanity defence" (4). Poe expects his readers to question the narrator's sanity. When the narrator is about to commit the horrible deed, they exclaim "and now have I not told you that what You mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses? I have told you that I am Nervous: so, I am" (Poe 768-769). The narrator again addresses the reader directly and underscores the reader's sense that the result of the crime is accountable. The protagonist refuses to acknowledge insanity and to present his conduct as sensible to emphasize more how deranged the narrator is. Given the nature of the protagonist's love for an older fellow, this fixation with the elderly man eagerly reflects the Oedipus complex that seems to derive from Poe himself. In combination with paranoia, Sigmund Freud has regarded

Thanatopsis as the intrinsic dread to lose one's parents. This projection provides the veil of uncertainty in the denial of his paranoia for Poe himself. As a result, Poe leaves his reader with this final admission of guilt since the reader must evaluate whether the protagonist is mad or not. Poe hoped that the concept would leave a lingering sensation in his conscience just as it had for him at the M'Naghten test establishment.

As with many works of Poe, "The Imp of the Perverse," another one of Poe's gothic tales, examines the darker sides of our psychology and the topic that we all ponder about occasionally: Why do certain individuals, who are human like us, commit acts of evil, the exact concept of which revolts us? One of the issues we tend to raise when we talk about an appalling assassination is what the motivation of the killer was. Listening to the victim, the history between them, their self-defence, all these comforts us because they seem to restore a semblance of order and explanation to events. They convince us that individuals do horrible things because they are willing. Nevertheless, Poe's narrative demonstrates that it is exactly why we are asking for such explanations and such reassurance: because underneath it all we know that man is capable of what is generally called "motiveless malignancy" by psychoanalysts, and the narrator in "The Imp of the Perverse" tells us that we know this deep inside. It is only that a lot of us do not follow up on it. In the story, the narrator says

Induction, posteriori, would have brought phrenology to admit, as an innate and primitive principle of human action, a paradoxical something, which we may call perverseness, for want of a more characteristic term. In the sense I intend, it is, in fact, a mobile without motive, a motive not motivirt (Poe 2).

The concept that "we act because we should not" foreshadows the notion of pessimistic psychoanalysis, but Poe's complete narrative prefigures the explanation by Sigmund Freud of the

function of the id in the unconscious. The id does things simply because it needs to, and does not consider whether they are unethical or immoral. The id implores one's will to go for a task only if it is rewarding. Then again, the id does not comprehend in any meaningful sense. The Gothic literary figure of the id describes an average person who indulges, kills people, and finally hangs them. Several other writings are also about homicide, but contained in their kind of detective novels, killing in these books just acts as shackles hanging on the casket of truth. On the one hand, Poe knows the corruption of human motives and vulgar appetites; “for this understanding he will let disasters fall on those characters once they take actions against reasons; deprivation of life is the most severe punishment, so descriptions of death is not only to reveal terror of death but also to warn human beings of standards” (Xiaobin 176), and to not be overtaken by the id.

Poe's id had strongly and unintentionally controlled his literary side, given the many times he faced the loss of significant individuals that gave safety, warmth, acceptance, compassion and closeness. Aided by his extreme alcohol addictions and toxicants such as morphine and opium, his neurological aspects were significantly expanded and helped expand his inner personality. According to Åslund, “Supported by Pruette and Bonaparte both; there remains little doubt that Edgar Allan Poe suffered from evident mental disorders, strong complexes and a tendency to actively, however conscious or not – perform destructive actions and habits upon himself, without clear or evident respect for his own psychological or physical well-being” (15). It seems as though the writer himself experienced humanity's miseries, and he developed his ideal of the perversity of existence, voluntarily or not, in the face of huge anguish and looking at the taboo. As stated, “Poe wrote this Gothic tale while being a victim of not only physical but also mental vices – negative habits and patterns which he could not combat successfully” (Åslund 26). These acts and judgments certainly prompted him to create the short tale, a narrative that has much to do with his

life and how he functioned. Poe did not just write a fictional story in which he made up views that he did not hold – to him, the imp of the perverse was real, perched maliciously on the shoulder and muttering wicked thoughts till his demise – this mirroring of self is how psychoanalytical literary theorists explain how a writer could transfer elements of their psyche; recollections and encounters into the text. It ought to be clear that Poe never produced a fictional work where he presented ideas he did not own.

Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" depicts the psychological state of monomania and its development together with the fear of imminent death. In one of his most well-known works, the prisoner is entrapped between pleasure and pain, elegance and horror, death and life while being tortured by the machinery of the Spanish Inquisition. It utilizes the concept of death in a particular way and represents death in the form of a death penalty as a continual and ubiquitous danger. Having been condemned to death, the tragic fate that a man can barely escape, the consciousness of his approaching death, hovers throughout the rest of his life as a cruel smothering shroud. In the story, this impact is extensively utilized. The prisoner's relatively close death experiences seem to reinforce the sense of finality of death, so heightening the intense ambience of dread created by the motif of the death penalty. An intriguing observation seems to be that "The capital punishment is used in such a way that it is brought out right at the beginning for a certain effect; such information forces the reader to pause and think about the cause of the punishment, it evokes a sense of some horrible deed executed in past and introduces eeriness and suspense into the tale" (Práce 15). The reading of this information leads readers to the same compulsive fixation with incidents or uniqueness which also had Poe caught in a monomaniac limbo. Poe uses this conditional insanity to intensify his work. It is used to highlight the effects on individuals of a traumatic event or scenario, therefore amplifying the effect of the general setting. The prisoner

becomes insane as he watches, tired and helplessly, the pendulum slowly but surely plummets to terminate his life: “I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm and lay smiling at the glittering death as a child at some rare bauble” (Poe 500). This breakdown of logic adds to the dread elicited by the inquisition's procedures. The reader cannot be certain about the true state of affairs; thus, the dread of the unknown plays an essential part. This is an unusual tactic since generally the reader sees so much more than just the hero, as the writer conveys to him what the characters would not be able to fully understand. This fiction, on the other hand, does not benefit the reader; it just presents the prisoner's viewpoint. Práce demonstrates this, “Thus Poe, as well as the reader, discovers by degrees and by chance that the vault contains a circular pit and that the walls are made of metal” (Práce 38). This Freudian analytical framework for the protagonist's story wonderfully illustrates the anxiety and purgatory of monomania that had haunted Poe his whole existence.

In this work, Poe depicts obsessive-compulsive neurosis in his trademark fashion: the great human mental resistance to survive does not offer peace, but it is accompanied by a twisted mind disturbing the peaceful repose in the tomb, bringing terror. Almost all of Poe's writings oscillate between the protection of lives and the acceptance of death. “Monomania befalls almost all of Poe's protagonists who struggle between the desire for the spiritual realm and the fear of death,” says Kao (69). Monomania portrays the problem of an individual who, owing to his survival impulse, is unable to transport the spirit to the divine world. Thus, the last scene of religious redemption uses the method of replacement for the prisoner's wish for death to be postponed in exchange for redemption which does not occur. The pendulum, presumably constructed as beauty or even as a mechanized bit of engineering, holds sway in Poe's macabre aesthetic, which adds to his fascination. As Bryant puts it, “Always interested in creation, Poe also explores the question

of what occurs when a design is brought into existence. These objects are equal parts designed spaces and a literal mind space embodying the protagonist's obsession" (49). In the story, the structure – the pendulum's apparatus – describes a painstakingly planned construction. While the thematic elements generate a supernatural fear and propel the tale forward, these artefacts rewrite truth and, as a result, are a way of compulsively controlling the bodies of many others.

The untimely burial is another distortion of death that is unique to Poe's writings. This theme can be seen in "The Fall of the House of Usher." Similar to the terrible fate of the friend to another one of Poe's vile creations – Montresor from "The Cask of Amontillado," burying him alive and witnessing the act is, without question, a significant transgression of the order of things, and hence a subject of fear and horror. Inside the otherworldly ambience of this story, Freudian psychoanalysis pinpoints various neurotic disorders. Práce affirms this with precision, "This motif supplemented with realistic descriptions of the anxious, often chaotic, and panic-stricken sentiments of the victim have a very imposing effect on the reader" (18). Certainly, Roderick Usher's persona seems to be more comparable than ever to Poe in mind and spirit – the dual appeal and vileness. The significance of this tale is a widely discussed subject in literary communities; a psychoanalytic theory states in accordance that "the narrator's journey to Usher's domain is a Dream-journey into his own mind" and that Usher himself represents "the incertitude of the hypnagogic state," that is to say, the state "on the brink of sleep" (Miller 378). The minor intricacies of how Roderick Usher is the same as Poe himself are even more unusual. Perhaps, if it is correct, we can assess the function of Poe in the novel. Pang makes further eerie findings and similarities: "the reason that the narrator finds everything within his room in House of Usher, such as the black oaken floor, the dark drapery and the general furniture which are 'profuse, comfortless, antique and tattered,' makes an unspeakable sense of familiarity and gives us what the environment

is like in Poe's inner world of the unconscious" (18). In Roderick Usher's footsteps, the journey towards slumber, and from realism to fantasy for the situation of Poe, is visible. Usher was bizarre and melancholy because he blamed his illness on his sister, Madeleine. Her disease was the source of his concern, and he was tormented enough to and it plagued him enough to firmly infect his unconsciousness. We realize that Poe and Roderick share the same past experiences if we are conversant with psychoanalysis and Poe's emotional maturity. Poe "lost his mother, and later lost a friend's mother, and later lost his adopted mother. There is no doubt that Roderick and Poe lost in love three times. Similarly, he always lived in fear, and always felt that he would soon die" (Xiong 94). Usher was terrified of destiny, for he read fantastical literature and fantasized about insane matters. He permitted his friend to assist him in burying his sister shortly after she died. Later on, he developed delusional paranoia, believing that his sister was buried alive, and he grew terrified, fearful that she would return. Also, as a result, when his friend read him a famous tale, he immediately connected it to the narrative of both him and his sister, Madeleine. This manifested libido and anxiety combined to lead Usher to believe that she crept out of the crypt to murder him, which, unfortunately, was the aberrant dread that ultimately led to his untimely death. Poe's own growing fears of insecurities regarding destiny, his mass acquisition of knowledge and the increasing sexual frustration all seem to also lead to the point in his life when he too, perhaps, passed on.

To summarize, the story's topic of insanity, incestuous love, the supernatural, and Poe's growing Freudian libido shown via Roderick creates an atmosphere of anxiety and fear. The effect of the concept and the situation is then amplified with the allegorical literary work that was read to Usher; terror comes in at this point, as Usher's psychic dysfunction is proven. Eventually, the shift to the worsening of Roderick's health, his surrendering to lunacy and his fear generate a very

dramatic and frightening situation following the death of the lady Madeline.

These aforementioned characteristic dark attributes and quirks give shape to all of Poe's protagonists and simultaneously run rampant in their respective worlds amok. These actions help shape the plot which, in turn, form the very basis of the Gothic horror genre's core traits – the elements of fear. As the writer's psyche gives the cast purpose, so too literary analysis exposes more elements of the dark from within the maelstrom that is the writer's craft, ready to be interpreted and dissected.

Chapter Four: The Macabre in the Works of Poe

Having extracted Poe's psyche from within his stories, the exploration of what he has left imprinted on the tales needs a thorough psychoanalytic literary criticism. The function of the narrators within their worlds need to be examined to ensure that they stand by the previous claims of self-imposition. The killer in "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a man not only driven by the desire to kill, but also by his own "death drive" to be captured by his guilt. As Amir states, "His idea of home is connected with a place of violence and death and also disease, anguish, and isolation. Home is portrayed as a place where mysterious hearts tell stories of horror and crime committed at the darkest hours of the night." (Amir 600). The setting, therefore, was set as a sacrificial altar for the protagonist to give in to his delusions and commit the murder. The subject of being malevolent from inside and outside clarifies that the old man was not detestable. He just has a revolting and frightful eye which makes him monstrous from outside. Then again, the killer is evil from within. He is terrible naturally and needs to murder an innocuous elderly person. He not just plans, but also executes the homicide. (Amir 559). The death drives Freud's idea of Thanatopsis, which is the peculiarity of someone to harm themselves and others despite the consequences and rationality, goads the killer to murder which is elaborated thus- "Poe understands human's violation of reasons and indulgence of vulgar desires; on the other hand, he'll let disasters fall on those characters... so descriptions of death are not only to reveal the terror of death but also to warn human beings of standards." (Xiaobin 176). It can be made relatable about Poe's paranoia about succumbing towards the id of will, which he suffered from greatly. This guilt and fear of death is infectious, "well educated and intelligent, and can control their minds and senses capably; but though they are aware of this factor, they cannot identify it within their a priori knowledge about the human mind.

They are the slaves of their rationality/will and self-love" (Koçsoy 144). This scrutiny of the sublime of paranoia, coupled with delusions, gave the author a distinctive portrayal of the entire cycle of commission of wrongdoing, including criminal rationale, murder and admission by examining the killer's unnatural psychology. Moreover, it was passed on in the type of mental sentiments and built the dark environment for the readers, and so accomplished Poe's anticipated impacts.

In the tale "The Imp of the Perverse", through the scope of psychoanalytic literary hypothesis it is comprehensible how Poe "mirrors" the neural effects of himself - his power that affects, builds and authorises the characteristics of the Imp's subliminal, intertextual messages and how brilliantly the dark implications are explained. As we delve into the soliloquy of the Imp, we come to comprehend the power of insanity of the protagonist, ultimately comprehending how extreme mirroring delusions alienate one from the self, or Ego from Superego of the social norm, as stated by Freud in his "Iceberg Principle". Insanity gives rise to a new form of warped Superego, born out of mental malfunctions. Práce expands "these narratives are marked by particular characters and their particular behaviour; that is to say characters whose psyche is damaged, whose vision of reality is twisted, and whose behaviour is therefore strange, often creepy, sometimes violent, simply unnatural. The stories of madness are therefore concerned with the theme of perverted mind" (18). This pervasiveness of the Imp, the psychopathic murderer, can be said to be a shadow-projection of Poe's own mirrored and neurotic psyche itself. Åslund expands upon this theory- In connection to "Psychoanalytical Aesthetic Theory", Poe could be considered to use components of all degrees of the cognizant and subliminal layers- creating, in crafting, an imaginative cycle where all issues of the creative impulse of the human mind interconnect-machinery of the sublime, which to make something, needs to pour from not just a plane of

information and reasoning of the brain. On the other hand, the blurred profundities of conscious or unconscious imagination and inventiveness (as with narrating, conceptualizing)- rather, these conceivably isolated components are unavoidably connected as the fundamental establishment of innovative construct- the essential standard of Poe's artistic creation. (Åslund 4-5). Thus, we see how Poe himself is in a loop of "conscious denial" of his rejection of the logic of sanity- for a will without goodness is simply insanity, to admit is a forbiddance, and yet, a compelling inspiration, an imp and another phase of the sublime. The thought persecutes him until he surrenders to confession. All the insight of the Imp does nothing to quiet this inclination and it implies his calamity. He felt the physical burden and with the disappointment of reason, revealed the secret. At the point when he admits his wrongdoing, he is mentally relieved. Both he and the reader have another negative sublime. While he was wearing the chains, he requested comprehension and approval. He attempts to convince the readers that he is sane, simply a prey of the Imp of the Perverse, creating a delusional ethic. Just as Poe tries to prove himself sane forcibly in the material world.

Creating a stark contrast with the killer and Imp is the doomed prisoner of the pit in "The Pit and the Pendulum." Unlike the other protagonists, the prisoner is innocent and was not insane from the beginning, but is slowly torn apart by the fear of monomania. The optimistic, yet conflictingly troubled mind of the prisoner is the most "positive" of all the protagonists to be discussed. He is doomed to confinement in the presence of a seemingly bottomless "pit," which may represent the endless depth of the human mind from a Freudian perspective. The edge of the pit is the boundary between life and death, between the realm of the real and that of dreams. It is a dark region that cannot be characterized by language. It is also a region that drives impulses to dive into the void in the pit. It looks to extinguish the subject's personality (the ego). In Gothic

discourse, this mysterious boundary is the Gothic sublime (Kao 58). Indeed, this loss of his personality is similar to the loss of the prisoner's sanity, which in turn, is memorable with the fall of the pendulum in the prison. All of the downward spirals of action, thought, and objects are reminiscent of the fall of morality and sanity of our previous convicts from "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Imp of the Perverse." With the resonation of these various sensations continually expanding, the grotesque blend of image and sign make an entanglement inside the story, the painting epitomizing this disjuncture as the prisoner's ending turns into a portrayal of living death. Bryant states that "the narrator ... is obsessed with the gaudy blade that simultaneously creates dread of his impending death and a Giddy excitement that is the excess of life" (56). Thus, all of the action in the climax of the story sums up the atmosphere of the story becoming like the instrument of torment in the title – an encapsulation of this jubilant articulation of fear and invigorating life. The reader is left with a fusion of feelings of fear, death, and life caught in a particular impression of Poe's empath. Just as Poe himself was trapped in his trauma of inescapable turmoil, marked by his drinking and gambling issues, so was the prisoner in a similar situation. As Práce stated, Poe "makes use of the theme of death in a specific way; it presents death as a persistent and omnipresent threat in the form of death sentence" (16).

The pervasiveness of the supernatural element in Poe's self, which would manifest upon his Superego from time to time, is reflected strongly in Roderick Usher of "The Fall of the House of Usher". The Protagonist is named – an exceptional case, for the similarities between these two troubled men are eerily many. Chang states that "Poe describes him like this: A cadaverousness of complexion, an eye large, liquid, a luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew mode..., a fine moulded chin, ... in its want of prominence..." (qtd. In Pang et al. 18). The explanation that the narrator

discovers everything inside his room in the House of Usher, for example, the dark oaken floor, the dull curtains and the overall furniture which are abundant, forlorn, antique and worn out, comprehends commonality and gives us the nature of Poe's psyche. He fears this sort of feeling and endures harshly by his internal dread for the outcome which is brought about by his internal frightfulness and hidden sin. This representation of the similarities of Poe with Usher (including naming him for exclusive identity), both physical and mental, brings forth the strong conviction of Poe's repressed sexual desires punishment- The libido. As written blatantly by Xiong in support of Freud's theory, "According to psychoanalysis, the abnormal fear is the repressed sexual desire; this is the boycott to "libido". A person's sexual impulses cannot be suppressed, if it is not shown in other ways. Poe suffered "libido" all his life, he is exactly Roderick Usher in Fall of the House of Usher." (Xiong 94). Roderick Usher was eccentric and discouraged. His long-suppressed desire for his sister mingled with his guilt borne of the delusion that he had killed her lead to the incestuous desire to manifest to a life-ending degree. If we are accepting of the psychoanalytical findings on libido and Poe's life experiences, we realize that Poe and Roderick have similar fateful encounters and demise.

The behavioural factors studied at the period, such as Thanatopsis, mirroring, and Oedipus Complex fuelled Poe's broad variety of interests. Yet he not only covered his time's practices and beliefs; he condemned them for not being enough to give answers that do not appear on the conscious surface but lay concealed in the remote locations that are hard to map out as they form the domain of the unconscious mind. His critique was based on his attempts to unravel the secrets of the psyche. It is seen how the killer and the Imp are similar in nature when it comes to their true ulterior motives as opposed to their binary opposites- the prisoner and Roderick Usher. Based on the Iceberg principle of Freud that operates on the driving forces of the "good and evil" concept of

the psyche, the greatest contrast to the duo of the first pair with the duo of the latter is that- the killer and Imp are guilty, while the prisoner and Usher are innocent- mere victims of the all-powerful strings of fate that had pitted them into circumstances completely out of their control. Also, it is fascinating how these four individuals are seemingly tied to each other by the binds of neurosis- Oedipus Complex, mirroring, Thanatopsis and neurotic libido. The four elements of psychology give rise to and a proper explanation to the Gothic themes of death, madness, paranoia and the supernatural respectively. All of it is made more poetic as everything boils down to the three base subcategories- id, ego and the superego of none other than Poe himself, further proving that the texts mirror his own self's various hubris and other aspects of literary intelligence marvellously.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The analysis of the four selected short stories of Poe, which deal with the different aspects of psychoanalysis from the threefold model of Freud's psyche to the self-defence mechanisms, fears, and innate drives that arise from the Oedipus complex, shows that Poe anticipated Freudian concepts in his works. Poe, because of his impact on the Gothic genre, is one of the most famous authors in American classical literature. The texts were selected because of their potential to demonstrate disparities in characteristics that may be analysed with psychoanalysis. Poe has written multiple stories around the same concepts (such as used in "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Imp of the Perverse," the character overwhelmed with his guilt complex are discovered; sadness and melancholy are incorporated in the "The Fall of the House of Usher"; anxiety and fear of the inevitable in "The Pit and the Pendulum"). It is worth noting that Poe was well-versed in a wide spectrum of psychological disorders. As a result, the texts chosen are designed to cover and address a wide range of topics related to human psychology that Poe was mindful of. The major approach employed to generate these results was the literary theory of psychoanalytic analysis. In the final derivations, Freudian theories may be identified and applied to these works, metaphorical motifs, like protagonist titles and the situation of the locations according to the emotions and experiences of the figures, have been researched and included. Sigmund Freud's ideas were extremely useful in determining the scope of this research while also providing insight into how and what to seek for while reading Poe's short works closely. Studying Poe's narratives again served to create the atmosphere for such understanding and to map out the components of psychoanalysis that were crucial to the assessment.

The writings of Poe belong to Gothic Fiction, a prominent genre in the nineteenth century.

Among the myriad offences that American culture is addressing are aggression, terror, death and incest. Typically, these dreadful issues were explored under the unpleasant situations of the authors in the “new world.” Poe expanded this field by concentrating on psychoanalytical procedures which a first-person narrator may represent. Poe's growing awareness of the mind was uncovered via literary assessment in the late nineteenth century, long after he died in 1849 when a rise in psychological themes became apparent. This narrative method brings sentiments and ideas to the surface that might otherwise be hidden. While many writers have included locations and surroundings that reflect characters' emotional conditions, Poe's intuition illustrates a comprehension of the human mind that goes beyond that of his associates.

Sigmund Freud developed an approach that concentrates on the unconscious mind. His purpose was to heal psychological problems by bringing suppressed and twisted recollections into the conscious area of the brain using therapy. Psychoanalysis is the name for this technique. Psychoanalysis, though, is not a precise science because it can be utilized for patient interpretations only. It is vital to highlight that the interpretation allows the opportunity for inaccuracies. The therapist's interpretations are very provocative and might be accepted by patients for the sole purpose of the therapist's expertise. Thus, one must make a comprehensive and reasonable explanation while executing this technique. The strange link between Freud and Poe occurs because both the men's approaches to the psyche are similar. Poe utilized reality to construct fantasy, whereas Freud employed fantasy to uncover the truth. It does not, though, imply that every feature in Poe's writings that may be viewed via the filter of psychoanalysis was included knowingly. Poe regarded that the greatest strength of wisdom was instinct. Thus, one may say that he has accidentally come across some Freudian subjects, while some were considered with precision. For instance, the positioning of individuals in “The Fall of the House of Usher” as the

depiction of Freud's libido complex was an instinctive judgement, because the manifestation of repressed sexual desire into the death drive was not yet a term and so, the notion was quite vague. But their interplay reflects Freud's theory strongly and illustrates how major problems may arise if one's guilt and sexual desires do not balance. Poe also creates a realistic depiction of a person suffering from chronic depression and personality disorders and even some images of offenders with a weak morality that they are unable to recognize. Moreover, Poe's writings show he was particularly keen on explanations of why people felt afraid, emphasizing this by integrating eerie factors that spread underlying and primal phobias.

There is little doubt that Poe's comportment had an impact on his works. While this is true, the protagonist's role is equally important for the thesis's favoured methodology. As a result, in-depth investigation into the protagonist's psychology is also required. While dealing with literature, Freud's theories are intriguing since they were influenced by fantasy. Therefore, it is necessary to use psychoanalysis as an instrument for interpreting literature reviews. For clarification purposes, this thesis has shown that it is extremely important to highlight in an entirely different perspective the intrinsic validity of the research and the process of excluding the protagonists' position, to produce an authentic literary critique that illustrates Poe's real motives, impulses, and demons. Research adopting this methodology is uncommon, such that subsequent writings dealing with this subject are insufficiently accounted for. Poe deserves praise on this cognizant component of his creativity, which was disregarded in most of his psychoanalytical investigations, and that is why this factor is of great relevance for continued study of his material.

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