

I. Edgar Allan Poe as a Short Story Writer

Although he lived a short and tragic life, Edgar Allan Poe remains today one of the most-beloved mystery writers in history. His contributions to literature and the mystery genre cannot be underestimated. His “The Raven” numbers among the best-known poems in the national literature.

Poe was an American short-story writer, poet, critic, and editor who is famous for his cultivation of mystery and the macabre. His tale “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) initiated the modern detective story, and the atmosphere in his tales of horror is unrivaled in American fiction. He won many literary prizes early in his career, but he made little money, and his alcoholism cost him many jobs in journalism.

Poe was to work for several publications as both editor and contributor. His career as an editor coincided with his growth as a writer. In 1839 he joined the Burton’s *Gentleman’s Magazine* as an assistant editor. While working in Philadelphia for Burton’s *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1839, Poe’s work continued to flourish.

At this time in his career his work was being recognized and praised, which helped greatly in furthering his reputation. In 1838 Poe published ‘The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym’ and it was widely reviewed. There too, he wrote a large number of stories, articles and reviews for the magazine.

He published ‘Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque’ in two volumes which contained a collection of his classic short stories such as ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’, ‘The Manuscript found in a Bottle’, ‘Bernice’, and ‘Ligeia’. For the Burton’s *Gentleman’s Magazine* in Philadelphia Poe wrote “William Wilson” stories of supernatural horror. It contains a study of a neurotic now known to have been an acquaintance of Poe, not Poe himself.

In 1840 he left the Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* and joined *Graham's Magazine* as an assistant editor. There, he published his first detective story titled 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' wherein he created the character of C. Auguste Dupin who solves crimes by the means of a process of deduction. This story was perhaps the first detective story ever told.

This character, later, went on to influence Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the creation of his famous detective, Sherlock Holmes. It was also after publishing this story, that he invited the readers to send in cryptograms to the magazine which he would solve and publish.

According to Hawthorne, with the technique of pre-established design, Poe tries to produce a single effect. Needless to say, this single effect is not necessarily be a complex mixture of emotions. Regarding Poe's influential dictum on short stories, Nathaniel Hawthorne comments that:

In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. (272)

After his stint at *Graham's Magazine*, Poe moved to New York where he joined the *Evening Mirror* and then moved on to the *Broadway Journal*. In 1845, his poem called 'The Raven' appeared in the *Evening Mirror* and caused quite a stir. The *Broadway Journal* went bankrupt in 1846 and Poe moved to *The Bronx* in New York.

Poe proceeded to New York City and brought out a volume of *Poems*, containing several masterpieces, some showing the influence of John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He then returned to Baltimore, where

he began to write stories. In 1833 his “MS. Found in a Bottle” won \$50 from a Baltimore weekly, and by 1835 he was in Richmond as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. There he made a name as a critical reviewer.

It wasn't until the 1845 publication of Poe's famous poem "The Raven" that he achieved the true rise to fame that had been denied him until then. The public's reaction to the poem brought Poe to a new level of recognition and could be compared to that of some uproariously successful hit song today.

Drinking was in fact to be the bane of his life. To talk well in a large company he needed a slight stimulant and, although he rarely succumbed to intoxication, he was often seen in public when he did. This gave rise to the conjecture that Poe was a drug addict, but according to medical testimony he had a brain lesion. Jacob Rama Berman brackets Poe along with other literary luminaries of America as:

Along with Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway, Poe ranks among the foremost literary stars in the firmament of popular American culture. A century and half after his death, Poe is instantly identifiable, stands without rival, and remains immensely enjoyable. In his normal frame of mind, Poe would have been deeply amused by the widespread adulation and fame he has enjoyed in posterity. (133)

While in New York City in 1838 he published a long prose narrative, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, combining much factual material with the wildest fancies. It is considered one inspiration of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. In 1848 he published the lecture “Eureka,” a transcendental explanation of the universe, which has been hailed as a masterpiece by some critics and as nonsense by others.

Poe's work owes much to the concern of Romanticism with the occult and the satanic. It owes much to his own feverish dreams, to which he applied a rare faculty

of shaping plausible fabrics out of impalpable materials. With an air of objectivity and spontaneity, his productions are closely dependent on his own powers of imagination and an elaborate technique.

His keen and sound judgment as an appraiser of contemporary literature, his idealism and musical gift as a poet, his dramatic art as a storyteller, considerably appreciated in his lifetime, secured Poe a prominent place among universally known men of letters. The outstanding fact in Poe's character is a strange duality.

The wide divergence of contemporary judgments on the man seems almost to point to the coexistence of two persons in him. With those he loved he was gentle and devoted. Others, who were the butt of his sharp criticism, found him irritable and self-centered and went so far as to accuse him of lack of principle.

Much of Poe's best work is concerned with terror and sadness, but in ordinary circumstances the poet was a pleasant companion. He talked brilliantly, chiefly of literature, and read his own poetry and that of others in a voice of surpassing beauty. He admired Shakespeare and Alexander Pope.

He had a sense of humor, apologizing to a visitor for not keeping a pet raven. If the mind of Poe is considered, the duality is still more striking. On one side, he was an idealist and a visionary. His yearning for the ideal was both of the heart and of the imagination. In his study of the confident man in American literature, Richard Benton offers his views of reader response to Poe's short stories as:

Poe's characters hasten to assure themselves that it's only a gaseous exhalation or a fan behind the curtains, that the fiction is hackneyed, that it is only a masquerade, only a formula, only a joke, that in whatever way, the phenomenon is bounded, improbable, isolated from actual significance. And in assuring themselves, they also assure the

reader that there is little reason to believe what they say. (534)

His sensitivity to the beauty and sweetness of women inspired his most touching lyrics “To Helen,” “Annabel Lee,” “Eulalie,” “To One in Paradise” and the full-toned prose hymns to beauty and love in “Ligeia” and “Eleonora.” In “Israfel” his imagination carried him away from the material world into a dreamland. This Pythian mood was especially characteristic of the later years of his life.

More generally, in such verses as “The Valley of Unrest,” “Lenore,” “The Raven,” “For Annie,” and “Ulalume” and in his prose tales, his familiar mode of evasion from the universe of common experience was through eerie thoughts, impulses, or fears.

From these materials he drew the startling effects of his tales of death, “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Masque of the Red Death,” “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” “The Premature Burial,” “The Oval Portrait,” “Shadow”. His tales of wickedness and crime “Berenice,” “The Black Cat,” “William Wilson,” “The Imp of the Perverse,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” “The Tell-Tale Heart”, his tales of survival after dissolution “Ligeia,” “Morella,” “Metzengerstein”, and his tales of fatality “The Assination,” “The Man of the Crowd”. Crediting Poe with the detective story genre, Benjamin F. Fisher writes that:

As for Poe's criticism of fiction and verse, there is an intersection with the often-overlooked depth of his work. Poe developed a theory of composition that he applied to both his short stories and his poems. He is duly credited with creating the detective story genre and with transforming the Gothic mystery tale of the Romantic Period into the modern horror or murder stories centered in the outlying regions of human mind and experience. (22)

Even when he does not hurl his characters into the clutch of mysterious forces or onto the untrodden paths of the beyond, he uses the anguish of imminent death as the means of causing the nerves to quiver, "The Pit and the Pendulum", and his grotesque invention deals with corpses and decay in an uncanny play with the aftermath of death.

As in life, Poe dealt with demons even in his death. On the 3rd of October, 1849 Poe was discovered on the streets of Baltimore in a very delirious condition. He was taken to the Washington College Hospital, where his condition worsened even more. He was not coherent enough to elaborate on how he came to be found in that particular state. He finally passed away on the 7th of October, 1849.

Many people don't know that Edgar Allan Poe also wrote stories about adventure on the high seas, buried pirate treasure, and a famous balloon ride. Poe invented the detective story with tales like "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter". Sherlock Holmes and other fictional detectives would later be based on the characters that Poe created. Poe wrote love stories and even a few strange little comedies. He attempted to explain the composition of the universe in a way that sounds a little like quantum physics.

The life of Edgar Allan Poe was filled with tragedies that all influenced his craft. From the very beginning of his writing career, he loved writing poems for the love of his life. Later, when he reached adulthood and realized the harsh realities of life, his writing became darker and more disturbing, perhaps due to his excessive experimentation with opium and alcohol. Referring to the tragedies in Poe's life, Katie Jordan writes:

Unfortunately, many of the most important people in his life were most influential due to their deaths. His response to death always involved

more increased substance abuse; therefore, it is hard to make a clear distinction between their individual influences. However, because the deaths came before the substance abuse, it was death alone which took the greatest toll on his life, causing a domino effect of self-destruction that eventually ended his own life. (141)

His horror stories remain some of the scariest stories ever written, and, because of this, some have speculated on what caused these themes to come so naturally to him. Many historians and literature fanatics have suspected his unstable love life as the source while others have attributed it to his substance abuse.

The cause of his unique writing is most likely a combination of both of these theories. But the primary factor is the death of so many of his loved ones and the abuse which some of them inflicted upon him. Since personal tragedy was a recurring theme in Edgar Allan Poe's life, his work reflected the darkness instilled by such continuous sorrow. This darkened his outlook significantly.

Poe was the first to create and popularize the 'Short Story' method of writing prose. He was also renowned as a master critic of literature. Poe was also the creator of what is known today as the 'horror' genre and the 'detective story'. The work of Edgar Allan Poe has influenced many renowned authors across the world. Few among them are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H.P. Lovecraft, Charles Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde, Ray Bradbury, George Bernard Shaw, and Alfred Hitchcock to name a few. Daniel Hoffman comments on Poe's poetry as:

Poe's early poems show that he could see through the verse to the spirit beneath, and that he already had a feeling that all the life and grace of the one must depend on and be modulated by the will of the other. We know of none that can compare with them for maturity of purpose, and

a nice understanding of the effects of language and metre. There is a little dimness in the filling up, but the grace and symmetry of the outline are such as few poets ever attain. There is a smack of ambrosia about it. (231)

Edgar Allan Poe was a household name to American readers. His use of terror and the supernatural in his fiction made him very popular with them. His writing, however, used little of the American experience, but relied heavily on the Gothic techniques and German romanticism. While his short fiction was loved in the United States, his poetry was more successful overseas, especially in France.

Most people recognize Poe by his famous poem, "The Raven". Others may have read one of his more popular dark and creepy tales like, "The Fall of the House of Usher" or "The Tell-tale Heart". Poe wrote quite a few gothic stories about murder, revenge, torture, the plague, being buried alive, and insanity. Many modern books and movies have borrowed ideas from Poe. Some of Poe's stories were not well accepted in his day because people were just not ready for them- they were too scary.

His critical essays have had a profound effect on literature as well, especially in the short story. Despite his personal tragedies, however, he remains one of the most beloved and widely-known of all American writers. His haunting poems and stories will endure and be read by countless generations of people from many different countries, a fact which would have undoubtedly provided some source of comfort for this troubled, talented and tormented man.

The essential drama of Poe's short stories is that of the individual mind, orchestrated and ordered by the life of the senses. The mind of the characters in his stories tend to regard their immediate environment as a problem to be solved, while the mind as sensibility is a reactor transforming and observing data into experience.

This phenomenon leads to the creation as a reactor to the gothic stimulus.

This dissertation will track down the gothic nature of Poe's short stories. In gothic fiction, and in the works of Poe, the self-conscious reactors of protagonists faced with the problem of life, do not show a keen sense of author's humanity, thereby intensifying terror.

The primary source of observation and analysis will be the text itself. For secondary sources, available critical reading and evaluation from authentic sources on the stories and author will be thoroughly studied. This dissertation will take ideas developed in the field of gothic studies as a supportive tool to prove the hypothesis.

The first chapter deals with an introductory aspect of the dissertation. The second chapter delves into the theoretical modality that is to be effectively applied in the analysis of the novel. Therefore, it provides an introduction of the tool that is gothic theory and its development. The third chapter of the dissertation presents an analysis of the novel at considerable length on the theoretical modality defined and developed in the second chapter. The fourth chapter concludes the research work. Standing on the firm foundation of the analysis of the text done extensively in the third chapter, it tries to prove my hypothesis stated in the thesis proposal.

II. Theoretical Tool: Gothic

Gothic is a type of romantic fiction that predominated the English literature of the later decades of the 18th century and the first two decades of the 19th century. Usually set in the ruined Gothic castles or abbeys, the Gothic feature accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castle, experiences connected with subterranean jail, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, groan, bloody hands, ghosts, graveyards, and the rest.

During the Renaissance, Europeans rediscovered Greco-Roman culture and began to regard a particular type of architecture, mainly those built during the Middle Ages, as gothic, not because of any connection to the Goths, but because they considered these buildings barbaric and definitely not in that Classical style they so admired. Centuries more passed before gothic came to describe a certain type of novels, so named because all these novels seem to take place in Gothic styled architecture mainly castles, mansions, and abbeys.

In literature, the term gothic refers to a particular form of the popular romantic novel of the eighteenth century. Gothic novels continued to appear in the nineteenth-century and have reemerged in strength as part of the paperback revolution of the last half of the twentieth century. It is also defined as the literature of the nightmare. Gothic literature evolved out of explorations of the inner self, with all of its emotive, non-rational, and intuitive aspects. Thus it emerged as a form of romanticism, but confronted the darker, shadowy side of the self. At its best, gothic works force the reader to consider all that society calls evil in human life.

By extension, it came to designate the macabre, mysterious, fantastic, supernatural and again, the terrifying, especially the pleurably terrifying in literature more generally. Closer to the present, one sees the Gothic pervading Victorian

literature (for example, in the novels of Dickens and the Brontes), American fiction (from Poe and Hawthorne through Faulkner), and of course the films, television, and videos of our own culture.

Gothic novels called into question society's conventional wisdom, especially during the post-Enlightenment period when special emphasis was placed on the rational, orderliness, and control. Gothic authors have challenged the accepted social and intellectual structures of their contemporaries by their presentation of the intense, undeniable, and unavoidable presence of the non-rational, disorder, and chaos. These are most often pictured as uncontrollable forces intruding from the subconscious in the form of supernatural manifestations of the monstrous and horrendous. Gothic literature imposed a sense of dread. It created a complex mixture of three distinct elements. Terror, the threat of physical pain, mutilation, and/or death, horror, the direct confrontation with a repulsive evil force or entity and the mysterious, the intuitive realization that the world was far larger than our powers of comprehension could grasp.

The Gothic revival, which appeared in English gardens and architecture before it got into literature, was the work of handful of visionaries, the most important of whom was Horace Walpole (1717 – 1797), novelist, letter writer, and son of the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole. David Punter says that the discomfort of most scholars of Gothic studies, who have been obliged either to accept the scornful verdict of criticism was:

Until the 1930s, most accounts of Gothic fiction were modestly content to admit that the Gothic was an undistinguished curiosity of literary evolution, which nonetheless merited some scholarly treatment of its sources, influences, biographical contexts and generic features. Since

that time, however, shamefaced antiquarianism has given way to defiance, as the Gothic literary tradition has attracted to it partisans and champions who have advanced ever bolder claims for its value, attempting to cast upon it the reflected glories of literary romanticism and of the political traditions of the French Revolution. (56)

In the 1740s Horace Walpole purchased Strawberry Hill, an estate on the Thames near London and set about remodeling it in what he called “Gothik” style, adding towers turrets, battlements, arched doors, windows, ornaments of every description, creating a kind of spurious medieval architecture that survives today mainly in churches, military academies, and university buildings. The project was extremely influential, as people came from all over the Strawberry Hill and returned to Gothicize their own houses.

When the Gothic made its appearance in literature, Walpole was again the chief initiator, publishing *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), a short novel in which the ingredients are a haunted castle, a Byronic villain. It is a romance set in medieval times and involving supernatural interventions to restore the principality of Otranto to its rightful heir and overthrow the tyrannical Manfred, whose claim to rule rests upon ancestral crime. The work was tremendously popular, and mutations followed in such numbers that the Gothic novel was probably the commonest type of fiction in England for the next half century.

The Gothic genre seemed to culminate with Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* of 1820 often seen as marking the end of the gothic in its classic form, though its progeny would flourish in the form of the Victorian ghost story and the twentieth-century supernatural horror tale, as well as in Southern gothic fictions and female gothic romances. The Famous works from the classic gothic phase include

Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). It is noteworthy in this period that the best-selling author of the genre (Ann Radcliffe), the author of its most enduring novel (Mary Shelly), and the author of its most effective send up (Jane Austen) were all women. Ann B. Tracy writes in her novel *The Gothic Novel* that there was a mismatch between the time period of Gothic writing and its form as:

The Gothic novel took shape mostly in England from 1790 to 1830 and falls within the category of Romantic literature. It acts, however, as a reaction against the rigidity and formality of other forms of Romantic literature. The Gothic is far from limited to this set time period, as it takes its roots from former terrorizing writing that dates back to the Middle Ages, and can still be found written today by writers. But during this time period, many of the highly regarded Gothic novelists published their writing and much of the novel's form was defined. (21)

Given the limited number of gothic works of distinction, the form has proven surprisingly hard to define. Most would agree, however, that it usually involves settings distanced in time and frequently in Catholic countries of Spain and Italy. Such distancing may help accommodate the supernatural elements, which were both an attraction of these tales and a source of unease to authors fearing to be thought superstitious. Male hero-villains, themselves haunted by past crimes, often persecute innocent maids in places beyond the law: castles, ruined abbeys, dungeons.

To accomplish its self-assigned task, gothic literature developed a set of conventions. Generally, action was placed in out-of-the-ordinary settings. Its very name was taken from the use of medieval settings by its original exponents, stereotypically an old castle. The most dramatic sequences of the story tended to

occur at night and often during stormy weather. Integral to the plot, the characters attempted to function amid an older but disintegrating social order. It was a literary device that subtly interacted with the reader's own sense of disorder. The energy of the story often relied on the combined attack on the naive innocent and the defenders of the present order by momentarily overwhelming and incomprehensible supernatural forces in the form of ghosts, monsters, or human agents of Satan.

Gothic writing of the late eighteenth century explored how an ethical sensibility might best be produced. The sentimental novel had indicated potential weakness in the theory that a distressing scene produces an innate response, a disinterested, morally correct sensibility. Exploring the suggestion that such acts of viewing were often tainted by mercenary considerations or by the desire for power, Gothic writing of the 1790s posited the existence of several distinct forms of gaze. On the one hand, 'splendor', display and fashion become associated with a mode of viewing that was concerned largely with power. The usually depicts this fashionable, consumer-based gaze, as generating an indifference to suffering, languor, feverishness and ultimately a disastrous weakness for the 'passion'.

The popularity of the gothic novel directly led to the famous 1816 gathering of Lord Byron Percy and Mary Shelley, and John Polidori in Switzerland. Each was invited to wait out the stormy weather by writing and reading a ghost story to the others. Mary Shelley's contribution was the seed from which *Frankenstein* would grow. Byron wrote a short story that Polidori would later turn into the first modern vampire tale. The effect of the storm was heightened by the group's consumption of laudanum. This typified the role of various consciousness altering drugs played in stimulating the imagination of romantic authors.

Once introduced, the vampire became a standard theme in gothic romanticism,

especially in France. However, virtually every romantic writer of the nineteenth-century from Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Edgar Allan Poe ultimately used either the vampire or a variation on the vampire relationship in his or her work. Gothic fiction reached a high point in 1897 with the publication of the great vampire novel, *Dracula*. The alternative often presented within the Gothic is a gaze instructed by nature, associated with self-control, yet often increasingly also linked with knowledge and experience.

Yet this self-control yet sympathetic gaze was it self problematic.

Commentators like Joanna Baillie thought it was necessary to consider how it would work, not only in a rural idyll, but also within society. Hence Baillie, following Adam Smith, insists on art as something that is socially educational, revealing not merely nature in general but specifically human nature. Vijay Mishra, in his essay entitled "The Gothic Sublime," states the Gothic novel as:

A presentation of the unrepresentable. The Gothic novel deals with understanding attained through horror. The Gothic novel, in the aforementioned sense, is a foil to the typical Romantic novel, wherein the sublime is found through temperance. The idea of a protagonist having a struggle with a terrible, surreal person or force is a metaphor for an individual's struggle with repressed emotions or thoughts. (53)

Even given the backlash against sentiment, in the Gothic and more generally, the exploration of the relationship between vision, emotion and moral responsiveness that was typical of late eighteenth-century Gothic had far-reaching consequences for British literature. The knowledge of the ethics of getting and spending, and a strengthened moral stance concerning display, became a prerequisite for taste, present in both Romantic poetry and prose. Indeed, this concern with economics is the

hallmark of nineteenth century British novel. Yet accompanying this awareness of the distortions of economic display, is a search for a more permanent or reliable basis on which to base both state and moral judgment.

Dracula played on traditional gothic themes by placing its opening chapters in a remote castle. Contemporary Transylvania replaced the older use of medieval settings and effectively took the reader to a strange pre-modern setting. However, Stoker broke convention by bringing the gothic world to the contemporary familiar world of his readers and unleashed evil from a strange land on a conventional British family. Neither the ruling powers, a strong heroic male, nor modern science could slow, much less stop, the spread of that evil. Except for the intervention of the devotee of non-conventional and supernatural wisdom, the evil would have spread through the very center of the civilized but unbelieving world with impunity. Joyce Carol Oates, writes of how:

The repressed emotions, which are personified in the Gothic novel, are horrible not only because of what they are, but also because of how they enslave a person. These desires are mysterious, and mystery breeds attraction, and with attraction, one is easily seduced by them. With this in mind, it is easy to understand how the Gothic novel is consistently weaker than the antagonist and usually flees from it rather than defeating it. The similar themes of repression of forbidden desires, and the horror surrounding and penetrating them, are clearly focal points of most Gothic stories. (97)

For commentators including Baillie the key to this was a form of observation encouraging stronger, more detached virtues. Unbiased observation would encourage a more accurate knowledge of human nature. This, in turn, would generate a socially

beneficial form of taste. The resultant emphasis on observation, in part was a product of the Gothic obsession with vision, was to hold sway over the British novel till the end of the nineteenth century.

In her criticism of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), Reeve captures what would become two of the Gothic's most significant features. Its insistence on emotional excess and its preoccupation with the visual. At a time when those later known as aestheticians were promoting detachment, the Gothic apparently refused it. The genre's emphasis, as David Morris says, "the extremes of subjective experience runs contrary to the neoclassical privileging of the 'universal' perspective, the disinterestedness considered the mark of good taste" (124). Throughout the twentieth century, the vampire developed a life of its own. It flew far beyond the realm of the gothic, although it regularly returned to its gothic romantic home. The gothic vampire survived in novels and films. The genre experienced a notable revival in the 1960s. The action centered on an old mansion in a remote corner of rural New England. Its main characters were members of an old aristocratic family who symbolized the establishment under attack by the hippie subculture of the time.

Critics have noted that female writers of the Gothic in particular were reluctant to reproduce such a position of neutrality. Traditionally, this has been represented as a flaw in aesthetic judgment and taken as evidence of mental weakness, a materialistic concentration on the quotidian which reflects the association of femininity with body as opposed to form. Represented as feminized, the Gothic's emotional and visual excess leads to its dismissal as artistically inferior. However, this tendency can be reinterpreted as part of an important response to a tension between two elements of eighteenth-century aesthetic thought, disinterestedness and sensibility.

Although far from being necessarily incompatible, these came to possess

significant points of friction, particularly when described in relation to the act of viewing. Such studies, however, were exceptions to the general treatment of the gothic as a literary dead end. Only in the closing decades of the twentieth century did academic interest in the gothic expand exponentially. Robert Mighall argues that criticism for the last three decades has sought in varied ways to rescue the gothic from second-rate status by stressing its qualities alleged to be subversive of middle-class, traditional, rational norms as:

Largely forsaking historical grounding, such readings save the reputation of the gothic by imposing on the form the political and cultural views of contemporary academia. Thus *Dracula* (1897), the most famous Victorian descendent of the gothic, becomes a mirror for nearly any fashionable political viewpoint, having been read as turning upon everything from androgyny to xenophobia. (78)

The notion of disinterested sensibility was undermined by its connection with vision. These difficulties were even more evident when disinterestedness was developed as part of the discourse of art criticism. Gothic fiction queries how the disinterested yet ethical spectator might be distinguished from the inhumane, voyeuristic consumer. Particularly in the last twenty-five years, sympathy and the novel of sentiment have received a significant amount of attention, and partly as a result, there has been increased interest in the formulation of the gaze. However, little attention has been paid to the way in which tension between sympathy and disinterestedness inherent in the discourse of philosophy and art criticisms are interrogated in the Gothic fiction of the 1790s.

Two key characteristics of late eighteenth-century fiction can be usefully understood as an interrogation of the sympathetic gaze. By examining, the genre from

this perspective a more complicated aesthetics of distress can be traced in Gothic fiction. Indeed, the very feature that appears as weaknesses of the Gothic can be reinterpreted as an important contribution to the eighteenth-century debate concerning the construction of the ethical spectator. There were flaws in the construct of disinterested sympathy, flaws particularly linked with the visual. Discussion of the issues can be in more marginally Gothic works influenced by sensibility: for example, the writing of Frances Burney directly considered the relationship between artist, audience and morality.

Gothic writers across the political spectrum suggested the contamination of the gaze. For the writers like Ann Radcliff and Eliza Fenwick, the desire for wealth and power associated with urban or fashionable life undermined visual disinterestedness. In the Gothic exploration of the visual, isolation is rarely a sufficient guarantee of disinterestedness. Instead, as the work of Radcliff and Fenwick shows, the Gothic, perhaps paradoxically, promotes knowledge of the world, equally unexpectedly, its exploration of emotional excess leads to a moral economy based on self-control. Indeed it is possible to see continuity with explorations of self-control such as Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiment* (1759) and resultant aesthetic theories, including Joanna Baillie's. Despite reaction against the genre's excesses, the Gothic's exploration of vision, emotion and moral responsiveness was immensely significant both to Romantic aesthetics and to the nineteenth-century novel. Describing the various forms of Gothic, George Haggerty writes:

The term Gothic has come to mean quite a number of things by this day and age. It could mean a particular style of art, be it in the form of novels, paintings, or architecture. It could mean medieval or uncouth. It could even refer to a certain type of music and its fans. What it

originally meant, of course, is of, relating to, or resembling the Goths, their civilization, or their language. (183)

Ghosts were not the only culturally suspect component of eighteenth-century Gothic writing. Prefiguring the modern horror film, author of Gothic literature were intrigued by the possibility that the body, normally closed and neat, would be disordered, penetrated, exposed that it would be made a spectacle for the protagonists and, through them for the readers as well. Sex, torture, rape, and death were ever presented in the Gothic, whether they actually occurred or only hovered as ominous possibilities. For an eighteenth-century woman author seeking respectability and acceptance, writing about the disrupted, sensational body or, for that matter, about the body at all was no simple matter, and it likewise called for quite a bit of “negotiation”.

Clearly, as scholars have long argued, control of female sexuality was a primary goal of this discourse. Yet, the emphasis on sexual continence was, in fact, amplified within the ethos of female propriety into a border notion of “delicacy”, which might be loosely defined as a set of attitudes toward the body, including a particular kind of relationship to the body’s appearance in language. As Wetenhall Wilkes says, the most dangerous of all were words evoking the body’s sexual aspects, “She that listens with pleasure to wanton Discourse defiles her Ears; she that speak it defiles her Ears. She that speaks it defiles her Tongue, and immodest Glances pollute the Eyes” (458). The phrasing of the advice effectively cancels the distinction between a sexual act and words alluding to one.

Even when it is merely words, the body pollutes women through their orifices, in the process, it transforms their image in men’s eyes: “The dissoluteness of men’s education allows them to be diverted with a kind of wit, which yet they have delicacy enough to be shocked at, when it comes from your mouths, or even when you hear it

without pain and contempt” (458). If flesh and words are almost synonymous, then warding off linguistic pollution requires women to signal an almost physical inability to tolerate indelicacy. No man, but a brute or a fool, will insult a woman with conversation which he sees gives her pain. Gregory wrote that even if a woman finds herself accused of prudery, it is better to run the risk of being thought ridiculous than disgusting.

The setting is greatly influential in Gothic novels. It not only evokes the atmosphere of horror and dread, but also portrays the deterioration of its world. The decaying, ruined scenery implies that at one time there was a thriving world. At one time the abbey, castle, or landscape was something treasured and appreciated. Now, all that lasts is the decaying shell of a once thriving dwelling. The Gothic hero becomes a sort of archetype as we find that there is a pattern to their characterization. There is always the protagonist, usually isolated either voluntarily or involuntarily. Then there is the villain, who is the epitome of evil, either by his own fall from grace, or by some implicit malevolence. The wanderer, found in many Gothic tales, is the epitome of isolation as he wanders the earth in perpetual exile, usually a form of divine punishment.

Even though the Gothic novel deals with the sublime and the supernatural, the underlying theme of the fallen hero applies to the real world as well. Once we look past the terror aspect of this literature, we can connect with it on a human level. Furthermore, the prevalent fears of murder, rape, sin, and the unknown are fears that we face in life. In the Gothic world they are merely multiplied. The Gothic novel has received much literary criticism throughout the years. Bertrand Evans, believes that:

The Gothic novel addresses the horrific, hidden ideas and emotions within individuals and provides an outlet for them. The strong imagery

of horror and abuse in Gothic novels reveals truths to us through realistic fear, not transcendental revelation. Personifying the repressed idea or feeling gives strength to it and shows how one, if caught unaware, is overcome with the forbidden desire. (47)

Summing up, we can say that the Gothic novel took shape mostly in England from 1790 to 1830 and falls within the category of Romantic literature. It acts, however, as a reaction against the rigidity and formality of other forms of Romantic literature. The Gothic is far from limited to this set time period, as it takes its roots from former terrorizing writing that dates back to the Middle Ages, and can still be found written today by writers. But during this time period, many of the highly regarded Gothic novelists published their writing and much of the novel's form was defined.

III. Gothic Terror in Poe's Short Stories

Poe brought the Gothic to America. American Gothic literature dramatizes a culture plagued by poverty and slavery through characters afflicted with various forms of insanity and melancholy. Poe, generated a Gothic ethos from his own experiences in Virginia and other slaveholding territories. In the spectrum of American literature, the Gothic remains in the shadow of the dominant genre of the American Renaissance. Poe's embrace of the Gothic with its graphic violence and disturbing scenarios places him outside the ultimately conservative and traditional resolutions of Romantic novels. Gothic literature, a genre that rose with Romanticism in Britain in the late eighteenth century, explores the dark side of human experience, death, alienation, nightmares, ghosts, and haunted landscapes.

While most of his works were not conspicuously acclaimed during his lifetime, Poe has come to be viewed as one of the most important American authors in Gothic tradition. Poe's stature as a major figure in world literature is primarily based on his highly acclaimed short stories, poems, and critical theories, which established an influential rationale for the short form in both poetry and fiction. Regarded in literary histories and handbooks as the architect of the modern short story, Edgar Allan Poe was the master craftsman of spine-chilling horror. His setting is greatly influential in Gothic novels. It not only evokes the atmosphere of horror and dread, but also portrays the deterioration of its world. The decaying, ruined scenery implies that at one time there was a thriving world. At one time the abbey, castle, or landscape was something treasured and appreciated.

“The Fall of the House of Usher” was first published in 1839 during a time when most popular literature was highly moralistic. In contrast, Poe's stated intent in writing this and several other tales was to create powerful emotional responses in his

fiction through the use of language. 'The Fall of the House of Usher' describes the final hours of a family tormented by tragedy and the legacy of the past. The story's narrator is summoned by his boyhood friend Roderick Usher to visit him during a period of emotional distress. The narrator discovers that Roderick's twin sister, Madeline, is also sick. She takes a turn for the worse shortly after the narrator's arrival, and the men bury Madeline in a tomb within the house. They later discover, to their horror, that they have entombed her alive. Madeline claws her way out, collapsing eventually on Roderick, who dies in fear. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Poe introduces the brilliant sleuth C. Auguste Dupin. When the Paris police arbitrarily arrest Dupin's friend for the gruesome murders of a mother and daughter, Dupin begins an independent investigation and solves the case accurately. Uncovering evidence that goes otherwise unnoticed, Dupin concludes that a wild animal, an Orang-Outang, committed the murders.

"The Black Cat" is a thrilling story where the narrator hangs a cat he had formerly adored, the cat returns from the dead to haunt him. The narrator tries to strike back at the cat but kills his wife in the process. The cat draws the police to the cellar wall where the narrator has hidden his wife's corpse. In "The Masque of the Red Death" a bloody disease called the Red Death ravages a kingdom. Prince Prospero retreats to his castle and throws a lavish masquerade ball to celebrate his escape from death. At midnight, a mysterious guest arrives and, as the embodiment of the Red Death, kills Prospero and all his guests. "The Cask of Amontillado" explores extreme states of decadence, fear and hate. The vengeful Montresor repays the supposed insults of his enemy, Fortunato. Luring Fortunato into the crypts of his home with the promise of Amontillado sherry, Montresor entombs Fortunato in a wall while the carnival rages above them. These short stories display Poe's startling ability to build

suspense with almost nightmarish intensity. Poe demonstrates his intense interests in aesthetic issues, and the astonishing power and imagination with which he probed the darkest corners of the human mind.

Poe was a horror writer. He combined the intensely psychological with the gothic, the rational with literary romanticism, to create the foundation of modern horror. Although perverseness is the theme of Poe's story, he uses the feeling of guilt as a kind of fear. By detailing the decline in the main character's mental state throughout the story, Poe demonstrates the loss of control over one's own behavior and the horrifying effects, touching on the fear of one's own self as fear of the unknown. The narrator begins tale claiming to be perfectly sane, but over time his account shows that he indeed has a spirit of perverseness that surprises even himself. Through a series of violent acts, he brings about his own destruction. The elements of horror in this tale are very apparent.

Gothic literature investigates man's emotions, particularly fear, in the face of forces we cannot comprehend. Typical motifs of this type include darkness, horrid figures, grotesque imagery, illusion, and spaces. Stories of this sort strip us of our understanding, and sensationalize us, giving us a thrilling sense of terror that we enjoy.

The Black Cat

Like most of his other stories, "The Black Cat" follows the Gothic convention of literature, a style that explores humanity's fear and fascination with the unknown. In "The Black Cat", it is Poe's explicit detail of the atrocities divulged upon the 'black cat' that reveal his intent to scare or shock the audience by graphically detailing horror quickly and usually within one sentence. Poe uses a theme of the supernatural to contrast against the narrator's claim to logically explain the events that have led up to

his imprisonment. The apparition of the first cat upon the burned wall, the appearance of the gallows like pattern upon the chest of the second cat, and the discovery of the second cat behind the cellar wall set up a convincing case that the supernatural plays an important part in this grotesque short story. The narrator contrasts logic with words like wonder, apparition, and amazement to make the reader aware of the unexplained nature of the tale and create vibrant detail. Throughout the story, it is suggested by the narrator that the cat is responsible for his problems: "Upon [the narrator's wife's] head, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder." These statements also hint at the supernatural, which is a characteristic of the gothic genre.

One primary element of gothic literature is the superstitious blurring of the line between the normal and the fantastic. Poe accomplishes this in a number of ways. "The Black Cat" is narrated by a once-kind man who has fallen into alcoholism. One day, in a rage, he hangs his cat and is forever haunted by the image. Upon attempting to kill the cat's replacement, he instead kills his wife. It appears his deeds will go unpunished until he is given away by the screaming animal, who is sitting on his dead wife's head. The narrator is unreliable, being insane. In his account, he claims that the exact shape of a cat hanging on a noose was imprinted on a wall in the ruins of his old home. Although he tries to explain it naturally, it seems that there may be supernatural elements at work. The changing shape of the gallows on the new cats' white spot have similar effects. The narrator's wife even had a suspicion of black cats:

About this wall a dense crowd were collected, and many persons seemed to be examining a particular portion of it with very minute and eager attention. The words "strange!" "singular!" and other similar expressions, excited my curiosity. I approached and saw, as if graven in

bas relief upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic cat. The impression was given with an accuracy truly marvelous. There was a rope around the animal's neck. (165)

Revenants and haunts from the dead are often prevalent in Gothic literature. In the story, the second cat the narrator happens upon is a double of the first, and represents a revenant or ghost of the first, the one he killed. When the narrator kills his wife and walls her up, he attributes the scream from inside to the cat, although he describes it as sounding very human, as if his wife's ghost had screamed:

No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb!-by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman-a howl-a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation. (171)

Gothic architecture plays with open spaces and depicts the decay and gnarling of human creations. Likewise, Poe explores a lot of psychological space in his story, and takes the reader on an emotional tour through the mind of a madman until reaching his final emotional breakdown and mental defeat. Poe's narrator is so perverse that his mind eventually becomes so twisted it is inhumane. Such a character is typical of the old Gothic romances. As Gothic movement was in part a rejection of neoclassical rationalism, so does Poe defy all logical explanation of the events in his story, his narrator being completely vexed by his own uncontrollable actions. The destruction of his house and the eerie basement of his new one are representatives of

usual structural motifs of Gothic variety. He explores perverseness as a thematic gateway to inner, inexplicable terror as:

Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not-and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. (161)

Since the narrator cannot claim his past temperament and preserve the life that he once shared with his wife and pets, it is this madness that leads the narrator down his road to destruction. Poe also hints at destiny and fate in “The Black Cat”, which adds another slant toward the supernatural. The narrator conveys his wish for another cat that resembles Pluto and it just so happens that he runs across a black cat around the same size with a missing eye, but has one difference; a splotch of white on it’s breast. These similarities are unusual, unexplainable, and therefore add to the 'gothic' nature of the tale. When the narrators seeks to pay the landlord for the cat, no one knows where the cat has come from or has ever seen it before. The replacement of the first cat is described as a phantom-like or mythical occurrence. Even the splotch of white covering the animal’s throat changes over the years like:

By slow degrees—degrees nearly imperceptible, and which for a long time my Reason struggled to reject as fanciful—it had, at length, assumed a rigorous distinctness of outline. It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLOWS! (168).

It is Poe's use of the supernatural that conveys to the reader that the narrator is not as logical or sane as he wants us to believe at the beginning of the short story. It is the supernatural aspects of the short story that capture what leads the narrator to commit such grotesque acts. Through the common viewpoint of Poe's main character his audience is able to enter the mind of a madman. Poe's narrator suffers from the devilish effects of alcoholism leading him to murder his beloved and long suffering wife. Poe's madman was driven insane by both alcohol and an over-affectionate cat. He went from a man that loved his wife and the cat to a psychotic animal torturer and murderer. When he became addicted to alcohol he became "moody, more irritable, and more regardless of other people's feelings." This complete loss of sense and control is often used in Gothic novels.

The use of symbols and omens in "The Black Cat" is unique to the Gothic genre. The title 'The Black Cat' is symbolic in itself as a black cat often carries the superstitious belief that they are evil and symbolize death. The first cat was named Pluto, an allusion to the god of the dead, and ruler of the underworld in Roman mythology, thus creating an omen of the death and an ominous tone. Both cats in the short story are symbols of punishment for the narrator. Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events are also elements of the Gothic novel evident in Poe's "The Black Cat."

The first cat punishes the narrator by supernaturally, after he was hung, alighting his house. The cat's figure appears with a rope around its neck as an impression on a wall however the narrator continues to deny anything supernatural occurring and tries to justify what happened with science. The purpose of the second cat is also to punish the narrator by reminding him of the hanging of the first cat. The cat looks almost exactly the same as Pluto, and it follows the man everywhere, thus

punishing him. Through his symbolic character of the black cat, which continually punishes the narrator because of his actions, Poe has used the Gothic genre to convey one of his main purposes of exploring superstitious beliefs and omens:

It is impossible to describe, or to imagine, the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. It did not make its appearance during the night-and thus for one night at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly and tranquilly slept; aye, slept with the burden of murder upon my soul!
(170)

The setting is another important Gothic convention. The setting plays an important role in "The Black Cat" to establish Poe's idea of creating a dark, highly Gothic novel but also to emphasize the madness of his narrator and the evil actions performed. The story takes place in a house burned to the ground, a dark tavern and a cellar. This atmosphere makes the reader feel scared and creates a certain element of suspense. The cellar where the narrator hides the body of his wife in the walls is the perfect Gothic setting. It is dark and gloomy which isolated one from the rest of the world. Poe created a perfect Gothic scene for a body to be found in this place of "dampness" and where it would be easy to insert the corpse of his wife in the walls. This gruesome and horrifying environment successfully terrifies the reader.

Through the use of Gothic devices such as settings, omens and symbols and classic characters Edgar Allen Poe has effectively written a highly Gothic tale. Throughout "The Black Cat" Poe has achieved his purpose of conveying the effects of alcoholism, the evil of cruelty to animals, superstitious beliefs referring to black cats being evil, perverseness and the results of madness.

The Fall of The House of Usher

As is typical of the gothic genre, the story is set in a dark, medieval castle, and uses a first-person narrator to instill a sense of dread and terror in the reader. A tale of sickness, madness, incest, and the danger of unrestrained creativity, this is among Poe's most popular and critically-examined horror stories. A Gothic horror story, Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" was written in 1839. The ancient, decaying House of Usher, filled with tattered furniture and tapestries and set in a gloomy, desolate locale is a rich symbolic representation of its sickly twin inhabitants, Roderick and Madeline Usher.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" has been lauded by scholars as a prime example of the Gothic short story. Besides its use of classical Gothic imagery and gruesome events the story has a psychological element and ambiguous symbolism that have given rise to many critical readings. The descriptions of the Usher family home and of Roderick and Madeline create an atmosphere of evil and dread that permeates the narrative from the very beginning. The house itself is referred to as a "mansion of gloom" that seems to cast its shadow over its occupants. Both Roderick and Madeline have a ghostly pallor, arousing feelings of unease in the narrator as:

A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother-but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears. (47)

The narrator begins by describing a dreary fall day. He was traveling alone when he came within view of the house, which caused a sense of gloom to enter his

soul. He proceeds to share that the mansion had been in the family so long that the name “The House of Usher” referred to both the family and the building itself. It was not a self-indulgent gloominess, which can be enjoyed, but deep depression. He had been invited to the mansion by a letter from its owner, Roderick Usher, who was a childhood friend. In the letter, Usher tells the narrator that he is physically and mentally ill. He requested a visit from the narrator who was his best and only close friend. The narrator could not refuse such a heartfelt request.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I knew not how it was - but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. (40)

The story is also one of several of Poe's which utilize as a central character the Decadent Aristocrat. This mad, often artistic noble heir took the place of the traditional Gothic villain in tales portraying the sublime hostility of existence itself rather than the evil embodied by individuals. Usher greets the narrator with sincerity and warmth. The narrator is shocked by the changed appearance of Usher, especially by the pale skin and overly bright eyes. Usher's extreme mood swings disturb the narrator. The narrator gives a detailed description of the house, which is extremely old. He says that the age of the house gives the impression of being a hollow façade

and not a 'real' building. He also mentions a small fracture that runs from roof of the house and zigzags down to the water that surrounds the building as:

Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

(43)

Writers of Gothic horror had used the fear of death in their writing. The suspense came from the anticipation of death. Poe went beyond the known terrors and created fright by bringing the dead to life, by mistaking the living for the dead and by celebrating death as a ritual unto itself. Poe was the first to use the presentation of supremely horrific moments to frighten the reader. In "The Fall of the House of Usher" shows the dead coming alive and the living suddenly struck dead.

At last, unsettled by the noises, Roderick, in a fit of agitation and distress, proclaims that for several days he'd heard his undead sister's struggle as she tried to free herself from her tomb. He feared that she would come after him to exact revenge for her premature burial. Just as he proclaims that she is at that moment standing outside their door, the storm blows the door open. There stands Madeline, covered in her own blood, and battered from her struggle out of the vault. She falls forward into her twin brother's arms. Roderick dies immediately from the horror and shock of the sight. The narrator flees from the horrific scene, and runs from the house. Behind him the crumbling house cracks down the center, collapses, and is swallowed up by the tarn that spread before it.

The Masque of The Red Death

This tale is a prime example of Poe's Gothic horror fiction. Poe evokes a dark and eerie mood in a story that focuses on images of blood and death, while the personification of the Red Death lends an element of the supernatural. "The Masque of the Red Death" embodies Poe's mastery of the short story. According to Poe, a short story should be tightly focused so that every word, from beginning to end, contributes to the overall effect. In "The Masque of the Red Death," powerful imagery and an illusive narrative voice are tightly woven into a tale of horror with insight into the human condition.

Gothic literature is full of dark, disturbing, bizarre, deathly things. In "The Masque of the Red Death," there are many elements reflecting the gothic literary parts of its nature. In this macabre tale, a Prince Prospero seals himself and a thousand of his friends into the abbey of a castle in order to protect them from a deadly pestilence that is ravaging the country. But when the group indulges in a lavish costume ball in order to distract them from the suffering and death outside their walls, the Red Death, disguised as a costumed guest, enters and claims the lives of everyone present. The story is narrated in a manner which gives it the quality of a myth, allegory or fairy tale, exploring themes of man's fear of death, sin, madness, and the end of the world. Describing Prince Prospero and his party, Poe writes:

Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the Prince's own eccentric yet august taste.

Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence. (133)

Edgar Allen Poe's, "Masque of the Red Death" has many gothic themes. A bloody disease called the Red Death has ravaged a country. Prince Prospero thinks he can hide from this plague and throws a ball to celebrate his victory over it. First, Poe uses several words in this play conveying horror such as fatal, bleeding, blood, redness, and chambers, which are all clue to death. The seven rooms in the house also conveyed stages in life ending with death. These rooms were set up from east to west. This meaning that the sun comes up in the east and goes down in the west, and death comes in the darkness. "In this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet--a deep blood color" (134). This seventh room is shrouded in black tapestries and carpet, but the windows of this room are blood red, so that the light coming through the windows casts a ghastly hue on the faces of anyone who enters. This room is mostly avoided by the revelers. The guest's avoided this room because it was a sign of death as:

But in the western or black chamber the effect of the firelight that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenance of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all. (134)

The final chamber provides another chilling aspect. It houses a huge ebony clock which ticks loudly and chimes horribly. The giant clock also was symbol of horror in the story. "Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang." Every hour the clock would ring it was so loud that the orchestra would stop playing and the guest's would freeze, almost waiting for something bad to happen.

This is how Poe would distract the mood. Not only was this but it was placed in the last vacant room. It is only when the clock strikes midnight and the revelries are stopped for the twelve strokes that the partygoers become aware of a figure amongst them not previously noticed. The unrecognizable one is dressed in such a way as to excite terror in the other partygoers. Whilst many among them wear hideous and even frightening costumes, only this figure excites true terror:

The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to toe in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest security must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat.

(137)

The gruesome costume of the unexpected guest also symbolized horror. The mysterious guest had a mask that looked like the face of a corpse. His face revealed spots of blood, which suggested the Red Death, "His vesture was dabbled in blood- and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror" (138). "The Masque of the Red Death" is a classic example of Poe's melodramatic gothic style. The supernatural visitation of a disease taking on a temporarily physical appearance and walking amongst its victims is designed to invoke fear. "The Masque of the Red Death" is one of Poe's most unique, poetic stories, that chill readers in favor of a more aesthetically-pleasing kind of horror and a gothic treat.

The Masque of the Red Death transformed what Poe knew of the bubonic plague and the Philadelphia cholera epidemics into a highly artistic Gothic fantasy

symbolizing the irresponsibility of attempting to escape the realities of Life, of Time, and of Death.

The Murders in The Rue Morgue

Poe modernised the Gothic in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”. Gothic literature was already hoary, ripe for mocking, in Poe's era. Gothic fiction featured simple plots about sensual relationships between a hero and heroine, sensationalism, supernatural horror and were period pieces set in distant times and places. The original Gothic impulse was an anti-Catholic one with plenty of abject attraction to the pre-Reformation world mixed in. The Gothic wasn't so much a reaction to the Enlightenment as it was a complement to it. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” is a showcase of Poe's amazing writing style, and the short story is full of rhetorical devices. The literary devices that are evident are Poe's creative use of point of view and gothic setting. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” is told in the first person point of view, acting as a narrator who says:

The analytical power should not be confounded with simple ingenuity; for while the analyst is necessarily ingenious, the ingenious man is often remarkably incapable of analysis. The constructive or combining power, by which ingenuity is usually manifested, and to which the phrenologists have assigned a separate organ, supposing it a primitive faculty, has been so frequently seen in those whose intellect bordered otherwise on idiocy. (64)

Many features has been used, such as the use of a detective that is not connected to the police, a narrator who is not the detective and that the murders take place in a locked room, which was a concept never introduced before "The Murders in the Rue Morgue". Even if the detective story was a new concept it was a natural

continuation of Poe's writings. Especially its Gothic element, with the gloomy mansion Dupin is kind of a Parisian Roderick Usher. The logic deductions and the detective work of Dupin are in no way coincidental, but the whole story is written backwards. Everything in the narrative is adapted to the given outcome.

Poe also incorporates a gothic setting into the story. The gothic setting is absolute. Located on the Rue Morgue-'Death Street,' the title foreshadows a catastrophe. The murder scene is a grotesque setting complete with hideously dismembered bodies and severed heads. The Paris suburb of Faubourg-St.Germain gives the mystery an aura of gloom and sets the stage for violence. The home of the pair is described as:

I was permitted to be at the expense of renting, and furnishing in a style which suited the rather fantastic gloom of our common temper, a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, a style which suited the rather fantastic gloom of our common temper, long deserted through superstition into which we did not inquire, and tottering toits fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain. (65)

This description certainly echoes Poe's inclination for gothic setting, and he even goes so far to use words like grotesque and gloom. Both of these literary devices help to create an atmosphere of suspense and help further Poe's narrative. He was praised for the novelty of the story and has influenced stories and movies ever since.

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The Cask of Amontillado

Poe is often considered a master of the Gothic tale, and "The Cask of Amontillado" contains many of the standard elements of Gothicism. Gothic stories are typically set in medieval castles and feature mystery, horror, violence, ghosts, clanking chains, long underground passages, and dark chambers. Montresor's crime is terrible, but it is believable, and it is committed without magic or superhuman power. Poe uses Gothic conventions to create an atmosphere of terror, but then he subverts the convention by using only human agents for terrible deeds. For Poe, it is not supernatural beings that people should fear. The real horror lies in what human beings themselves are capable of.

In Poe's story "The Cask of Amontillado" the setting starts in the early evening at dusk, during "the supreme madness of the carnival season" (214). This is significant because it explains why the two men are wearing costumes and possibly why Fortunato is drunk. Also, starting at dusk has relevance because he ends the story at midnight, showing the elapsed time of the story and includes the gothic element of darkness.

In "The Cask of Amontillado", Edgar Allan Poe uses gothic methods, which include macabre, suspense and mystery, to depict the dark feeling in the characters, setting, plot, and theme. Montresor, the possessed protagonist, presents himself as a conniving individual who seeks revenge and the immolation of Fortunado. In turn, Fortunado, the antagonist who has injured Montresor in limitless ways, unites with his supposed acquaintance Montresor in the catacombs to find the cask of Amontillado, unaware that he is walking into a trap that will bring him to his death. As the pair

progress through the catacombs, they observe the extensive niter and cobwebs that drape the walls and the decayed bodies that surround them. When they reach the end, Montresor evolves from Fortunado's friend to his murderer. Montresor leaves with Fortunado dead, chained, and buried behind a wall that he builds to hide the evidence of the kill. Edgar Allan Poe distributes an ensemble of gothic techniques, including the use of mystery and suspense, macabre, and psychology to portray the power of revenge. In the story Montresor says with élan:

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I reechoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still. (220)

One method of gothic literature that Poe validates to improve the revenge theme is the use of mystery and suspense. As Montresor and Fortunado walk through the dreary catacombs, they notice that the, "walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead" (219). Through this vivid description, Poe wishes to reel the reader in so that they find themselves at the edge of their seat, waiting for the moment when Montresor seeks his payback. After Fortunado toasts to the dead that surround both of the men, Montresor answers with "And you to your long life" (217). The gothic mystery and suspense expressed in the story add to the supremacy of revenge in Poe's literature.

In addition to the use of mystery and suspense, Poe uses macabre ideas in his writing to advance the vengeance theme in "The Cask of Amontillado." When Montresor declares, "I must not only punish, but punish with impunity, (218)" he shows that the revenge-seeking side of himself takes him over. He hopes that he will initiate his plan to work flawlessly, so that nobody will ever know what happens to Fortunado. This statement exposes the grotesque side of Montresor that replaces his previous individuality. Montresor reveals a black persona through his appearance, "Putting a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaure closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo" (217).

This gruesome costume clashes with the brightly colored jester outfit that Fortunado wears, offering the idea that Fortunado is the fool that falls for Montresor's trick. Montresor's morbid and chilling outfit represents the dark and intimidating personality that skulks within him, letting readers identify that Montresor is the type of person who can and will take reprisal. The uses of macabre throughout the story help accentuate gothic tone of dominant revenge that Poe distributes.

Edgar Allan Poe distributes an ensemble of gothic techniques, including the use of mystery and suspense to portray the power of revenge. By using these techniques, the author imitates moods of horror and fright within the reader, and highlights the powerful revenge shown throughout the story. These gothic methods help to describe revenge in the setting, plot, and characters. Edgar Allan Poe has a balance of representation of all aspects of gothic literature. Poe's story, "The Cask of Amontillado" contains gothic characteristics that create the perfect essence, tone, and feeling to emphasize hateful revenge.

Poe was fascinated with the materials and devices of the Gothic novel, although he preferred to work in the short story form. "The Cask of Amontillado"

takes many details from the Gothic tradition. The palazzo of the Montresors with its many rooms, the archway that leads to the "long and winding staircase" down to the catacombs, the damp and dark passageway hanging with moss and dripping moisture, the piles of bones, the flaming torches that flicker and fade, and the "clanking" and "furious vibrations of the chain" that Montresor uses to bind Fortunato to the wall. The overall atmosphere of brooding and horror also come from this tradition.

Gothic horror became a popular writing style in the late 19th century with Edgar Allan Poe being known as the "Father of Gothic Horror". Gothic horror is a style of fiction that emphasizes mysterious, grotesque and desolate settings. The point of view is almost always in the first person and the narrator is the protagonist. The setting, in gothic horror, usually is the most important element of the writing. The writer focuses mainly on describing the scene than the characters.

Poe's ability to instill fear in the reader, primarily in the short stories. Poe builds suspense throughout the stories, revealing some facts while withholding others. Because the element of danger is usually present, the reader can feel the intensity of the emotions. The narration is frequently first person, which makes the reader's connection to the story more intimate. Poe's descriptions are usually minutely detailed to give a sense of verisimilitude to the stories, despite their supernatural atmosphere. The use of irony and black humor is common. Gothic elements are usually prominent in his writing, the supernatural, evil animals, and dark, gloomy settings. Poe's depictions of how the human mind works heighten a reader's connection to the story. The surprise endings provide a reason to go back through the work to look for clues missed on the first reading.

There is a common thread that connects the above mentioned stories. All have been penned by Poe with the elements of Gothic in them. Poe brought Gothic writing

to the American shores and consolidated on this genre. Today, Poe is recognized as one of the foremost progenitors of modern literature, and of the Gothic style in particular. It was Poe's particular genius that in his work he gave consummate artistic form both to his personal obsessions and those of previous literary generations, at the same time creating new forms which provided a means of expression for future artists. In conclusion, Edgar Allen Poe was an amazing writer when it came to gothic literature. He used many themes and conventions to carry out the definition of gothic writing. He deserves much credit for his writings, which will never be forgotten

IV. Conclusion

Gothic literature was a popular writing tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and is still used today. Gothic literature explores the wicked, perverse and dark desires. Even though the Gothic Novel deals with the sublime and the supernatural, the underlying theme of the fallen hero applies to the real world as well. Once we look past the terror aspect of this literature, we can connect with it on a human level. Furthermore, the prevalent fears of murder, rape, sin, and the unknown are fears that we face in life. In the Gothic world they are merely multiplied.

The Gothic novel is a liberating phenomenon, which expands the range of possibilities for novelistic expression. Gothic conventions can include burial alive, ghosts, hysteria, ruined bodies, and tales within tales, undead characters, underground spaces, and more. Gothic themes are guilt, sex, violence, death, and cosmic struggle. Gothic stories or poems should inspire terror or horror. Edgar Allen Poe was one of the many well-known Gothic writers. In his stories he uses a variety of themes to carry out the gothic theme.

In Poe's "The Black Cat," the reader is drawn into a story centre around madness, crime and murder. Poe has chosen his genre excellently as through the Gothic conventions he can successfully established his purpose. His themes of alcoholism, cruelty to animals, superstitious beliefs, perverseness and madness, sanity and denial are all successfully conveyed and exaggerated through the use of the Gothic conventions. Through the uses of such Gothic devices such as settings, omens and symbols and classic characters Edgar Allen Poe has effectively written a highly Gothic tale. Throughout, "The Black Cat" Poe has achieved his purpose of conveying the effects of alcoholism, the evil of cruelty to animals, superstitious beliefs referring to black cats being evil, perverseness and the results of madness. Through the

viewpoint of a madman the reader is directly drawn into the experience of the murder and encounters the horrors of the Gothic genre.

Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher," which contains most of the Gothic elements, is thought to be one of the finest Gothic stories ever written. Poe was a master at creating a gloomy, mysterious, terrifying atmosphere and a feeling of threat and danger. Poe uses gothic colors of red and black in a non-harmonizing arrangement to reinforce an atmosphere of emotional discord in "The Masque of the Red Death." The principle of contrast can also be observed in the arrangement and decoration of the interior rooms reminding us that Poe even considered the background to be important in the design of a story. The symbols used in "The Masque of the Red Death" show that the mental processes of reflection are of chief importance. Poe's mastery of gothic writing and his literary philosophy are clearly seen in his story "The Masque of the Red Death."

"The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is a showcase of Poe's amazing writing style, and the short story is full of rhetorical devices. Two literary devices that are evident are Poe's creative use of point of view and gothic setting. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is told in the first person point of view, presumably Poe's view, acting as a narrator. "The Cask of Amontillado" is told in the first person by Montresor, who reveals in the first sentence that he intends to take revenge on Fortunato. Fortunato is helping to spin the web that Montresor hopes to incarcerate him in. The reverse psychology Montresor displays aids the gothic technique of the story.

Gothic tales are dominated by fear and terror and explores the themes of death and decay. The Gothic crosses boundaries into the realm of the unknown, arousing extremes of emotion with settings evoking a gloomy, morbid atmosphere while focusing on doom, destiny and fate. It deals with the dark, the sinister and the

supernatural, often has symbolic characters such as the helpless female and associates common images and themes. Edgar Allen Poe was an English short-story writer whose work reflected the traditional Gothic conventions of the time.

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