

T.C.
BEYKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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**A MAN IN DISTRESS: FINDING THE VOICE IN THE
GOTHIC**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Tezi Hazırlayan:
Belit ERŞAHİN

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Öğrenci No:

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Danışman:

Prof. Dr. Visam MANSUR

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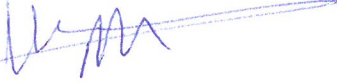
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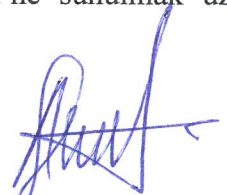
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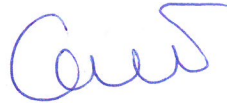
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ÖZ

KEDERLİ BİR ADAM: GOTİK EDEBİYATTA KENDİ SESİNİ BULMAK

Bu çalışma genel olarak Edgar Allan Poe'nun kendi kişisel travmaları ile yaklaşmakta olan Amerikan İç Savaşı öncesinde toplumun kendi travmalarını Gotik edebiyatta nasıl birleştirdiğini ele almıştır. Teorik çerçeve olarak insan psikolojisine Marksist açıdan yaklaşan bu çalışma, Edgar Allan Poe'nun da sıklıkla ele aldığı temalar olan delilik, yalnızlık, ölüm ve güç ilişkileri gibi konuları analiz edebilmek için Sigmund Freud, Marie Bonaparte, Arthur Schopenhauer, Irvin Yalom, Karl Marx ve Fredric Jameson gibi seçkin teorisyenlere atıflarda bulunmuştur. Hikayelerinin ve şiirlerinin çoğunda ölen veya ölmekte olan karakterleri inceleyen Edgar Allan Poe'nun yaşamı boyunca travmatik anılarını, damgasını vurduğu Gotik edebiyatı ile yeniden canlandığı, bu bağlamıyla da dönemin iç ve dış politikasının da oldukça rahatsız edici sonuçlara gebe olduğu düşünüldüğünde başka türlü bir yaşamın sosyolojik ve ekonomik olarak pek de mümkün olmadığı gösterilmiştir. Kapitalist ekonominin yeni gelişmeye başladığı dönemin Birleşik Devletleri'nde binlerce insanın açlıktan ve yorgunluktan ölmesine sebebiyet veren kölelik sisteminin Gotik edebiyat için oldukça elverişli bir ortam hazırlamış olduğunun altı çizilmekte ve ayrıca tüm yaşananlara ve umutsuzluğa rağmen yaşamın sanat ile güzel bir yere döndürülebildiği, Edgar Allan Poe'nun da bunu ustalıklı yazdığı eserleriyle kanıtlamış olduğunun mesajı verilmektedir.

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ABSTRACT

A MAN IN DISTRESS: FINDING THE VOICE IN THE GOTHIC

This study aims to explore how Edgar Allan Poe's personal life, childhood traumas and social traumas in the Antebellum society were reflected in his Gothic literature. Edgar Allan Poe used madness, obsession, loneliness, death and power struggle as recurring themes in his writing, therefore, while examining his Gothic style, Marxist theory and psychoanalysis are used as a critical framework. In this sense theories of Sigmund Freud, Marie Bonaparte, Arthur Schopenhauer, Irvin Yalom, Karl Marx and Fredric Jameson are referred to prove the arguments in the thesis. Considering the large numbers of characters who were either on deathbed or have already been dead in Edgar Allan Poe's literature, it is stated that his traumas were revived in his Gothic literature since the gloomy atmosphere of the period also coincided with the traumatic and chaotic tone of the writer himself. In the thesis, it is also expressed that many people lost their lives due to the new capitalist system in the United States. However, in spite of having hopeless moments and traumatic experiences, the pursuit for happiness is highlighted and Edgar Allan Poe has been given credit for turning bad experiences into something artistic and beautiful.

CONTENTS

Page No.

ÖZ

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION	1
i. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	2
ii. Methodology	2
iii. Structural Overview	3

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. PSYCHOANALYSIS	4
1.1. Origins of the Freudian Method and Psychoanalytic Method.....	4
1.2. Freud's Legacy	6
2. GOTHIC	9

CHAPTER TWO

GOTHIC VOICE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE AND THE SOCIETY

1. MADNESS	18
2. OBSESSION	26
3. LONELINESS	31
4. POWER	38
CONCLUSION	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47

INTRODUCTION

Some theoreticians, like Roland Barthes claim that the author has no reflection on the text he/she creates. Barthes' post structuralism theory denies any role for the author beyond the mere creation of the text itself. Barthes suggests that the task of meaning in the text becomes the reader's job. The author is a person who simply puts words into the correct order and, he/she does not control nor know the meaning of his work.

The reader has never been the concern of classical criticism; for it, there is no other man in literature but the one who writes. We are now beginning to be the dupes no longer of such antiphrases, by which our society proudly champions precisely what it dismisses, ignores, smothers or destroys; we know that to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author. (Seymour, 2018)

Contrary to such modern assumption, it is argued that Edgar Allan Poe's life along with his society's traumas were reflected in his Gothic literature.

It has been an enlightening and powerful experience to work on Edgar Allan Poe. Tracing his memories from childhood which were revived in his short tales and poems has turned out to be an interesting quest for me. I believe that Edgar Allan Poe was looking for ways to ease his pain after he lost many important people in his life. However, he continued his pursuit of finding a relief in art even when his beloved ones left him alone. He spent his whole life by writing. He did not live long but he managed to create such sensational stories and poems that even today many people continue to admire. As a matter of fact, Edgar Allan Poe lived in a century that had distinguishing characteristics. One of them was the development and research in the field of psychology. People were amazed by Sigmund Freud's theories. He found a new technique to cure his patients which he later referred to as psychoanalysis. In his studies Freud used Oedipus symbol in order to enter the realm of the subconscious. Because, for him, human psyche could only be understood and analyzed via childhood memories, dreams and other subconscious parts of our minds. Not only did he affect doctors and psychologists of his time but also opened a path for others to start

analyzing literary people from their texts. One of his pupils, Marie Bonaparte, was fearless enough to examine Edgar Allan Poe's work. Her work provided tremendous knowledge on Poe's background.

Edgar Allan Poe not only lived a tough life with a lot of disappointment, resentment and painful losses but also he found the beauty out of these traumas and felt the urge to create something artistic. I believe that the traumas gave him strength to become an amazing writer. Also, one can ask that if he had lived in a different country or in a different time period, would it have been possible for him to write the way that he wrote. To me, this is a question that nobody can answer but in this thesis I look for explanations to grasp his state of mind when he was writing. Because once my research expanded I found that he gave life to many characters who seem to be the replicas of one another and the atmosphere in his tales as well as in his poetry represents the Antebellum chaos. Indeed, death, obscurity, big and abandoned places are the most abundant elements in his works. It is then I started to believe that in Edgar Allan Poe's works, it is possible to find autobiographical features along with the representation of social anxieties.

i. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This paper explores how Edgar Allan Poe spent his life and what kind of themes and characters were revived in his works. The thesis' main questions are how traumas shaped Edgar Allan Poe's literature and in spite of the hardness that he went through how he managed to create such appealing, emotional, sensational and mostly shocking literary works. In the thesis, brief descriptions of the historical and political background of the 19th century are given to establish a bridge between Poe's biographical facts.

ii. Methodology

While approaching the thesis within the historical and psychoanalytic framework, my research draws upon critical ideas from Sigmund Freud, Marie Bonaparte, Karl Marx and Fredric Jameson. First and foremost, the thesis is going to

reveal Edgar Allan Poe's traumatic experiences, then, it will show how gloomy was the Antebellum South. While analyzing Poe's literary texts, the anxieties of a polarized nation and Poe's own uneasiness will be discovered.

iii. Structural Overview

This work consists of two chapters. In the first chapter theoretical background is covered. While expanding the meaning of psychoanalysis by making references to Sigmund Freud, his concept of conscious, subconscious, childhood traumas and life and death drives is put under the scope. The chapter continues with the explanation of the Gothic and the elements of Poe's Gothic style.

The second chapter consists of the most analytical part of the thesis. While exploring many different works of Edgar Allan Poe, it is stated that his Gothic style created unique artistic literary texts because it connected Poe's soul with the soul of the era.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. PSYCHOANALYSIS

1.1. Origins of the Freudian Method and Psychoanalytic Method

For centuries many thinkers and philosophers tried to explain how thinking and brain were related to each other and they proposed many theories on this matter. Indeed, it is possible to trace the roots of this question back to Ancient Greece. It is a well-known fact that philosophy was a common matter amongst the Ancient Greeks and other disciplines derived from that. Like many others, psychology came out from philosophy as well.

During Edgar Allan Poe's most prolific years, psychology started to differ from philosophy. It took so long for psychology to be considered as a branch of science. However, in the 19th century it started to be regarded as a distinct discipline and the studies about human brain started and psychiatry made its first appearance. In its first appearances, the main focus was on the human conscious, the nature of human mind and its relation with the body. When psychologists opened the first psychological laboratory in Germany, they committed themselves to the field of mental representation, experimental perception and sensation of the world. Indeed, some of them participated into the formulation of the laws of perception.

In the second half of the century, Sigmund Freud developed his theories in his system of psychoanalysis while he was studying on mental diseases. He rejected old methods because he felt that beyond the state of consciousness, there was something more. While he was working on so-called hysterical patients he came up with the idea that it is the subconscious which has a tendency to maintain its condition. According to Freud, the subconscious resist to change. The majority of his theories were based on his ideas about the subconscious factors that prevent a person's healing. Later, he analyzed those resistances in many of his works. In *the Interpretation of Dreams* he

suggests that the dreams are the paths to our subconscious. By referring to them as “the most trustworthy method of investigating deep mental processes.” (Freud, 1961) he proposed a new method to cure his patients.

However, Freud was not the first one to state that dreams have significant importance. In *the World as Will and Representation*, Arthur Schopenhauer talked about this matter by referring to other people who lived long before his time. Schopenhauer mentioned that there is a link between dream and life. In the *Vedas* and *Puranas* it is stated that, dreams are the carriers of the world’s real knowledge:

The Vedas and Puranas know no better simile for the whole knowledge of the actual world, called by them the web of Maya, than the dream, and they use none more frequently. Plato often says that men live only in the dream; only the philosopher strives to be awake (Schopenhauer, 1969)

but it was Sigmund Freud who expanded the meaning of the conscious and the unconscious. Division between the conscious and the unconscious was the fundamental point of his method. While defining these terms, Freud stated that the id is responsible for our most primitive desires. By talking about the id’s instinctive structure and its ability to combine the life and death instincts, Freud basically stressed out that the id is the unconscious part of our psyche which is responsible for meeting the needs of our primary instincts. According to him, in the childhood our personalities are totally under control of the id itself. Only later in our lives, we establish an ego and a super ego, yet, the id remains the same. It does not change with the age or experience. Its sanctuary is the unconscious and it has nothing to do with the external world.

Id wants its wishes to be fulfilled immediately and does not care about the outcomes. Its only concern is to find a path to satisfy the primitive wishes to get the pleasure out of them. Id does not have a concept of the reality and fantasy. Hence, its desires can be morally unacceptable or unrealistic but then, it is possible to ask that how human beings can have a moral compass? According to Freud, this can happen when ego starts negotiating with id. It can block unacceptable desires, primitive impulses and immoral actions. By doing so, the ego uses energy to repress irrational

demands of the id. However, it uses considerable amount of energy to repress them. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud discusses about this relation:

But we come now to a new and remarkable fact, namely that the compulsion to repeat also recalls from the past experiences which include no possibility of pleasure, and which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed (Freud, 1961)

Another important point in Freud's theory is the child sexuality. Indeed, Sigmund Freud introduced a very controversial idea; the child starts to have feelings of desire for the opposite-sex parent in his/her phallic stage and as a consequence starts to compete with the same-sex parent under the dominance of the Oedipus complex. This desire lays in the unconscious but has a great influence over a child's development. Freud continued that if one follows the path of analysis by going back to the infantile sexuality, it would be possible to cure the uttermost cases. As mentioned before, the dreams were abundant sources of the unconscious and thus, the dream-interpretation turned out to be a very convenient process for Freud to practice psychoanalysis. He implied that he did not want to use hypnosis but the voluntary participation of the patient. While examining the patients who participated voluntarily in his sessions, Freud started to build his theory. He initiated a method to discover the symbols that occurred in the dreams because he thought that revealing the meanings of these symbols are the keys to understand what is going on in the unconscious: "The dream content appears, then, even when coherent and intelligible, to be concerned with those indifferent trifles of thought undeserving of our waking interest." (Freud, 1920)

1.2. Freud's Legacy

Freud influenced so many great people that his theories and method are still being carried out by a lot of psychoanalysts today. Not only do people continue to examine his theories in our century but also they coin new terms and introduce new ideas in the field of psychoanalysis. Indeed, psychoanalytic movement has made a lot progress since Freud's time and it is possible to add that there are many different schools in this field today.

Carl Gustav Jung was a remarkable pupil of Freud and for that reason it would be appropriate to start with him. At the beginning, Jung was a proponent of Freud's new science and he had already gained international recognition in Zurich for his research in the Burghölzli clinic before they met for the first time in 1907. That was the time when Freud was looking for future students to collaborate and confirm his ideas. When he met with Jung, Freud thought that he found his potential heir. However, Jung's theories on human mind started to differ from Freud's ideas. In the Freudian theory, the unconscious is the storehouse of unacceptable or irrational desires whereas the theory that Jung proposed suggests that the unconscious is the reservoir of repressed memories which are explicit to the individual and his/her ancestral past. Jung referred them as archetypes. They are universal and transmitted by our ancestors. Due to the nature of these archetypes, Jung proposed that they are the collective unconscious. He rejected the idea that at birth, human mind is like a blank sheet and only the experiences that the individual goes through are going to fill this sheet. By believing that the human mind preserves unconscious and primary aspects of his/her ancestors, Jung emphasized the role of collective unconscious:

These "primordial images," or "archetypes," as I have called them, belong to the basic stock of the unconscious psyche and cannot be explained as personal acquisitions. Together they make up that psychic stratum which I have called the collective unconscious. (Jung, 1975)

As mentioned before, dreams were the fundamental point in the Freudian theory whereas, Jung regarded them as the symbols or metaphors that depict both internal and external world of the individual. He agreed that they could reflect some events that occurred during the childhood but also added that they could forecast future events as well. That was the most critical idea which opposed to the Freudian theory and that was the reason why Jung cut his ties off with him.

Another psychotherapist who contributed a lot into the field of human psychology was Alfred Adler. He was the father of the individual psychology. Freud had so much influence on him. Unlike the Freudian theory, Adler thought that if one focuses on the present and creates meaningful goals, then the therapy can help the

patient's recovery. In this sense, it is possible to say that his main focus was on the present rather than the past. His biggest contribution to the psychological literature is the concept of the Inferiority Complex which basically suggests that every child would experience the feeling of inferiority since they see stronger and capable adults around them. As a consequence of that, when they grow up they seek for acceptance and power and if they recover from feeling inferior, they become healthy adults.

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, reinterpreted the writings of Sigmund Freud and, he proposed many other things in his research. One of his biggest contribution into the field of psychoanalysis is the Mirror Stage. In this stage, the infant basically sees him/herself as a representation of an I when he/she meets with the external image of him/her body in the mirror. With this psychic response the infant starts to identify him/herself with the image. However, this situation brings along a conflict because the image does not coincide with the Ideal – I. Because the infant's physical formation is not developed yet. Physical weakness which the infant sees in the mirror, creates a strive that will constantly be in quest for reaching the Ideal I. Lacan proposes that the ego starts to identify itself when it meets with the external image or the "Other". He also states that after the mirror stage, the individual will use language to build an identity. It is possible to see Freud's influence on Lacan while he was establishing his theory of Mirror Stage yet, Lacan revised the notion of Oedipus Complex. He thought that the child picks up an obsession over his/her mother's wishes and tries to satisfy her. Since symbolism is the key to the unconscious, Lacan emphasized the importance of the symbolic. With reference to this, he connected Saussurian ideas with his theories on psychoanalysis and came into a conclusion that; the desire can never be entirely fulfilled because of the fact that there will always be possibilities of adding another signifier to the signifying chain.

Last but not least, we cannot ignore French psychoanalyst Marie Bonaparte who worked closely with Sigmund Freud. She also wrote a book on Edgar Allan Poe. In her *the Life and the Works of Edgar Allan Poe* she examined Poe's life and his literature in the light of psychoanalysis. Bonaparte thought that Edgar Allan Poe's

works are like dreams. Since the nature of Poe's work consists of intense symbolism, it is possible to analyze his works through psychoanalysis. Freud confirms this by saying:

Thanks to her interpretative effort, we now realise how many of the characteristics of Poe's works were conditioned by his personality, and can see how that personality derived from intense emotional fixations and painful infantile experiences (Bonaparte, Foreword, 1949)

The recurrent themes of death, madness, obscurity, loneliness and obsession were not only present in Poe's literary texts but they were also prominent in the Antebellum South and Poe's own life.

2. GOTHIC

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is considered the first Gothic novel. In this novel, Walpole wanted to blend medieval romantic elements with the modern novel. One can see many traps, curses and unexplained mysteries. In spite of being the first Gothic novel in literature, Walpole first published it in a way that tricked the audience and people thought that was a medieval romantic novel. Indeed, Walpole was the first one to put unexplained, unnatural elements in the text to create tension, for instance, the characters vanish from secret passages or get lost in the underground tombs. As Valdine Clemens states, the story consists of family violence and the characters are violently and mysteriously killed. Ann Radcliff is another important author in the genre of Gothic. As Robert Geary says "Her style was extraordinary. The malleability of the Gothic novel nowhere finds clearer or more vexing illustration than in the mature work of Ann Radcliffe." (Geary, 1992) She was the one who first tried to explain the natural causes of the supernatural events in her works. Radcliffe introduced the figure of Byronic hero and the Gothic villain and when she published *the Mysteries of Udolpho* in 1794, she became the precursor of the female Gothic.

Mary Shelley was an important Gothic writer as well. When she started writing she was just 18 years old. She became the one who used science as a means of

suspense. In her time occult and galvanism were considered to be popular topics and she used them a lot in *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*. In the 19th century, Emily Bronte's only published book *Wuthering Heights* proposed the acts of violence, ruthlessness and the setting of wilderness. Extreme landscapes, melancholic figures, moonlight, madness and obsession can be seen throughout the novel.

By looking at the story of Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, it is possible to grasp the nature of the 19th century Gothic. As Grace Moore states, "Dickens carefully blends realism and the supernatural to create a world in which the Gothic and the mundane sit side by side." (Moore G. , 2004) While portraying Scrooge as a character who sees horrifying appearances of the spirits during Christmas time, Dickens' purpose was to criticize social relations within the power struggle. This struggle can also be seen in the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* since the novel was written in a time when the society was in great turmoil under Victoria's reign. By analyzing Gothic novels as representations of a disturbed society, it is possible to refer to F.Scott Fitzgerald as a Gothic writer as well. The dangers of the Modern Era like; industrialization, urbanization, the uncertainty of future and liberalized sexuality turned to be the main Gothic features in Fitzgerald's works. With reference to the mentioned examples of Gothic literature, it is possible to say that Edgar Allan Poe did not invent the Gothic fiction but he became its master.

Benjamin Fisher says that "few would hazard a challenge to long-standing opinions that Poe was a master of the Gothic horror tale, although many might not as readily be aware that he did not invent Gothic fiction." (Fisher, 2002) When Poe started to publish his first Gothic tales in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835, critics did not like his style at all. They criticized him for being German because of the word's origins. Actually, the Goths were a Germanic tribe and their traditions were very different than those of Greco-Roman civilizations and that is the reason why Gothic has always been considered as the opposite of the Classic. The Classic is organized, simple and with limits whereas, the Gothic is chaotic, sophisticated and without borders. However, for Edgar Allan Poe the Classic and the Gothic were not rivals so

he used both of them to reach his aesthetical goals in literature. Indeed, the link between some of his characters' names and the Greco-Latin world can be seen in a number of his tales. Edgar Allan Poe never believed in the distinction between the past and the present. Hence, in many of his tales, he alluded to the Classical Mythology and to the Renaissance.

Edgar Allan Poe as an American writer, along with Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville, he was influenced by the English Romantics. American Gothic writers got some features from Romantics; “an excess of sentiment, by over-lavish decoration, a strong sense of color and a feeble sense of form, an attention to detail.” (Beers, 2012) Poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Lord Byron were influential on the American Gothic. Poe believed in the importance of the poetry on Gothic and that is the reason why he chose Lord Byron as his role model; “His immediate literary influence was Lord Byron, whom he had emulated in wearing primarily black clothing and in his predilection toward melancholy subjects.” (Sova, 2007) As a matter of fact, Poe really wanted to write verses like Lord Byron but at the end of the day he created his own style.

One of the reasons why Poe chose Gothic as his predominant style could be examined under his aimed preference for the reader. He wanted his work to be read in one sitting so that the feeling can penetrate deeper. Indeed, length and style were important to him. That is why Poe wrote in many different forms. He took his theory of Unity of Effect as a norm and then the short story became his main format. A summary of the characteristics of Poe's Unity of Effect is as follows:

1. Determining the effect that the author would like to have on a reader
2. Carrying that effect throughout the story or poem
3. The tone should be the same from the start to finish
4. Vivid imagination and introspective perspective are needed
5. Craftsmanship and experimenting are important
6. Consequences, causations or the incidents should serve to the work's tone
7. Melancholy is the most poetical tone (Poe, 2005)

These characteristics can be seen in many of his works. In 1840, he published the first collection of his twenty-five stories and called them *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. As Harold Bloom states Edgar Allan Poe thought that the Grotesque and the Arabesque were like the vessels which took him to destroy the reality and body so that he could enter the world of dreams:

The distortion of all ingredients; the fusion of different realms; the coexistence of beautiful, bizarre, ghastly, and repulsive elements; the merger of the parts into a turbulent whole; the withdrawal into a phantasmagoric and nocturnal world (Poe used to speak of his “daydreams”)—all these features have here entered into the concept of the grotesque (Bloom, 2009)

It is possible to argue that Poe used Grotesque elements in his Gothic literature as a means of showing pathological troubles of the modern social order. Wolfgang Kayser’s description of the word Grotesque proves its protomodern nature:

By the word grottesco the Renaissance, which used it to designate a specific ornamental style suggested by antiquity, understood not only something ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one—a world in which the realm of inanimate things is no longer separated from those of plants, animals, and human beings, and where the laws of statics, symmetry, and proportion are no longer valid. This meaning ensues from a synonym for grotesque which came into usage during the sixteenth century: the dreams of painters. (Kayser, 1966)

With the help of Classical Mythology and arabesque themes employed by German Romantics, Edgar Allan Poe formulated his own grotesque style to build his Gothic literature.

As a versatile writer Edgar Allan Poe created detective stories as well. By using ratiocination as a means of fighting mechanism, Poe was aiming to show the quarrel between rationality and irrationality. Poe’s characters in his detective stories can be seen as mad and ironic from a rational perspective. However, Poe used ratiocination not only to describe a chaotic situation but also to define whole course of actions that are bizarre and inexplicable. That is the reason most of his characters are both tragic -

since they are the victims of the course of actions- but also comic since they seem to have an unreliable, irrational point of view. The character in *the Tell-Tale Heart* with his confused mind can be regarded as an example of this duality.

Upon analyzing Edgar Allan Poe, both psychoanalytical and historical readings are necessary so as to grasp the cultural context between the Gothic narrative and the events which occurred in the 19th century. At that time, the country was in turmoil. President Jackson relentlessly promoted the idea that the Americans had the capacity to transform the continent. His politics played a big role in the social mobility and his discussions inspired the public to take actions. As Carboni observes “the years of Poe’s life were, for the United States, the years of deep transformation.” (Carboni, 1994) In this sense, it can be argued that one of the reasons behind Poe’s Gothic style was lying in the uneasiness of the Jacksonian society. The uncertainties of the period created a mistrustfulness on individual identity. The chaos in the Antebellum America can be seen in the *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Poe’s biographer Arthur Hobson Quinn emphasizes the meaning of the collection’s name by stating; the Grotesque uses satire to put a spotlight on the external and internal conflicts of the nation and the Arabesque uses powerful imagination to produce. (Quinn, 1998)

Edgar Allan Poe’s fiction examines the dark side of the human mind. Some may suggest that humans are violent and ruthless creatures but it can be argued that Edgar Allan Poe was just a melancholic rather than a pessimist. Upon creating Gothic he used this melancholy as a springboard. Because, as Levine states, death was the most alluring theme to him: “I asked myself – “Of all melancholy topics, what according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?” Death – was the obvious reply.” (Levine, 2009)

In the 19th century, America was a land of opportunities. Everyone wanted to see the New World and Romance became an important concept to discover the fundamental parts of the American experience. According to the Romantics, when there was love, there was death. Where there was heaven, there came hell. Even when he was a young adult, Edgar Allan Poe was aware of this Romantic aspect of death: “I


could not love except where Death - Was mingling his with Beauty's death." (Bonaparte, 1949) As the Romantics stated, human nature is sophisticated hence rationalism would not be adequate to explain it. Their arguments were also based on the thing that the autonomy could not be achieved by common people. It makes the pursuit of acting autonomously the most difficult thing to attain (Agassi, 2008). However, at the end of the 18th century, emotions and imagination became essential for the Romantics. Same considerations can be seen in the works of Percy Shelley, John Keats and Lord Byron whom Edgar Allan Poe admired a lot.

Throughout his life, Edgar Allan Poe pursued the exploration of the human experience. The exploration of the uncanny in the human mind led him to focus on violence, destruction, perversion and monstrosity. Edgar Allan Poe believed that the universe was created via destruction. He called it a paradox and argued that if one wants to create something new, one must oppose the destructiveness of the human nature to maintain the originality of his/her art. Most of Poe's tales consist of transgression to show that the creation is like a destruction. This explains why Poe never stopped using themes like death and evil as symbols for this irony. Besides, he knew that psychological issues go hand in hand with social issues. Different range of identities were put under the spotlight to better cover different types of traumas. For this reason, Poe usually preferred first person narrator. Gerald Kennedy describes his first person narrators as delusional psychopats: "through his first person narrators, Poe lures readers into identifications that can only be described as perverse." (Kennedy, 2019) however, it can be argued that Poe used perverseness as a controlling mechanism on his readers' emotions. Most of the time he leaves his narrators unnamed. By doing so, he leaves the door open for identification and disidentification.

For Edgar Allan Poe, beauty is absorbent and, illusions do not intercept beauty as it is not a confining concept. In the aesthetic harmony even the ugliness of the Arabesque and Grotesque can be blended into sublime concept of beauty. Yet, the supernal beauty is out of reach. Poe, idealized many women both in his life and in his art. While creating his art, he was aiming for self-destruction in order to achieve this

supernatural beauty. The way that Poe used Gothic was like an opposition to the Transcendentalist movement. Because, Transcendentalists emphasized the concept of freedom with the goodness of people. According to them, one needed to rely on oneself to achieve this goal but Edgar Allan Poe created such characters that they only trusted their own perception of the reality.

As mentioned earlier, Edgar Allan Poe liked visions and visualizations. In the Romantic ideal, the landscape of an ideal domestic presence is appreciated since it signifies order. As opposed to this, the architecture in Poe's Gothic literature was used as a symbol of political turmoil. The falling constructions can be seen as the nation's breakdown. When Poe created edifices, he was aiming to refer to an unidentified past or a dark secret. Most of the time he used the Grotesque to destroy the sense of order which is placed in the structured world. By doing so, Poe formed tension between reality and its distorted version. Castles, abbeys and monasteries are among the most used architectural elements in Poe's Gothic literature. Their representations as falling structures serve elements of destruction and they symbolize a collapsing order. This symbolization can be seen in *The Fall of The House of Usher*:



— the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “House of Usher” (Poe, 2004)

The same effect can be seen in the burning Chateau of Metzengerstein in the *Metzengerstein* tale:

An occurrence so common attracted no particular attention, but his return was looked for with intense anxiety on the part of his domestics, when, after some hours' absence, the stupendous and magnificent battlements of the Chateau Metzengerstein, were discovered crackling and rocking to their very foundation, under the influence of a dense and livid mass of ungovernable fire. (Poe, 2011)

Taking into consideration all these points, it is possible to say that Poe's Gothic literature opposes the realistic novels of its time. With his style Poe rejects social norms. He prefers his characters to live in seclusion. That is why his characters try to

achieve self-actualization. In *the Tell-Tale Heart*, the character tries to convince himself and the reader that he is not mad: “Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded with what caution with what foresight with what dissimulation I went to work!” (Poe, 2004) In this process the Grotesque figure serves as an example of rejection. Just like the narrator of *Berenice* shows; “But from the disordered chamber of my brain, had not, alas! departed, and would not be driven away, the white and ghastly spectrum of the teeth.” (Poe, 2011) The majority of Edgar Allan Poe’s characters are obsessed with something. So, it is not surprising to see that they easily become the slaves of their Grotesque attitudes and, the Gothic figure enslaves the Grotesque in the end.

Poe’s usage of the Grotesque permitted him to create the unusual in the familiar. His exaggerated endings manufactured an explosion that led the main character to discover a dark secret. In *Berenice* the secret unravels itself at the end:

He told of a wild cry disturbing the silence of the night --of the gathering together of the household--of a search in the direction of the sound; --and then his tones grew thrillingly distinct as he whispered me of a violated grave --of a disfigured body enshrouded, yet still breathing, still palpitating, still alive! (Poe, 2004)

This kind of an end can be seen in *Morella* as well: “But she died; and with my own hands I bore her to the tomb; and I laughed with a long and bitter laugh as I found no traces of the first in the channel where I laid the second--Morella.” (Poe, 1948)

In Poe’s Gothic, the reader feels the problem of indeterminacy. Because the process of identification and the need of interpretation does not coincide with each other. For this reason, his literature works both internally and externally. Moreover, his style of describing something sublime and beautiful is interesting. Poe recognizes pain and pleasure as motives for writing and, he does not override one’s value over another. His writing has the seeds of an artistic thought. For this reason, it is possible to see an artist’s need for creating and destroying in Poe’s literature.

For Edgar Allan Poe, the aesthetics was not a mere expression of the beauty. He did not write in Gothic just to acquire the zeitgeist of his century and be sensational but he also used Gothic to establish a stronger tie between the individual and the society. He frequently used first-person narration so that the reader can identify him/herself with the narrator. Especially, at the end of his stories, Poe's reader starts to feel empathetic. Because his obsession with design shows that there is an order in chaos. Wasn't life created from chaos? Didn't chaos give birth to life? That was what Edgar Allan Poe believed from the beginning and, this is why he tried to prove his cosmological concept of the universal order in his Gothic literature.



CHAPTER TWO

GOTHIC VOICE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE AND THE SOCIETY

1. MADNESS

Edgar Allan Poe was aware of the dramatic effects of abnormality. He seemed to cherish the vices of abnormality over normality. Most critics considered Edgar Allan Poe to be a rather weak personality because of his habits of drinking and gambling. However, it is possible to argue that these habits imbedded so deeply in his character that his genius used these moments of ecstasy to shape his literary style. Poe's experimental writing considered controversial by many people yet, his innovative introduction of the unreliable narrator to the Gothic literature casts light upon Poe's life as well.

Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes pointed out the death of the author and exalted the survival of the text. In postmodern critical theory, where deconstructionism is elevated, it is still possible to argue that the author is very significant in imposing both his life and meaning on his literary text. Indeed, analyzing Poe's background and literary texts through Freudian psychoanalysis and dreamwork shows how significant the author is in attaching meaning and signification to the text. Poe's life was surrounded by mystery, even the cause of his death is still unknown. Some might suggest that Poe, as a human being was born without human emotions, yet it is unlikely to underestimate his love and affection for his family and his child-wife Virginia. By looking at his life, one can understand why Poe used madness as a recurring theme in his literature.

A disturbed mind cannot be easily spotted if there is a logic in it. Poe used this method to disturb his readers. In the opening of the *Tell-Tale Heart* the narrator talks about insanity and tries to prove that his analytic mind is intact. However, he uses an ill-applied logic to prove his motive for the murder. The character becomes the slave

of his ill-applied logic. Merton S. Yewdale visited this issue in his article by saying “Reason was the dominant force of his life. It drove him like a slave-driver with a black lash in his hand. However, Edgar Allan Poe was continually experimenting with the processes of reasoning.” (Yewdale, 1920) Indeed, he became the servant of his obsession for rationalization.

The role of the madness in Edgar Allan Poe’s literature can be interpreted as a disguised philosophical question to raise awareness on the mysteries of human mind. Because, while trying to define madness, literary phrases and philosophical statements walk hand in hand. As it was talked in Shoshana Felman’s article madness is an issue in which the madman, the poet, the philosopher coexist so one can easily find philosophical elements in Edgar Allan Poe’s literature. However, Poe needed the language of reason to praise the folly. In *The Black Cat*, the narrator is losing his mind over the course of actions and the reason is getting away from him. This creates a sense of terror because the reader starts to enter the realm of uncanny. Sigmund Freud suggested that people tend to stay away from the things that are beyond rational explanations. On the other hand, Edgar Allan Poe’s literature raises philosophical and psychological questions to show the proximity between logic and madness.

For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. 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. (Poe, 2004)

As it is seen in this paragraph madness paves the way for paranoia and blurs the distinction between dream and reality. This is exactly how Poe’s Gothic fiction operates. The epistemological doubts that Poe noted became the eminent elements of his fiction. The Age of Enlightenment had taught that the reason was the most important thing in the world and the Americans were affected by this idea. Losing one’s sense of mind became a preeminent fear of the American society. In *the Black Cat* the narrator was described as a remorseless psychopath who had the same fear of becoming mad.

The Antebellum Era was an inconvenient time for the black slaves. The executions were carried out without the restraints of conscience and most of the slave population couldn't reach at the age thirty. For the majority of the American Society, the black people represented a dark mystery. When the black people were living with their white masters, they were treated like domestic pets and, most of the time, they were accepted as inferior to domestic pets. The narrator of *the Black Cat* implies that he has a slave and the slave is mesmerizing him.

Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind. We had birds, gold fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat. This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree. (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004)

Contrary to Vicki Hester and Emily Segir's analyses which indicate that the narrator in *the Black Cat* is a superficial psychopath, it is possible to argue that the narrator was reflected as a symbol of the irreconcilable clash between the free white men and the black slave population of the Antebellum American society. Indeed, the darkest of all problems was hanging like a sword of Damocles over the society's head. The "Peculiar Institution" was creating chaos in the country. The term peculiar institution is related to the chattel slavery and Loic Wacquant describes chattel slavery as "the pivot of the plantation economy and original matrix of racial division from the colonial era to the Civil War (Wacquant, 2003)." Timothy Jacobson also pointed out the slavery was greatly nourished from the coming of cotton and spreaded out through the old South of Virginia, the Carolinas and coastal Georgia.

The slaves were forced to live under harsh conditions and if they were about to refuse what they got they were punished by being tortured, beaten or even killed. Indeed, at that time the country was in chaos. This anxiety can also be seen in a message of the then governor of Virginia, John Floyd: "A spirit of dissatisfaction and insubordination was manifested by the slaves in different parts of the country from Richmond to the seaboard." (Aptheker, 1996) Richmond was situated in the middle of chaos and Edgar Allan Poe was in the heart of the events. It seems like Poe's narrator in *the Black Cat*, was inspired by the social traumas in the Antebellum South. By

referring to the horrifying murder that he committed “as a series of mere household events” (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004), the narrator was showing the traumatic effects of executing black slaves. Besides, he was not the only character who exhibits elements of irrationality in Poe’s Gothic literature.

The very first phrases of *the Tell-Tale Heart* start with a sensational opening “TRUE!—NERVOUS—VERY, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them.” (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004) The character shows a certain uneasiness to prove his sanity rather than his innocence. He seemed to have murdered someone with a precise rationalism. This action represents the mass execution of black people in the aftermath of Nat Turner’s rebellion.

In *the Tell-Tale Heart*, it seems like the old man’s eye provoked the murder. Yet, it can be argued that the motive of the murder was the narrator’s obsession. This obsession can be linked to repetitive compulsion which serves as a recurring device. Indeed, the character insists on the justification of his motive. The tension created by Edgar Allan Poe becomes more clear when the course of actions reach to a climax. Throughout the story, a chronological development occurs yet, there comes a point when the relation between the subject and object disappears. Then, the factual and fantasized world blend together. The narrator can no longer trust on the information that the outer world provides him because he becomes the victim of his inner world. His own perception is blinded by his madness.

Healthy mind exists in a healthy society. With reference to this, it can be said that there is a relation between a social and an individual trauma. This is how the history of humankind has shaped. As Roy Bhaskar states, dialectical contradictions of nature are connected to the human experience: “These are connections between entities or aspects of a totality such that they are in principle distinct but inseparable, in the sense that they are synchronically or conjuncturally, internally related, both (some, all) or one existentially presuppose the other.” (Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, 1993) One example of this phenomenon can be seen in *Ligeia*. When *Ligeia* was first

published in 1838, it was the time when American society had already been struggling with the dilemmas of a newly established capitalist economy. Amy Greenberg's description of the Americans as commercial expansionists who seek for an American dominated world in favour of a commercial empire was also true for the 19th century America. The leading ideologies of the white Anglo-Saxon supremacy and the American exceptionalism were esthetically transferred into the eponymous character of Ligeia.

Ligeia, the dark haired beauty is the first wife of the narrator. In her features, one can find the beauty of an Oriental woman: "And at such moments was her beauty --in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps --the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth --the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk." (Poe, 2011) Her eyes fascinated the narrator and made him believe that she is not from his own race:

And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia. For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our own race. (Poe, 2004)

In that time period, Orientalism was used in literature as a means to create an ethnocentric national identity. As described in Edward Said's book, "if we recall additionally that human societies, at least the more advanced cultures, have rarely offered the individual anything but imperialism, racism and ethnocentrism for dealing with "other" cultures." (Said, 1978) Orientalism is a concept of understanding and seeing The East as inferior to The West and, with this argument, it can be understood that the core of a powerful and racial imperialistic ideology was walking hand in hand with Orientalism. Parodied elements such as, the story is nearly equally divided into two halves, Ligeia's association with the East and the Orientalist chamber, reflect the very nature of an Orientalist discourse. Due to the fact that in *Ligeia*, one can find the elements of a parodied Orientalist discourse, it is possible to argue that, maybe, Edgar Allan Poe was not a proslavery writer as Schueller suggested: "As a Southern writer, Poe's defence of slavery, of course, should come as no surprise." (Schueller, Harems, Orientalist Subversions, and the Crisis of Nationalism: The Case of Edgar Allan, 1995)

In *Ligeia*, the character's existence lies between life and death. She is the one who makes boundaries more ambiguous. Her background is as vague as her existence and - if it is possible to say - her non existence. Taking into consideration that Ligeia dies in the beginning of the story, it makes one questions the value of a non-white person in the Antebellum society. In that time, United States' policy was to eliminate Indian population and support the idea of Westward expansion. Slaves were totally in service of colonizers to get more profit from their cotton growth businesses. Many Indians and slaves were treated as commodities rather than human beings. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to the ancient times when people used to believe in magical effects of the objects. The objects meanings tended to hold some mysterious elements for primitive people. The determining factors of value were different than the capitalist economy. Primitive people used to attribute magical powers to ordinary objects such as wood carvings, stones or pots. However, a sense of furniture and commodity started to develop within the capitalist economy. Terence Byres describes this notion as "Under capitalism, labour itself becomes a commodity (Byres, 1996)." Hence, not only physical currencies were regarded as an exchange value but also human body and labour started to be considered as commodities.

Malini Schueller argues that Ligeia puts forward the Southern ideology as well as Orientalism. Schueller states that "The result is a highly politicized piece reflective of both empire-making and popular antebellum Southern ideologies (Schueller, 1995)." Indeed, in the 21st century, the enslavement of human by human is still a hot topic in the undergoing discussions. However, in the Antebellum South it did not happen in one day. A certain level of production had already been reached and a certain level of distribution was aroused. Therefore, it can be understood that during Edgar Allan Poe's century the conditions were convenient for slave-labour. Having been lived amongst the cotton-rich lords aroused Edgar Allan Poe's anxiety and triggered his childhood traumas. Because the dominant mode of production in this agricultural South - we still call it Deep South - had tremendous effects on the society. These effects can be seen Ligeia's character. Ligeia's willpower was attributed by a quote from Joseph Glanvill in the work:

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will (Poe, 2004).

Ligeia's attitude reminds of the slaves' attitudes. She was quiet but also full of life energy, full of Eros: "Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion (Poe, 2004)" In spite of her lively soul, she dies and that is when the narrator seeks for another wife. The narrator marries to Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine. As her last name suggests, narrator's new wife is coming from an upper class. Shawn Rosenheim states that "he purchases a bride whose title resonates with all the fine distinctions of social class, the Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine (Rosenheim, 1995)" to point out the class distinction between Ligeia and Lady Rowena. Unlike Ligeia's physical features, Lady Rowena is blonde and has a pale skin. Contrary to Ligeia's Orient womanhood, Lady Rowena signifies the white supremacy. (West, 1964)

The madness as it has been put by Edgar Allan Poe, both in literal and symbolic level, has shown the oscillation between the real and the fantasy. In this sense, along with Ligeia's narrator, the narrator of *the Cask of Amontillado* is a reflection of Poe's disturbed mind as well. The pure hatred which comes in as a form of an obsession was put deliberately by Edgar Allan Poe to deal with the psychological problems in his life. From his ordinary life, which cannot be described neither as happy nor ordinary, Edgar Allan Poe transferred the soul of the era and the never-ending quarrel in his life.

The antagonist of *the Cask of Amontillado* was exhibiting an obsessed idea of taking revenge from Fortunato in the middle of a carnival. Edgar Allan Poe ironically chose the setting of a carnival to show that even in a carnival, where there are lots of people, human mind cannot escape from itself. This explains the wish to enclose oneself - in this sense the narrator - in a remote area. Throughout the story, the reader faces an increasing tension because of the revengeful nature of the narrator but the

reader could not anticipate the course of actions. At the end of the story the narrator really encloses his rival with a mural while he was still alive. The same kind of enclosure can be seen in *Ligeia* as well. When the narrator remarries and moves to an abbey, he decorates it in a very Grotesque way. Poe's depiction of the bridal chamber : "Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the Bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold!" (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004) shows how the narrator/Poe subconsciously wishes his death chamber to be. The repeated ornaments, big and arabesque furnitures create moments of feeling as "surrounded by" the room or "trapped in it". By doing so, Edgar Allan Poe not only parodies the fetish for Orientalist decoration in the 19th century: "Some few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure, were in various stations about --and there was the couch, too --bridal couch -- of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a pall-like canopy above" (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004) but also stresses a disturbed mind which enclosed within itself and surrounded by his ill-applied logic.

In the literary history, madness has been discussed by many scholars and it turned out to be a multilayered notion for many of them. Madness affects imagination, creativity and perception. This is the reason why the concept of madness has artistic and literary considerations. Madness is also related to social issues like; seclusion, alienation and eccentricity. In this subchapter, Poe's mastermind under the influence of madness has been highlighted to pave the way for his Grotesque aesthetic style. The way Poe created his narrators as unreliable resources expresses the soul of the Antebellum society. Nonetheless, the representation of insanity in Poe's Gothic fiction cannot merely categorized as a reflection of Poe's mental instability. It is the key to symbolize the traumas that affected Edgar Allan Poe as an individual and Edgar Allan Poe as a writer.

2. OBSESSION

Obsession has always been an interesting topic in literature. The nature of obsession is repetitive and obsession opens the world of magical thinking. For Sigmund Freud, it became the central point of his research on explaining human traumas. Among Freud's patients, there were soldiers that came from World War I. Freud had enough time to study their dreams and the results that he got were stunning. Due to the fact that the traumatic experiences were being repeatedly coming alive in the veterans' dreams, Freud thought that it did not correspond with the principle of pleasure. If the id's main purpose is to feel the pleasure after satisfying its desire then, why one would repeat the traumatic experience again? The outcome was contradictory and he felt the urge to investigate this subject deeper than before. It was then Freud understood that the human beings are driven by two conflicting forces. Eros, which is the life instinct that makes the individual rational, acts as a mediator amongst the desires of the id. By nature, this instinct is associated with love, organizational skills and social behaviours. On the other hand, death instinct which is also known as Thanatos, is self-destructive and antisocial. It drives the individual to its own extinction. Freud also put emphasis on the matter that the compulsion to repeat was more primitive than the pleasure principle. Likewise, Arthur Schopenhauer expressed same kind of theory. "Birth and death belong equally to life, and hold the balance as mutual conditions of each other, or if the expression be preferred, as poles of the whole phenomenon of life (Schopenhauer, 1969)."

For Sigmund Freud, psychoanalyst's first task is to heal the compulsion to repeat, especially the self-destructive attitudes which are derived from the childhood traumas. By inviting those memories to the conscious, the person restarts the loop again. Freud also stated that the libido reserves the primal energy. Unlike the modern usage of the word, the libido is more than a sexual urge. It's the energy that covers the organism's survival instincts and other desires. However, the id does not change over time, it always stays the same. It holds the libido but if one represses so many sorrowful and hateful thoughts it consumes its libido. For that reason, it can be said that Edgar Allan Poe's experiences caused him to remember so many painful memories. While

creating his obsessed characters, Poe's reflection of his troubled past unfolds. As a matter of fact, repetition and compulsion became the occupational task for Edgar Allan Poe. By recalling the traumas, Poe's characters initiate a mental process in the unconscious which harbours primitive desires, essential instincts and basic drives like death anxiety.

According to Irvin Yalom's ideas not everyone experiences death anxiety at the same level. Some may consider death as a regretful act because of one's unfulfilled wishes or projects whereas others may fear of the physical pain of dying. However, those are adult responses thus they cannot be compared with the primitive fear of the death which resides in our subconscious (Yalom, 1980). It is possible to consider this phenomenon as uncanny by nature. When one enters into the realm of the death there is no way out. No one knows what is going on there, this leaves one in the dark and Edgar Allan Poe felt this darkness to the greatest extent possible. Poe's Gothic literature carries out obsession as an *idée fixe* that comes from an eternal fixation. In many of his tales, the narrators are obsessed with something, usually, obsessed with one single thing. By using monomania as a strong focus on his characters, it can be interpreted that Edgar Allan Poe was aiming to highlight his neurotic state.

In *Berenice*, the narrator tries to remember the main motive for the prematurely buried eponymous character. His obsession towards Berenice's teeth signifies a great monomania. From the beginning of the story, one little smile from Berenice gets Egaeus' attention and makes him obsessed with her teeth. As Heyward Ehrlich's states, Thanatos is behind every obsession. The id's nature is linked with everything that is dark, forbidden and repressed. A very disturbed Egaeus becomes the slave of his own death drive. The urge to repeat, correlates with the primal anxiety of all; the death anxiety. Egaeus let his cousin Berenice seduce him. It is understandable because Egaeus was living a gloomy life in a dark mansion. Berenice was the only good thing in his life. However, Egaeus' obsession starts to develop incrementally. Her teeth, being so white and perfect represented an ideal in his mind. This obsession with whiteness was also the main ideology in the Antebellum South. At that time most people had a tendency for believing in America's supremacy over other races. God

gave them power so they could spread their version of democracy across the continent. It was Thomas Jefferson who stated that America's society is an agricultural one. Not much after that people embraced this idea to widen their lands. In 1829, president Andrew Jackson requested to remove Indians beyond the Mississippi River. Since many years Georgian authorities were asking for their removal and the federal government was resisting to those demands but with the election of Andrew Jackson the removal became inevitable. Jackson was defending his propose by claiming that if the Indians move through the West it would be for their own good. Because in that way they could be protected from the white encroachment. However, the Indian removal's main objective was to capture Indian land and transfer it to the white settlers. It was obvious that they were trying to create white supremacy over Native Americans. Nevertheless, they forgot something. They needed human labour. They needed people to work on their seized lands. As a consequence, the removal by force increased the demand for slave labour. American Dream had already started to flourish in the society but it was hard to say that the slaves and the Native Americans were embracing this American Dream. The only dream they had was a long nightmare. With reference to these historical facts, it is possible to argue that Egaeus started to have a monomaniacal fetish for Berenice's teeth because they were the true representation of a pure and perfect whiteness.

At first, his obsession was like a temptation but at the end, it spreaded out like a germ and invaded Egaeus' mind. The dual between Eros and its rival Thanatos is well represented in him. He could not fulfill his primal desire, could not overcome his death anxiety and therefore, became a slave of his irrational fear. Originally, the reader could not understand how severe Egaeus' obsession was. He could repeat a word so often that the word could lost its meaning or he would stay still, without any movement for a day.

To muse for long unwearied hours with my attention riveted to some frivolous device on the margin, or in the topography of a book; to become absorbed for the better part of a summer's day, in a quaint shadow falling aslant upon the tapestry, or upon the door; to lose myself for an entire night in watching the steady flame of a lamp, or the embers of a fire; to dream away whole days over

the perfume of a flower; to repeat monotonously some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, ceased to convey any idea whatever to the mind; to lose all sense of motion or physical existence, by means of absolute bodily quiescence long and obstinately persevered in; —such were a few of the most common and least pernicious vagaries induced by a condition of the mental faculties, not, indeed, altogether unparalleled, but certainly bidding defiance to anything like analysis or explanation. (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004)

Obsession occurs as a possessive fetish and it is aligned with the secrecy of death. When death is present, people start to obsess since the very nature of death is unknown to the living ones. This reciprocal play of opposites creates a literature of transference in the ingenious mind of Edgar Allan Poe. “How is it that from beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness?—from the covenant of peace, a simile of sorrow? But as, in ethics, evil is a consequence of good, so, in fact, out of joy is sorrow born.” (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004) Consequently, Poe’s usage of rhetorical and structural repetition creates more tension and arouses the sense of uncanny in his unique Gothic style.

In *Ligeia*, the narrator is repeating the dialectical contradictions of nature and life. He was fascinated by Ligeia’s eyes and started to become obsessed with those large eyes. Her eyes, being vivid focus of his imagination, served as subject of deep interest. The narrator, rather than being contemplative, became obsessed and lost distinction between reality and fantasy. “-I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby colored fluid.” (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004) His actions were repeating the repressed traumas of Edgar Allan Poe. As a matter of fact, in *Ligeia*, the traumatic experiences of losing both parents came back to life with the drama of revivification. As Eva Cherniavsky states, it can be argued that *Ligeia* “is the narrative of sentimental motherhood told from the vantage of a rationalized masculinity, of a son whose desire for an impossible return to the original maternal body matches only his terror of that other possibility, that the maternal would come (back) to him (Cherniavsky, 1995).” John Ingram adds that Edgar Allan Poe started to write *Ligeia* after having seen a dream about eyes.

(Ingram, 1886) In the unconscious level, Poe was greatly inspired by his mother's eyes. His childhood traumas were hunting him (Bonaparte, 1949) and Poe's Oedipus complex was chasing his mastermind. Just like his love of the mother, the narrator was fanatically in love with Ligeia. Nonetheless, the eponymous character dies at the beginning of the story. When the narrator remarries, he starts to feel unsatisfied. The defective love in Edgar Allan Poe's childhood, impedes him to fulfill his affection of love in the adulthood. Ligeia as being the primary and primitive love of the narrator, did not let narrator have another love affair. His obsession turns into a hatred towards his second wife and, when Lady Rowena dies, the narrator only wishes for Ligeia's resurrection.

Another obsessive theme can be seen in *the Raven*. This time the narrator was trapped in his deep sorrow and yet, he remembers the loss of his beloved-one relentlessly. Then, one can ask that if the narrator feels great pain whenever he remembers the traumatic experience, then why the narrator insists on remembering it? For the reason that, unlike sexual drive that Freud suggested before, the compulsion to repeat is much more instinctual and primitive. Death drive is the underlying drive and it comes before the principle of pleasure. Contrary to Freud's argument on seeing the compulsion to repeat as a way of self-destruction, Geyskens stated that: "The active repetition of the trauma is an attempt to "suffer" it and thereby to recover from it." (Geyskens, 2005) In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud mentions about the Agutainos tribe who inhabit Palawan and talk about their death anxiety by saying that the "widow may not leave her hut for seven or eight days after the death; and even then she may only go out at an hour when is not likely to meet anybody, for whoever looks upon her dies a sudden death." (Freud, 1990) As mentioned in this statement, it is possible to conclude that some people try to avoid social contact with the situations where death is the topic because they do not want to provoke their death anxiety. Nonetheless, Edgar Allan Poe was reviving his anxiety on the purpose of achieving a recovery.

Confrontation with extreme terror and helplessness creates catastrophic situations. Edgar Allan Poe could not control the course of actions throughout his life. He witnessed many troubled incidents. He saw his whole family dying because of an

illness. All of these incidents provoked the fear of annihilation in him. Existential psychotherapist Irvin Yalom considers the death fear as the four ultimate concern in human psychology. By saying “Death acts as a catalyst that can move one from one state of being to a higher one: from a state of wondering about how things are to a state of wonderment that they are.” (Yalom, 1980) he points out that death experience can totally shift one’s perspective. As it was used in *the Raven*, by repeating, echoing and uttering the word “Nevermore”, Edgar Allan Poe managed to ease his anxiety with an existential confrontation. In the quest of understanding Poe’s mastermind, it is crucial to understand how life and death are related to each other. Because, without death, life cannot be understood.

3. LONELINESS

The lonely days for Edgar Allan Poe started when he lost both his parents and became an orphan at the age of three. His mother was a young actress called Elizabeth Arnold. She was charming and successful in her career. She married actor David Poe. David Poe was an alcoholic and died of tuberculosis in 1810. Following her husband’s death Elizabeth Poe became very sick and an illness took her away too. It was then that Edgar Allan Poe was taken in by the wealthy merchant Allan family. This explains how he got the second surname. In 1811, Edgar Allan Poe started to live with the Allan family in Richmond, Virginia. His surrogate father John Allan was a Scottish tobacco merchant and he was living with his wife Frances Valentine. Mr. Allan was a bourgeois and he was ambitious enough to think that it would be impossible for him to adopt this poor child. Thus, he agreed on fostering little Edgar for a while rather than accepting him as a member of his family. On the other hand, John Allan had two other illegitimate children and, that can be another reason why he did not want to keep Edgar in the first place. Because of this, Edgar Allan felt resentful throughout his life. The Allan family did their best to provide him with a good education. They sent Poe to a private school. Mr. Allan wanted him to be a successful businessman and he raised Poe that way. Nonetheless, Poe did not follow his footsteps and indulged himself with poetry. The need for love and loneliness are best described in Poe’s one of the best

poems, *the Raven*. Once Edgar Allan Poe stated that "... the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world." (Poe, 1846) That was the most inspiring topic for him and he used this theme in *the Raven* as well.

The poem starts with the narrator's first meeting with the raven while he was sitting and pondering in his room. The description of that very moment intrigues the reader since the room is dark and the air is mystical. "Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" (Poe, 2005). Just like the shady streets of the century, *the Raven* opens with a melancholic tone too. It can be argued that Poe's understanding of the creation process coincides with the melancholy itself. When he was working on this poem, Virginia Clemm was so ill that she was confined to bed. Unfortunately, the deathbed was something that Edgar Allan Poe was quite familiar with. He spent long hours next to her bed while trying to find moments of relief and these moments were becoming more and more unreachable for him since her health was deteriorating. He must have felt very impotent. Once again, he could not do anything but watch. Poe's existence and role became passive again, he wanted to do something. At least, he wanted to feel a little bit powerful. That must be the time when his very first verses of *the Raven* popped out in his head.

In *the Raven*, Edgar Allan Poe represented his death anxiety as; "And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain - Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before." (Poe, 2005) In fact, throughout the centuries the raven has been regarded as a messenger of Gods and when the narrator sees the raven in his chamber door, he was expecting to get news from the animal. However, there was a problem, the raven was not speaking so he waited in great fear: "Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing – Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before." (Poe, 2004) Long afterwards, he hears the name of his dead love "Lenore". As Freud argue, there is a destructive impulse that all life is going towards death, and that impulse will destroy everything on its path (Freud, 1961). By mentioning his dead lover's name, the narrator seems to repeat the trauma of death.

Edgar Allan Poe used that kind of destructive themes in his literature a lot, yet it can also be argued that he saw a beauty in death. Because one can ask that; If there is just one life to have dreams come true, why to wait instead of trying to make them true? The quarrel between life instinct and death drive constitutes the source of artistic creation. In a sense, one could not be creative if one was immortal (Freud, 1920). That is also the reason why Edgar Allan Poe became the master of macabre, especially after having witnessed all the drama and traumas in such an early age. The darkness of the “black matters”, the muddy atmosphere of the uncharted human experience became gift for Poe’s artistic soul.

In his disturbed mind, Poe was feeling very lonely. While fantasizing about perfect love, Poe’s loneliness was getting bigger since he knew that he could not love another woman like his dead wife. Painful memories were coming back to life while creating these verses: “Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore! Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken! Leave my loneliness unbroken! —quit the bust above my door!” (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004) Despite the intensity of his suffering, at the beginning of *the Raven*, the narrator was curious and intrigued by death. However, when the raven entered it did not talk “Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door - Perched, and sat, and nothing more.” (Poe, 2004) For centuries, Pallas has been considered as the deity of wisdom. Poe, when talking about Pallas, was reflecting his confused mind in which death anxiety had already overpowered rational thoughts. On this issue, Arthur Schopenhauer suggests that the trauma of a loss assists the practice of a creative course: “Birth and death belong equally to life, and hold the balance as mutual conditions of each other, or if the expression be preferred, as poles of the whole phenomenon of life.” (Schopenhauer, 1969) As a matter of fact Edgar Allan Poe seemed to have already accepted the reality of the fact that beauty and horror make a perfect couple for the process of Gothic creation.

When the raven, with its black features, casts a shadow upon the bust of Pallas, the narrator remembers Lenore. The dreary surroundings and the repeating quote of “Nevermore” creates a bigger feeling of loneliness. It can be argued that one way to

relieve the pain of loneliness is to provoke that feeling. By doing so, one would not feel isolated anymore. Poe, himself implies that a poem is a study of mental derangement. His way of coping with life by his Gothic literature becomes eminent as the poem continues. The reader feels more alienated in the course of actions due to poem's repetitive nature. The word "nevermore" echoes in Poe's reader's ears and isolation surrounds the narrator. However, Poe wants to share his loneliness with his reader. That is the reason why reader becomes Poe's subject of attention. One fears the most when one feels alone and alienated. For that reason, building an environment of fear is important in Poe's poetry. Fantastical descriptions and gothic implications may have formed Poe's literature but on the other hand, poetry became the trademark of his writing.

The raven says no other word than "Nevermore", contrary to this, there comes a moment in the poem, when the narrator starts to think that this bird only utters the words of its unhappy master: "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store - caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster." (Poe, 2004) According to Freud, traumatic experiences cause repetition compulsion. As a matter of fact, the repetitive character of the poem is standing out with the alliteration of the word "Nevermore". The narrator, on the other hand, does not want to remember this pain again. He desperately tries to suppress his memories of Lenore. Contrary to Poe's own statement about *the Raven* and the denial of the intuitive writing process "It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem." (Poe, 1846), it is possible to argue that Poe reflected his estranged and lonely soul into his character.

Loneliness is usually accompanied by deep sorrow and Edgar Allan Poe lived an isolated life. When he was a child, he sailed for England with the Allan family. That created a big impact on his isolation. He was enrolled into a boarding school in the suburbs of London. It was a very quiet place. Besides the school was very historical. As a highly imaginative kid, Poe must have been inspired by the mysterious setting of this boarding school. He stayed there for 5 years and collected impressive memories

which he used in his literature afterwards. The old school and the ancient city awakened his imagination and aroused his intention to write. Being lonely provoked his desire and, he started to write his very first verses.

I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight, at the deep hollow note of the church-bell, breaking, each hour, with sullen and sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded and asleep. (Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 1949)

While Edgar Allan Poe was improving his literary and artistic skills, the Allan family was struggling with serious health problems. Mr. Allan was about to lose his business and he was having sleepless nights because of his huge debts. Mr. Allan needed to make a tough decision to withdraw Edgar Allan Poe from boarding school. In 1820, the Allan family sailed back to America. These oceanic voyages inspired him to create his most known works such as; *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, *Annabel Lee*, *MS. Found in a Bottle*.

In *the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, Edgar Allan Poe describes two characters who love sailing and the ocean. In *Annabel Lee*, Poe's narrator mourns after his lost love who lives "in a kingdom by the sea" (Poe, *Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2004) and in *MS. Found in a Bottle*, the setting is the sea. Writing about sea and the ocean shows Poe's isolation. Charles Baudelaire pointed out that his character was a true example of a 19th century artist who was "an isolated and brilliant victim of his artistic temperament, neo-European and aristocratic, essentially opposed to his bourgeois American milieu of 'money-making' journalism and democratic mediocrity." (Allen, 1969)

Poe's genius comes from his life experiences. When he came back to the US he started to live in Richmond, Virginia and, in the 19th century Virginia was the city of aristocrats:

No factory-chimney then polluted the clear air and Richmond still nourished its aristocratic traditions: the best families prided themselves on their birth and

lived in homes already ancient, full of menials and family portraits. Such was the environment in which Edgar was now to grow. (Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 1949)

In this city he started to study in a very popular school but the school made him quite unhappy. He was feeling alone and isolated. The fact that he was not as arrogant as other aristocratic kids he felt alienated. Besides, he was more intellectual than others but he could not be happy with that because his classmates had an impeccable taste in the field of genealogy and they were very proud of their ancestors. Eventually, they made him remember that his foster father gave him all the privileges he had. The environment and his classmates' behaviors dragged him into loneliness. Poe was suffering and he started gambling. That addiction cost him his educational life and he had a fight with his foster father. Shortly after that, Mrs. Allan died. Poe could not even get the chance to say goodbye to her. He was alone again. The trauma of losing both mothers created a repetitive compulsion: "The repetition-compulsion which governs our deepest instincts thus, as often happens, assumed for Poe the semblance of a fate imposed by destiny; a fate which, one by one, in similar though varied fashion, stole his "mothers." (Bonaparte, 1949) Although he had experienced painful bereavements, Poe used these experiences as an inspiration to discover and build his Gothic style. As an individual he was aware of the fundamental isolation which constitutes an unbridgeable gap between life and death, and as a writer he reproduced what he had been through.

In *Dream-Land*, Poe's Lonely narrator starts his journey in an unknown land. The feeling of uneasiness grabs the reader from the beginning of the poem. "By a route obscure and lonely, haunted by ill angels only." (Poe, 2011) Most of the time, angels are attributed to the positive adjectives, however, in *Dream-Land* they are ill. This makes one think that, maybe, this dreamland is more real than a dream. Because being ill signifies that the one is a living thing, not a phantasy. Dennis Eddings also points out this in his analysis of the *Dream-Land*. He believes that it is important to remember Poe's concept of the Spiritual and Material Universe that Poe mentioned in *Eureka* and, with the light of Poe's own ideas, he says that the dream-land is chaotic because it represents life experience and reality (Eddings, 2019). Throughout the poem a sense

of dislocation creates the realm of dreamland where Edgar Allan Poe wanted to drag his readers:

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore (Poe, 2004)

The images and the visualization of the landscape become very vivid as the poem continues. Phantasmagorical elements start to come out and, a sense of loneliness surrounds the reader. Besides, creepy creatures evoke something that is known, familiar but buried in the reader's unconsciousness. This is the basic thing that drives life, which Freud calls as death instinct. As a matter of fact, anyone who is alive, is going to die but anyone who is dead, will always remain dead. Nobody knows what happens when one dies and this vagueness creates great anxiety. Judith Herman states that "Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning." (Herman, 1992). By saying so, she describes psychological trauma as an overwhelming feeling of helplessness, fear and terror. With reference to this, it can be said that Poe's narrator in *Dream-Land* is in a journey which is not any different from Edgar Allan Poe's own journey. Because, on the edge of consciousness, in a deeper level, even the angels of Edgar Allan Poe get to die.

In the middle of the poem, Edgar Allan Poe describes a swamp: "By the grey woods, - by the swamp, where the toad and the newt encamp, -by the dismal tarns and pools." (Poe 2011) This Gothic element was put there on purpose. As Charles Brockden Brown, whom Edgar Allan Poe greatly admired, mentioned in the preface of *Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* American Gothic does not need castles or fantastic creatures to constitute a Gothic feeling. Because it has its own landscape and wilderness: "The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the Western wilderness, are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology." (Brown 1988) The swamp presents an uncanny and sublime landscape.

Because, by nature, the swamp is neither land nor water. It is in between of these two things. It is possible to say that Poe's *Dream-Land* serves as a passage between life and death.

Once, Sigmund Freud suggested that "A large number of dreams, often full of fear, which are concerned with passing through narrow spaces or with staying in the water, are based upon fancies about the embryonic life, about the sojourn in the mother's womb, and about the act of birth." (Freud, 2015) Who else can wish more than Edgar Allan Poe to go back to his mother's womb? By dreaming about the act of birth he also wishes to die and, vice versa. Never-ending quarrel between life instinct and death drive continues. As a matter of fact, they have reciprocal influence on one another. Each movement seeks to find equilibrium. When there is a rest and an equilibrium occur, the motion puts the state of rest into an end again. Even one sees limited motion, one should not think that nothing is happening there. Because nothing can remain the same.

In *Dream-Land* one finds oneself surrounded by stagnant and lonely waters which again shows limited motion. Nonetheless, by nature, even a cup of water cannot be motionless. It moves with the observer's movement. Edgar Allan Poe understood this dialectical thinking. As Hanhijarvi states "Dialectic, is for one thing, thinking in oppositions, conflicts, or contraries." (Hanhijärvi, 2015) Edgar Allan Poe, as an artist and an individual, knew that nothing stays the same. Therefore, he believed in change and created many different literary texts so as to forget his loneliness.

4. POWER

Edgar Allan Poe's literature is subject to a multi-layered reading. His writings consist of many implications, symbols and historical allusions. In this sense, a political interpretation of his literary writings is necessary. Historical connotations can be found in many of his works yet, while making their literary analyses, many critics omitted or ignored this issue. This subchapter, in connection with Fredric Jameson's arguments, is going to argue Poe's writings through the notion of political unconscious. Beyond

being a mere methodological suggestion, this part is aiming to grasp the ideological background of the Antebellum South and its cultural context in conjunction with the power struggles.

Political unconscious, as Jameson suggested, is a way of showing class conflicts in a literary text in which the political background is hidden. To him, the purpose of a cultural text can be understood by examining its own function. Jameson's method includes establishing a bridge between the material and its historical meaning. On this issue, he used Marxism along with psychoanalytic theory. In *the Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Jameson traces back the covered social content on the basis of semiotics. By referring to dialectical thinking as a means of historical reflexivity, he emphasizes the importance of a Marxian orientation. (Jameson, 1981)

19th century US was very different than 21st century's USA. The biggest distinction was the operational systems of the North and the South. The North was industrialized whereas the South was dependent on slave labor. The society became oppressive, class-divided and hierarchical. Many people tended to believe that the Africans were biologically inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race. Some looked for pseudoscientific ways to prove this argument, others just used the Bible's words to ground their ideas. Whatever their methods were, the South became the most slave populated part of the country. Even, the slave population outnumbered the white population in Virginia. Marie Bonaparte states that Edgar Allan Poe used to visit slave parts of the city.

We must also remember the part played by the surrounding negroes in those slave-owning days in the South. Doubtless, he would often have visited the slaves' quarters on his guardian's estate with his black nurse and, possibly, even the negro part of the town. (Bonaparte, 1949)

According to this implication, Poe grew up in a society which harbored uprising tension and, this was the perfect time for American Gothic to thrive. In his *Philosophy of Furniture*, Edgar Allan Poe ridicules American society and criticizes their lust for money:

We have no aristocracy of blood, and having, therefore, as a natural and, indeed as an inevitable thing, fashioned for ourselves an aristocracy of dollars, the display of wealth has here to take the place, and perform the office, of the heraldic display in monarchical countries. (Poe, 2011)

As a matter of fact, it was the time when many Americans tended to furnish their houses with Orientalist goods since the trade with the East dramatically increased. Eastern fascination was provoked by the extensive desire to domesticate these exotic civilizations. Just like American Natives, the Eastern cultures were absorbed by white Westerners. Schueller argues this point in *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature*:

Merchants competed to earn profits from trade to the Near East and Asia, tourists eagerly rushed to visit the Holy Land and marvel at the pyramids, travel writers churned out numerous books on Near Eastern and Asian travel for an omnivorous readership, and the public at large consumed vast quantities of Oriental goods. (Schueller, 2001)

As Duncan Faherty suggests, the identities in the Jacksonian era reflects the nature of white supremacy; “Intermingling of identities that composes the tale’s end reflects the nebulous state of personal identity during the Jacksonian era. Even the minutest drop of blood could modify a paragon of whiteness like Rowena into the shadowy figure of Ligeia.” (Faherty, 2005) All human beings are subject to history and their psychology walks hand in hand with the well being of the society. In the Antebellum South, the social unrest was affecting many people. Marx states that the fundamental reason for this unrest is the nature of the class struggle: “The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.” (Marx, 1970) As a matter of fact the 19th century was the time when bourgeoisie made its first appearances and people started to think that money was more important than human life and exploitation for commercial gain was placed on everything; “Finally, there came a time when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic and could be alienated.”(Marx, 1955)

Edgar Allan Poe criticized alienation in *the Man of the Crowd*. Even a flaneur who needs to feel relaxed and happy when he strolls down the city, feels estranged and

alienated. On one hand, the flaneur wants to escape from the crowd because of its anonymous feature. Yet, on the other hand, he wants to hide within the society. When Edgar Allan Poe described the crowd and the city he also mentioned the basic patterns of modernity:

With a cigar in my mouth and a newspaper in my lap, I had been amusing myself for the greater part of the afternoon, now in poring over advertisements, now in observing the promiscuous company in the room, and now in peering through the smoky panes into the street. (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004)

He also described the changing face of the society:

They were undoubtedly noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stockjobbers- the Eupatrids and the common-places of society- men of leisure and men actively engaged in affairs of their own- conducting business upon their own responsibility. (Poe, Essential Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, 2004)

French historian Alexis de Tocqueville had similar ideas about the problems of the modern society. Although his ideas were not fully flourished, he was right about the thing that solitude breaks and menaces us:

... not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants, and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone, and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart. (Tocqueville, 2019)

It may seem like each individual operates separately however, people are socially connected. The history of a single person can not be separated from the history of the society. Because, everybody is connected to each other by economical system and in the 19th century U.S, the slave forced economy of the South created its own consequences on its own people. As mentioned before, in 1831, when Poe was in his twenties Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion broke out. Many people died along the way and the streets of the Southern states became full of abandoned black children. As an orphan, it is possible to say that Edgar Allan Poe shared the grief of these orphaned black children "Thus, in his misery of the eternal orphan, eternally hoping to be

fostered again.” (Bonaparte, 1949) It comes as no surprise that Poe shared this figure of blackness in his most popular poem, *the Raven*. When the raven with its pure blackness sits on the bust of Athena – the goddess of wisdom – it pushes Poe’s reader to question the text’s historical connotations. The slaves must have wondered and wanted a rational reason for their deathlike experiences. They were questioning and trying to rationalize how a skin colour can provoke a sentiment and idealization of one race. It seems like Edgar Allan Poe could not find a rational answer to that question either. This can explain why the raven sits on the bust of Athena but does “nothing more” (Poe, 2005).

Dream-Land is Poe’s another work which presents historical implications and hints rich symbolism. As mentioned before, the narrator talks about a swamp in the poem and this swamp reminds of The Great Dismal Swamp which is close to Virginia where Edgar Allan Poe considered as home. It is so vast and large that if one is careful enough then one can live hidden from the eyes of others. That was actually what the fugitive slaves did for hundreds of years: “The Great Dismal Swamp served first as a secure hiding place and then as home for fugitive slaves from the South. Slaves began running away to the swamp in the late 1600s.” (Traylor, 2010) William Alexander states that, by the time Edgar Allan Poe published *Dream-Land*, the Maroons had already been settled in the mesic islands of the Great Dismal Swamp: “The black fugitives who became the swamp’s majority in the early to mid-eighteenth century would have been primarily saltwater slaves or native Africans.” (Alexander, 2008) Like the slaves of the century, who were kidnapped and forced to work on the plantations -the saltwater slaves - until their lives ended, the narrator of *Dream-Land* brings about an irritating feeling of being thrown away into an unknown environment. By saying “Out of SPACE—Out of TIME” (Poe 2011) the narrator points out his feeling of uneasiness. Because nothing can grow in the swamp but still, as a result of the slave economy, many black people needed to spend their lives in the swamp. It is also known that Edgar Allan Poe praised the historical importance of the Great Dismal Swamp by mentioning about it in his *the Philosophy of Furniture*. He complimented Chapman’s painting of the Lake of the Dismal Swamp and emphasizes its suitability

with the walls of a well-furnished room: “Many paintings relieve the expanse of paper. These are chiefly landscapes of an imaginative cast—such as the fairy grottoes of Stanfield, or the lake of the Dismal Swamp of Chapman.” (Poe, 2011)

People are inclined to think that Gothic literature only produces the effects of terror, shock or chaos. However, they tend to forget its revolutionary aspects. The power struggle in the 19th century Antebellum South was more than devastating. While the slaves were being threatened by powerful landlords, Poe’s literature employed symbolism to represent anger and sorrow in his country. Due to the fact that he lived and wrote in the South, he had no other choice but to conceal his regret behind symbolism. Poe’s views of social relations and power struggle were beyond the oppositions of the good and the evil. That is why he created his unique Gothic style as a means of resistance in which everyone can find something related to their life experience.

CONCLUSION

Edgar Allan Poe's life was very difficult. In the 19th century, there was an extreme disorder in his life and in his country. Many people tried to explain the reasons behind Edgar Allan Poe's unique Gothic style. Although many of them were very successful in finding relation between his art and his life, the socio-political aspect of his period was mainly excluded from their analyses. In this thesis, I present in depth analyses of Edgar Allan Poe's works to better understand how political anxieties and childhood traumas shaped his Gothic style.

Edgar Allan Poe spent a considerable portion of his life in the proslavery parts of the United States. He has been criticized of being a slavery defender because he did not directly condemn the "peculiar institution". However, Edgar Allan Poe wanted to eliminate prejudices on his reader's minds, yet in his works he reflected the anxieties of the proslavery South. Indeed, Poe's characters are mostly the people who are portrayed as waste products, the debris of the legal order or the remains from nation's law obedient citizens.

Edgar Allan Poe lived in the 19th century when the corrupted sense of liberty put the value of money on top of everything. It is not surprising to find considerable amount of monstrosity and cruelty in Edgar Allan Poe's writings. What more ways could be found to fight with a society in which force by human was openly acknowledged? This is an actual answer for whom Edgar Allan Poe's literature has served. In the modern world, firms invest their funds in the training of their employees in the hope of getting more profit out of them. However, this is also a form of slavery. Before talking about Poe's legacy, it would be better to conclude the purpose of this study by mentioning the major influences of Edgar Allan Poe and how they met the expectations of Gothic literature in times of chaos and disorder.

To start with, we have mentioned that Edgar Allan Poe was orphaned and adopted at the age of three. He was never totally acknowledged by his foster father. This affected him tremendously. The application of this axiomatic to the family life of

Edgar Allan Poe helped this study to better grasp the nature of Poe's production process. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari said "Psychoanalysis is the technique of application, for which political economy is the axiomatic (Guattari, 1983)" and, in his literature, Edgar Allan Poe dealt with the ambiguity and uncertainty of human material. Thus, Poe's main concern was to define something or someone as a person.

In this study, I propose that his quest was established by the problematic status of human which was derived by capitalism itself. In spite of having the first representations of the capitalist economy, half of the world had already considered black people as lower beings. It is also indicated that, in Poe's Gothic style, the perils of possession can be found. Destruction, decaying, cutting, immurement, being possessed by strange powers constitute the core of his art. Besides, Edgar Allan Poe likes constructing tragic representations.

As mentioned in this study, Edgar Allan Poe used his wisdom and intellect to create paradoxical characters within the range of irrelevant chronological events. By doing so, he created a unique Gothic style to reflect the quarrel between life and death drives. The time changes but the struggle with life instinct and death drive stays intact. In spite of sounding antonymic the reader catches the harmony in Edgar Allan Poe's works. This is where his style of using alliterations affects the reader. His unique style resides in the arms of Gothic but it can be argued that his meticulous education in Classical Literature helped him form a base for his literature. Not only, did Edgar Allan Poe become a prominent figure in the United States but also, he is recognized throughout the world. What makes him so unique and why he chose to create his art in the Gothic genre became the preliminary questions of this study.

A literary review of the psychology is covered in the first chapter of the thesis to have a deeper understanding and knowledge on human psychology. A short introduction to the study of psychology has been put along with the evolution of the psychological theory. In the light of Sigmund Freud and his pupil Marie Bonaparte, Edgar Allan Poe's works are examined. However, it has seen that the core questions of the thesis have been limited because by nature, psychoanalysis provides subjective

perspective. Thus, I examined the historical aspects of the century to provide another perspective. By doing so, this research took a turn from being a single-angled subjective study to a more approachable synthesis.

There is a conflict between social demands and individual desires and most of the time this is what a creative mind needs. In other words, the production process of creating a masterpiece does not necessarily need to have a positive correlation between the level of happiness and a stable life. The second chapter constitutes the most analytical part of the study. The political situation of the Antebellum South has been analysed in depth. In this chapter, I aimed to show the analogy between slavery, capitalism and Edgar Allan Poe's unique tools of terror such as replicating characters who are seemingly obsessed with the trauma experience itself as well as the tension which is derived from chaos and disorder. In this context I referred to several scholars and theoreticians to support my argument. Also, a comprehensive discussion of death trauma and how it affected Edgar Allan Poe's writing process has been put under the scope. Since madness, obsession, loneliness and power are the most recurring themes in Edgar Allan Poe's literature, the analyses have been done under those names. Some of Poe's masterpieces are explained to establish a bridge between the political situation and life-death drives that Edgar Allan Poe used as preliminary sources for his creativity.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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