

Sense of Gloominess and Despair in Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Poems: Textual and Analytical Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Edgar Allan Poe's life was plagued by melancholy and disaster, which is evident in all of his writings. Among the many other poets of his generation, his solitude and individuality set him apart from the rest. He gave the Gothic genre a completely new meaning, making it both dark and significant at the same time. First, as an overview is given, of the 19th century, Edgar Allan Poe, and the tragedies that influenced his poetry.

This study employs a comprehensive methodology focusing on the close reading of three of Poe's well-known poems: "The Raven," "A Dream within a Dream," and "Alone." By analyzing how sadness and sorrow are portrayed in these poems, the paper investigates the extent to which these emotions impacted Poe's writing. The analytical approach involves delving into the thematic and stylistic nuances of the selected poems, shedding light on the intricate ways in which Poe articulates his emotions.

The purpose of this study is to tackle the sense of gloominess and sadness by employing textual and analytical approaches. The significance of the feelings of loss and sorrow in Poe's writings is addressed, drawing connections to Poe's life story. The findings demonstrate that Poe's writings occasionally converge with personal catastrophes, tragedies from his own life, and stories about death sadness, and grief come together on multiple occasions over the course of his demanding career.

Concluding that sadness, sorrow, and everything that comes with it were indeed lurking in every one of his statements, this paper contributes to the existing literature by portraying the semi-autobiographical image of the author within the realm of his poetry. The textual and analytical approaches used in this study provide a nuanced understanding of how personal experiences influenced Poe's poetic expression, enriching our comprehension of the intricate relationship between his life and art.

Keywords: *Gothic Writing, Dark Romanticism, Loss, Sorrow, Death*

INTRODUCTION

America in 19th century

The United States uses the term of 19th century to describe the years from 1801 to 1900. America was a young nation in 1800. By the end of the century the nation had rapidly expanded

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westward, established itself as the dominant force in the Western Hemisphere, transformed its economy from one based on agriculture to one based on manufacturing, and endured a civil war that almost brought the country as their forefathers had envisioned it to an end. The most significant 19th century events in America include: the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, the Monroe Doctrine, Jacksonian Democracy, Abolition, the war with Mexico, the Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, the Closing of the frontier, and the Spanish-American War (Findling and Thackery 6,36,43,106,108,145,173,178).

The vileness of some periods in American history is beyond serious debate. Indisputable aspects of its past include the genocide of the Native Americans, slavery, marriage by purchase, and so on. There is compelling evidence that these incidents are brought on by white racism, masculine privilege, and often the careless accumulation of money "the tendency of money to strive after ever-growing indifference and mere quantitative significance coincides with the ever-growing differentiation of men . . . and thus money becomes less and less adequate to personal values in man" (Altmann 58).

American Romanticism was influenced by the Romanticism Movement that happened in England in the eighteenth century and continued onwards to the early nineteenth century (Habich & Nowatzki, 4-5).

With the election of Abraham Lincoln American Romanticism came to an end by 1860 “. The era of American romanticism had come to a violent end. By the time of the war, the major figures of the romantic movement were of advanced age or dead” (Phillips et al., 82).

Most famous 19th century poets include Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Helen Hunt Jackson, Edgar Allan Poe, William Cullen Bryant, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Louise May Alcott (Baldwin).

Dark Romanticism/ Gothic Literature

Romantic literature is split into two categories: Light Romanticism and Dark Romanticism (Dinçer 10). All of the positive things that people wish to do in life are contained in the Light Romanticism. The dark side, which represents everything wrong with human life, is quite different from the light side. Because the poetry frequently contains dark, eerie, dismal, and depressing tones, the works labeled as Dark Romanticism tend to have poetry that has a sad ending.

It is believed that the Transcendental movement in America during the 19th century known as Dark Romanticism gave rise to the widely read sub-genre of Gothic Literature which it presents “the darker side of awareness... guilt, fear and madness... the uncomfortable sense of being in a fantasy world which is about to reveal secrets of the human personality” (Howard 3).

Also, as stated by Nyman in his book about Dark Romanticism “Nineteenth-century American literature fully embodies the two sides of romance: death and love, heaven and hell- they all are present in much of Edgar Allan Poe's writing” (11).

Dark Romantic writers believed that people are drawn to the evil and self-destruction, in contrast to Transcendentalists who believed that humanity’s capacity for perfection and their

own divinity are inherent attributes. The themes of Dark Romanticism center on frailty, self-destruction, judgment, retribution, as well as the emotional consequences of sin and guilt. Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickenson, and to a lesser extent Herman Melville are among the writers who embraced this genre, using Gothic elements in their work which dealt with utter dread, individual suffering, graphic morbidity, and otherworldly represented an even darker side of the Dark Romantics (Thompson 5).

While the idea of Romanticism was centered on Nature, Nature being the elements that surround us and also calling attention to the elements that are within us, or human nature. "Nature was highly valued by the movement, and man's connection to it was a key component. Furthermore, it was idealistic and sought to explain "the why rather than the how of reality" (Eigner 3). The Romantic writers included the duality of nature in their writings, emphasizing the common, observable beauty while providing room to investigate the terrifying, intangible ugliness of nature. This juxtaposition of nature's two sides allowed authors like Poe to base his stories on the idea of psychological decay while blending supernatural happenings into his stories.

The notion that the world was a harmonic whole piqued the suspicion of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville "emphasized in their writings the ambiguous, discordant, and chaotic aspects of human experience. They were not disposed to deny the reality of evil" (Phillips et al. 58).

While Romanticism exalts the inherently transcendent nature of human ambitions, Dark Romanticism is distinguished by an obsession with feelings like dread, horror, and the grotesque side of imagination. The genre emphasizes the insignificance of the individual by replacing happiness and peaceful solutions with death, loneliness, and alienation. It also serves to remind readers of the gloomy Romanticism of Gothic fictions (Nyman 23).

Stated by Fisher in the 5th chapter of the Cambridge Companion "The term 'Gothic' admittedly, originated in a confluence of history and architecture. The Goths were a northern Germanic European people whose ways and beliefs differed largely from those of Greco-Roman Classical civilization farther south" (72).

Edgar Allan Poe is regarded as the father of the Dark Romance genre. Many of his works are typically regarded as belonging to the genre (Koster 336). Poe abhorred transcendentalism vehemently. In honor of the pond on Boston Common, he called the movement's adherents "Frogpondians" and mocked their writings as "metaphor-run," slipping into "obscurity for obscurity's sake" or "mysticism for mysticism's sake." Poe once stated in a letter to Thomas Holley Chivers that he only disliked the pretenders and sophists among Transcendentalists (Silverman 169).

The Effect of Gothic Literature on Poe

Gloomy and ominous tales by renowned American writer Edgar Allan Poe, is perhaps the earliest of Gothic American writers who helped to catapult Dark Romanticism to new heights.

Poe receives high acclaim from H.P. Lovecraft, being a successful horror writer himself, who credits him with being the first to see possibilities for storytelling when dealing with psychological issues (Ahmed 10).

His characteristic curiosity for human psychology, particularly the wicked and destructive aspects of the conscious and subconscious mind, is evident in most of his poetry (Auden 518). Poe's gloomy romantic works include the poems "The Raven" and "Ulalume".

According to Nyman "Works by such authors as Charles Brockden Brown and Edgar Allan Poe are not mere historical fantasies but they explore the field of evil and darkness, contrasting the rational with the irrational" (21).

His most recurrent themes center on issues related to death, such as its outward manifestations, the consequences of decomposition, worries about early burial, the possibility of the dead being brought back to life, and grieving (Kennedy 3).

Several Gothic elements, particularly those used by Edgar Allan Poe in America and the romans fren' etiques (or "frenetic novels") in France in the middle of the nineteenth century, served as a foundation for Sigmund Freud's idea of the unconscious in the late nineteenth century as a vast storehouse of very old, infantile, and suppressed memories or impulses, the archaic underworld of the self (2).

T.S. Eliot stated in his article "from Poe to Valery", "He wrote very few poems, and of those few only ½ a dozen have had a great success: but those few are as well known to as large a number of people, are as well remembered by everybody, as any poems ever written." (327).

Poe's Effect on American Literature

In the antebellum American publishing industry, Edgar Allan Poe, poet, short story author, and critic was a contentious figure. In numerous American publishing locations, like Richmond, New York, and Philadelphia, Poe worked as an editor and contributor to magazines. Then his ambition led him towards editing his own magazine (Hayes 7).

Poe started his literary career in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Throughout his life Poe published more than 350 poems, short stories, reviews, and essays; his contribution to the development of an exclusively American literary style; and his ongoing effect on Modern literature and culture (Sova 3).

Nowadays many critics place a strong emphasis on Poe's works as artistic compositions, as opposed to older critics who attacked his writings and looked for the inspiration for it in his mind and life. Contemporary poets recognize Poe as an artist whose stories, poems, and essays display his creative abilities and convey a sense of modernism in literature that is still relevant more than a century and a half after his death. They no longer see each poem and story as merely the expression of Poe's emotions and mental state, but they now see them as works of art "Poe is regarded as one of the founding writers of modern literature, both in popular forms, such as horror and detective fiction, and in the more complex literary forms of poetry and criticism" (Sova 11).

Poe died in 1849, and the obituary papers that followed his passing sought to explain what his contemporaries thought to be the main contradiction in his life "he was one of the country's preeminent literary 'geniuses' yet he had lived a life of misery and privation. Overwhelmingly, Poe's contemporaries were forced to conclude that his peculiar personality was responsible for his lack of professional success" (Hayes and Tomc, 21).

Edgar Allan Poe: The Portrayal of Grief and Sorrow

Poe's writings frequently have strong emotional resonance. Tragedies abound in many of his writings, just like in his own life. But whereas some stories end with a character going through a tragedy and becoming distraught, giving the reader a shattered narrator or main character near the conclusion suffers a catastrophe end and is left in a state of mourning.

Poe's work frequently depicts grief and suffering, which is appropriate given the genre of literature. Although they do not appear to have any intrinsic value, these components do play significant roles in the stories that surround them. Grief and Sorrow serve as either the culmination of a series of character acts or as transforming catalysts having an essential purpose within the individual plot plus "In some cases, like "The Raven", these emotions serve both functions at the same time; grief and sorrow are emotions present in the beginning, and they later spark other emotions such as anger, and finally the narrator returns to a state of grief and hopelessness, via a transformative and transformed sorrow" (Kaas 25).

The life of Edgar Allan Poe was tragic. It is also crucial to remember that despite some claims to the contrary, he most likely battled alcoholism and despair at various points in his life. His illness was not limited to substance misuse. Whether Poe intended this or not is unclear, but the characters in "The Raven", and "A Dream Within a Dream" do indeed go through feelings that are probably analogues to those Poe went through at the time (Bogusslavsky & Boller 59).

Death and melancholy are discussed in "*The Philosophy of Composition*" Poe says: "I asked myself –"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death – was the obvious reply" The apparent response was that death was the "most depressing of subjects." Therefore, he claims that melancholy is "the most legitimate of all the poetical tones." Poe wanted to employ the most widely understood sorrowful subject possible, so he decides to write about death (368).

Tragedies that Affected Poe's Writing/Poetry

Poe's writings were greatly influenced by his personal life and misfortunes, though in this period the lives of many Romantic writers were full of misfortunes "A fact of life in the nineteenth century was the firsthand knowledge of the fragility of human life. In nearly all of the biographies of the great romantics, one will find tragedy" (Phillips et al. 62).

Poe's personal life reflected his menacing imagination. Poe was three years old when his father left him an orphan and abandoned his family. This abandonment caused Poe's mother Elizabeth to plunge into a pit of obscurity and adversity, which contributed to her early death. "From his father Edgar inherited family pride, incongruous gentility, histrionic habits, a volatile temperament, sensitivity to criticism, self-pity, instability, a perverse self-destructive tendency and an Irish weakness for drink" (Meyers 6).

Poe also suffered the losses of other women he had loved, including his foster mother Frances Allan in 1829, surrogate mother Jane Stith Standard in 1824, and young Elmira Royster in 1826, when their relationship ended (Kopley and Hayes 194).

Also, the death of his brother Henry, which brought back memories of the passing of his mother, was Poe's final significant loss. Poe wrote on the connection in 1829 and said that "there

can be no tie more strong than that of brother for brother – it is not so much that they love one another as that they both love the same parent.” (Hayes et al., 194)

On October 3, 1849, Poe was discovered intoxicated in the streets of Baltimore and transported to the Washington College Hospital. He passed away there four days later, early on October 7th, still too incoherent to explain what had happened to him (Kaas 10).

Poe had severe agony throughout his life as a result of realizing how inevitable death is and the void it leaves behind. These feelings consumed him, causing anxiety, drinking, and eventual insanity. It is not surprising, then, that the subjects of his melancholy, occasionally gory works are sick, despondent women who abandon their loved ones by dying, as this echoes the misfortunes he suffered from a young age which led him toward writing many poems, including “Annabelle Lee”, “The Sleeper”, “The Raven” and more (Amador et al. 5).

Only a few of Edgar Allan Poe's works made him popular. Edgar Allan Poe has been the subject of numerous studies and articles as he is the most well-known among other Gothic authors and is regarded as the father of Dark Romanticism. His writings had a recurring theme of all things: gloomy and dark, which prompted many gothic enthusiasts to attempt to decipher its significance.

Literature Review

A number of studies have tackled many gloomy themes throughout Poe's poems. For instance, Monica Amador analyzed the theme of death in five famous poems of Edgar Allan Poe. Poe felt such a dreadful hole without the female characters who were so important to him that he became fixated on the romanticization of dead women in literature. This mirrored the theme of death in his poems such as: “The Sleeper”, “Lenore”, “To One in Paradise”, “The Raven”, and “Ulalume – A Ballad”. Amador recognized the recurring themes in Poe's life and literary works were that of death and women, with the reoccurring motifs of grief, melancholy, nostalgia over the past, insanity (Amador 1, 30).

On the other hand, Marjiya Ahmed demonstrated the negative and destructive qualities of the subconscious and conscious minds regarding Edgar Allan Poe. The literary scene has undergone numerous alterations because of Edgar Allan Poe. Poe's accomplishments as a poet and author is not limited to ushering in a new era of detective fiction; he is also recognized with popularizing and establishing the genre of horror stories. She said it can be challenging to avoid finding Poe's influence in gothic and horror literature, he was the pioneer in popularizing the horror subgenre (Ahmed 36).

Ladan Bakhsh argues in her article “A Deconstructive Reading of Edgar Allan Poe's ‘The Raven’”, which is about losing a beloved, after its publication, even Poe offered some self-criticism and gave the readers an authorial sense. Additionally, poststructuralist literary theory, the idea of deconstruction, was used to interpret it. The study identified the poem's main binary oppositions, as how these opposing concepts can easily cross paths and be utilized interchangeably without having a predetermined, final interpretation. Such as, melancholy/happiness, fantasy/reality, reason/emotion, with oppositions of darkness/light, are not contained within any fixed center, concluding no definite meaning to be attached to the

recurrent themes. It was suggested that in the poem's context, meaning resists closure and finality, instead it is perpetually postponed and unstable. Reaching the conclusion that meaning is always evolving, growing, and dodging finality (Bakhsh 19, 27).

Allen Tate stated in his article "It is no wonder, then, that Poe wrote so few poems. There are not many ways to deliver his message of spiritual solipsism and physical decay if the poet limits himself to romantic expressionism." He also argued that he was a harsh and strong individual who was ironically didactic. In Poe's poetry, the phrase "rhythmical production of beauty" refers to the expression of pure emotion that leaves the reader with a purely emotional reaction to which he is unable to respond (Tate 223).

Also, Maria Lima wrote in her article "Poe and Gothic Creativity", "Poe's work reveals the paradoxical nature of art, as deeply conscious of the germ of destruction in every creative act, ... to imitate the way the universe was created." Gothic art compels us to look at frightening picture though it isn't as upsetting as today's reality, Poe himself predicted this when in the 19th century he said "I have no faith in human perfectibility. I think human exertion will have no appreciable effect upon humanity. Man is now only more active—not more happy—not more wise, than he was 6000 years ago" (Lima 22, 28).

On the other hand, numerous critics have different opinions regarding Poe, as if he frequently seemed as a somewhat disheveled victim of characteristics he did not quite comprehend.

No literary endeavor has so horribly deteriorated among us as the story. The works of Mr. Poe offer a reprieve in such circumstances. His story moves forward with enthusiasm, his colors are used with care, and when the results are magnificent, they are meaningful. The articles with such issues are more engaging than others because of the level of expertise displayed in the management of abhorrent or horrible circumstances. Even failures are indicative of a strong mind with a purpose in mind (Fuller 1).

Stoddard stated, that despite the fact that most of his poetry is unintelligible, Poe is a highly regarded poet. Poe belongs to a literary school that we vehemently disapprove of, and he is unquestionably its master (199).

Getting used to that kind of sparring, therefore there is no need to mention how frequently American critics have attacked his poetry. Good poets around the world receive the same criticism from lousy reviewers (Baudelaire 144).

The perfection of dread that permeates his literature has unfairly been blamed on a character flaw. However, I fail to see why knowledgeable critic would commit this error. Poe has shown the least of himself in his works of any author, ancient or modern. He wrote creatively. He immediately understood what Schiller had so eloquently stated—namely, that it is a general characteristic of human nature for the melancholy, the frightened, and even the horrifying to enchant us. Up till he was in the very abyss of its center, the only master of its effects, he examined this basic psychological law in his intricate windings through the mystic chambers of our existence (Burr 19-33).

In the end, Poe's poetry is likely to be categorized as "electric lights of imaginative literature," which are brilliant and dazzling but lack heat. They also demonstrate an intense faculty for

technical and abstract beauty, excessive use of rhyme, an inexorable propensity toward nocturnal themes, and a demonic undertone behind every page (Whitman 147).

“The Raven” (1844)

For the first time "The Raven" appeared in N. P. Willis' New York *Evening Mirror* on January 29, 1845. It was described as "the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country.". Poe's epic poem "The Raven" is one of his most well-known pieces. It was initially published in 1845, but Poe presumably started working on it in 1844 (Hayes 192). The poem is divided into 18 stanzas, each of which has six lines. Trochaic octameter is used in each line, and the rhyme pattern generally follows ABCBBB, though this can vary when inner rhymes are considered. Poe's poem makes good use of alliteration, which complements rhymes and internal rhymes in each line (Kaas 19).

Poe went on to detail “The Raven” concerning its functions in “*The Philosophy of Composition*” as a result of the poems' immense popularity. He claimed that the poem was meant to appear to be a mathematical puzzle. The reader must be able to finish the poem in one sitting, he emphasized. He concluded that the reader would have forgotten the poem's meaning if they had to go back and read it. They should be able to finish it in one sitting. Poe suggested that a poem should include roughly 100 lines. There are 108 total lines in “The Raven”. This poem was really written backwards. He started writing from the third to the last stanza and went backwards from there. He claimed that the plot was decided upon first, followed by the effect and that the chain would expand backward for a single impact. Poe firmly believed that in order to genuinely compose anything, a truly fantastic narrative is necessary.²

Poe became famous due to the poem during his first nine months in New York City. Poe also released “*The Raven' and Other Poems*” in 1845 in an effort to focus on the poem's popularity and his own rising star. By releasing “*The Philosophy of Composition*” in 1846, in which he purports to give an account of how he wrote the poem. This gave more credence to critics who have viewed Poe as a conscious rather than a purely creative artist (Sova 156).

What Loss in Life Caused Poe to Write “The Raven”?

Poe's life probably included a number of catastrophes at the time "The Raven" was written and published. Poe was already a frequent drinker at this point, and Virginia had started to exhibit early signs of tuberculosis a few years earlier. Seeing a beloved family member deteriorate due to a disease like tuberculosis can undoubtedly cause feelings of grief or sorrow, much like those described by Poe in "The Raven". The narrator in the story was describing a lost love, perhaps an emotion Poe himself felt towards his wife (Kaas 20). Additionally, as he was writing "The Raven," he might have known that his "young, gentle, and idolized wife" Virginia

² [Critical Analysis Of Edgar Allen Poe'S “The Raven Essay Example - PHDessay.com](https://www.phdessay.com/critical-analysis-of-edgar-allen-poe-s-the-raven-essay-example/)

would pass away because she was diagnosed with tuberculosis three years prior to the poem's release, and she died two years after it appeared (Quinn 480).

Martens stated in his thesis “discussing women in the works of Edgar Allan Poe, one cannot help but notice how often they are completely ignored... Moreover, when women do appear in his stories, they are often placed in the role of helpless victims... This image is the one that is best known among Poe readers and therefore constitutes the prototypical Presque woman (19).

In a letter to a friend in 1846, Poe described Virginia's death “six years ago, a wife, whom I had loved as no man ever loved before... Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all the agonies of her death... I had, indeed, nearly abandoned all hope of a permanent cure, when I found one in the death of my wife. This I can and do endure as becomes a man. It was the horrible, never-ending oscillation between hope and despair which I could not longer have endured, without total loss of reason. In the death of what was my life, then, I received a new but –Oh God!—how melancholy an existence” (215).

Unmentioned in “*The Philosophy of Composition*”, Poe had a personal link to “the death... of a beautiful woman” in his life. Poe's loss of his mother and other people he had loved is likely what inspired the poem, partly. Poe claims that the poem was composed in an ultra-rational manner, yet the poem's motivation appears to have unjustified sorrow (Kopley 194).

In “*The Philosophy of Composition*” as cited in Thompson, Poe says “The Raven” is “emblematical of mournful and never-ending remembrance”. Here the black bird signifies the student's endless remembrance of his lost Lenore, Poe's never-ending memory of those he loved and lost, as well as our own endless recall of our own lost loved ones. This certainly is the poem's key. Although there may not be a “surcease of pain,” this poem does contribute to building a global community of shared sorrow throughout time (25).

Analysis of “The Raven”

The raven is a representation of the narrator's loss. Since ancient times, ravens have frequently been viewed as an omen of death, evil, misfortunes, and the paranormal. The bird represents pain brought on by loneliness and isolation in the poem.

The poem's symbolism helps to create a theatrical tone that accentuates the main character's deep sadness and loss. “The Raven” personifies this emotion. In particular, the conflict one can never ignore, the fight of control over the feelings of sadness and loss, is explored in “The Raven” which examines the realm of emotional wars that people face in all spheres of life. These conflicts are not physical, but they nonetheless cause bruising and scarring. With this poem, Poe has created a great piece of writing that speaks to the emotions and experiences of every reader who encounters it.³

The poem opens in a dark and chilly location on a dismal night with an unexpected knock at the door. A figure who is already worn out and exhausted introduces a story that is already worn out

³ Rehman, Noor. “The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe”. *Poem Analysis*, <https://poemanalysis.com/edgar-allan-poe/the-raven/>. Accessed 2 December 2022.

and emotionally draining since, as we will later find, the character has already suffered a lot before this poem even starts. The peaceful nightfall builds a picture of mystery and suspense for the reader. In order to express his sorrow about losing his beloved Lenore, the narrator is reading the book of "forgotten lore" which is essentially ancient stories and folklore that were researched by experts, to emphasize his worn-out state of mind (thus we presume the figure is a scholar or student of sorts).

The sight of the stranger knocking at the door is abruptly interrupted as the speaker's thoughts take over. He pauses here to inform the reader that this scene occurred in "bleak" December, when "dying" fire embers were creating "ghost"-like shadows on the ground. He was urgently attempting to distract himself with his books in order for the night to end faster while grieving the loss of Lenore. The fact that he calls Lenore a "unique and radiant maiden" and states that she was now "nameless forevermore" in the world make it very clear that he held Lenore in high regard. It also becomes clear that she had passed away⁴.

He initially has mixed feelings about the tapping and doubtful whether to open it or not. He reassures himself that it's just a visitor and "nothing more". At the time of his visitation, the sad narrator of "The Raven" is "ponder[ing], weak and weary," and this passive condition of bereft mourning is more typical of the poetry than the tales (Hayes 173) ("The Raven" LL, 1-6).

Additionally, the narrator's chamber serves as a visual representation of the man's loneliness and melancholy. The room serves as a coffin in this poem's depiction of death and terror, serving as an index for us as a result. Lenore's death is depicted, along with the internal death of the poem's narrator (Balan 100).

Suddenly, he remembers the uneventful memories that happened in December, he tries to escape the reality of her death through reading by the dying fire; The story takes place at midnight and in December, which both represent the end of happiness in the narrator's life. December is a month of frugality, death, and coldness, which represents the end of something and the beginning of something new (Balan 100) ("The Raven" LL, 7-12).

In the last verse the narrator refers to her beloved as "Nameless here for evermore" ("The Raven" L, 12), William Freedman explores two readings that are accorded to this "nameless," noting its paradoxical meaning given that the speaker of the poem frequently calls the "nameless" by name:

Nameless here for evermore - only to be named twice more but three stanzas later and yet again twice more in the rest of the poem. That which will be nameless here for evermore, in other words, will be repeatedly named - a paradox that lends itself to several interpretive possibilities. For J. Gerald Kennedy, it is because "Lenore 'signifies' the absence which afflicts him" that the speaker perversely and self-punishingly cannot resist naming her. For Blasing, Lenore may not be the actual name of his beloved at all, but a "generic name for... the male speaker's anima-muse"; hence her real name does remain unspoken. (Kennedy and Blasing, quoted in Freedman 25).

In the third stanza Poe attributes the rustling of the purple curtains to melancholy and doubt ("The Raven" L, 13). There is no doubt, Poe's fictional works all contain significant amounts of

⁴ Rehman, Noor. "The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe". *Poem Analysis*, <https://poemanalysis.com/edgar-allan-poe/the-raven/>. Accessed 2 December 2022.

color symbolism, as stated by Harutyunyan “Edgar Allan Poe is a superb example of the writer who uses color symbolism in his works to play off the emotions of his readers. Using elements of nature, dread, superstition and legend” his use of colors symbolizes death and illness, mystery, and spirits (245).

The narrator seems to think Lenore has emerged from the grave because he is torn between reality and his imagination. Again saying "nothing more" he implies that he thinks it's simply a visitor (“The Raven” LL, 14-18). Equally hopeful and fearful, he opens the door (“The Raven” LL, 19). Hoping to see his lost beloved even if it's as a ghost, but also fearful of the unlikeliness of that to happen. As he opens the door, there lies only darkness (“The Raven” L, 24). He stands there in utter silence, staring hopelessly into the darkness and accepting the fact that no one's there (“The Raven” L, 25). Out of his desperation he whispers Lenore's name, and all he hears back is an echo (“The Raven” LL, 28-30). He starts to blame the blowing of the wind against his chamber door (“The Raven” L, 36).

In the seventh stanza, while encircling the shutters, a raven rushes inside and lands on a Pallas (“The Raven” L, 41). Poe provides a cryptic allusion to mythology, Pallas of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom. Therefore, the location of the bird's landing on the statue might imply some sort of defiance against reason and intellect. Also, “Plutonian” (“The Raven” L, 47) related to Pluto, god of the underworld (Kopley and Hayes 194).

The narrator tries to understand where this unusual bird has come from, which makes him think and recall old times from the “days of yore” (“The Raven” LL, 38-48).

Freedman maintains the theory of the raven being a metaphor for the lost Lenore: “The visitor who eventually brings nothingness in its wake is also Lenore: a vacancy equated with darkness and the raven but also with the woman and the perpetuation of utter absence and uncertainty.” (26)

The narrator expresses his belief that the raven will fly away with the break of morning, leaving him alone once more. Since he had previously lost his lover, Lenore, who had been taken from him by death, the speaker's lack of confidence in life is evident. The raven once again replies his plea with “Nevermore” (“The Raven” LL, 50-60). He no longer has any hopes or faith in the future and is instead obsessed by an inward abyss that threatens to destroy his sanity. He also has no significant purpose in life (Amador 22).

In “*The Philosophy of Composition*”, Poe explained the use of the phrase “Nevermore”, this rendition's repetition of the word serves as a logical conveyance for the refrain. Also, Bloom made remarks regarding the same issue:

The bird is thus a figure for mechanical poetic repetition. The purveyor of the burden has to be a bird: the intentional relation to a signified is denied through the nonhuman repetition of a pure signifier. The word “nevermore,” offered here as the most poetical of words, in fact crops up uncannily as a distinguishing poetic mark, the words that the poet used helps the reader to feel the atmosphere of sadness and fear. So if the word “nevermore” stands in Poe as a figure for poetic language as such, a number of theoretical implications can be drawn. Since the bird is not human, the word is proffered as a pure signifier, empty of human intentionality, a pure poetic cliché. The empty repetition of the word therefore dramatizes the theoretical priority of the signifier over the signified which Poe claimed when he said that he began the text of the poem with the letters o and r. The plot of “The Raven” can be read as the story of what happens when the signifier encounters a reader. For

the narrator of the poem first introduces himself as a reader, not a lover—a reader of “quaint and curious forgotten lore.” Poe’s claim, in “The Philosophy of Composition,” that the poem was written backwards (commencing 98 Volume 60 with its effect) applies both to the poem and to the essay about it: both are depictions not of the writing but of the reading of “The Raven” (23).

In the eleventh stanza he thinks to himself that the bird is employing words “stock and store” that it learned from a prior unfortunate master. Later, the narrator initially finds the bird entertaining and asks its name, but it only responds with “Nevermore”. He sits on a chair because he can't help but be intrigued and wondered about the origin of the word "Nevermore" and what this “ominous bird of yore” is trying to convey (“The Raven” LL, 67-72).

The main character is knowingly allowing grief to control his thoughts. He thinks he is having a dialogue with the raven as he questions about his mental health and the afterlife, but he is actually talking to himself. In the nineteenth century, people thought that melancholy frequently resulted in despair and agony; in Poe's writings, the protagonist's brain constantly balances self-control and self-pity (Rahman 32).

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Poe aims to convey darkness, gloom, melancholy, loneliness, grief, death, and nostalgia by utilizing a bird like the raven; this bird has various meanings, and it may also be a symbol of unending sorrow. It also conveyed the loss of hope and of lost love. We also have a color symbolism, two hues that are directly opposed to one another: Lenore is represented by bright colors, while the speaker of the poem is represented by dark colors, which correspond to his melancholy. Darkness is employed to depict the speaker's loneliness and melancholy (Balan 99,100).

A sudden realization fills him with grief and sorrow, that he is lying on the "velvet lining of the cushion," which Lenore would never again sit on with her body (“The Raven” LL, 75-78).

In the fourteenth stanza the narrator then notices that the air has grown "denser, perfumed from an unseen censer," and claims that this must mean that "Seraphim", or angels, have arrived to aid in the narrator's process of grieving for Lenore. One of the six-winged angels manning God's throne is a Seraphim, a biblical figure who represents "life, ardour, and purity". He starts posing the raven with absurd queries, whether God had brought him there to give him some solace after Lenore's passing was one such question. He searches for "nepenthe" in hopes that it will help him forget his traumatic experiences. A mythical anti-sorrow remedy called nepenthe, often known as the elixir of oblivion, is mentioned in Greek literature, most notably in Homer's *The Odyssey* (Amador 23). The raven’s answer is yet again “Nevermore” (“The Raven” LL, 81-84).

He grows more frustrated and anxious, the narrator begs the raven if heaven will give him some hope of seeing Lenore again if there is "balm in Gilead"; a Biblical allusion. yet the bird answers, "Nevermore". He becomes enraged, says the raven is a “thing of evil!” and was sent by the devil. The narrator again inquires as to whether he and Lenore would cross paths "within the distant Aidenn," or Eden, an Arabic word for paradise. But once more the bird answers, "Nevermore" (“The Raven” LL, 85-96).

In the seventeenth stanza the narrator yells at the bird to go back to "the Night's Plutonian shore!" and never come back, now enraged and heartbroken, begs the raven to leave his "loneliness unbroken". However, the bird does not move from the head of the Pallas and says "Nevermore" ("The Raven" LL, 97-102).

The raven is "never flitting, still is sitting" on the bust of Pallas as the poem comes to an end, with the narrator being overcome by sadness. His avian friend is now a burden to him. He cannot stand the bird's constant presence. The narrator ends the poem by claiming that he still lives in the raven's unavoidable shadow, which stands for the persistent shadow of destructing thoughts, the raven put him in a worse mental condition than he was at before ("The Raven" LL, 103-108). Amador commented that "the last three lines of the poem resound as an epitaph, as a recited damnation: there is no salvation for his grieving soul" (25).

In drawing a distinction between mind and reality, lunacy and sanity, in Poe's poetry and across the range of human psychology generally, Freedman stated "this is the absorption of reality into the subjective intelligence, the subordination of both language and the world to the creative mind. The raven that begins as the voice of the other, the irrevocable truth of reality or fact, becomes but an expression of the haunted projective imagination" the tragic term "Nevermore" takes on the depressing connotations that have been attached to it by the tortured recollection of the speaker: the world is darkness, a blackened bird that speaks only a single syllable, barren unless we give it a context in which to be understood. Since the raven might represent our own sadness, even the word might originate from within (29).

The very strong connection Poe has with his antagonists, most of whom share his tendency toward self-destruction and become victims of their own terrible impulses. The author exposes the perversity of human nature to his readers through them. He frequently employs the imagery of death and evil as a metaphor for art itself, including pieces that make references to horror or the gothic, which are not always entirely negative (Lima 24).

Elisabeth Bronfen concludes "art needs dead bodies, art creates dead bodies. In the images of the beautiful but dead female faces... decorated skull, the perfection of aesthetic idealization meets its opposite, monstrosity" (168). As the phrase goes "art does not come from happiness", being a victim of his own perverted aesthetic aspirations that drove him to use the death of beautiful women as its motif, Poe was acutely aware of the costs of creation and its retributive effects. also maintaining its tendency to be negative Poe produced his art through his writings.

Gloominess and Sadness in "The Raven"

Like many of his works, "The Raven" tackles death, how it affects the living, and whether or not there is a hereafter where they can be reunited with the dead. The poem's narrator, who is dealing with the loss of a loved one, sees their memories as a painful, unavoidable burden "since the beginning of this poem, we can feel the ambiguity of the man's mental state that has been introduced. His inner fear from the unknown makes him somehow irritable" (Bakhsh 24).

The tone, which refers to the poet's attitude toward his subject, is portrayed in "The Raven" as a powerful aspect that allows the poet to enhance his sentiments of isolation as stated through his unique diction or symbols such as; blackness, ebony, stillness, night, and gloomy December. With the help of these depressing words, the reader is further convinced that the narrator's loneliness is something negative rather than happy. Additionally, the first-person narrator is used to convey this lonely and depressing mood to the reader, allowing them to experience his pain alongside him and enhancing the impact. Because the narrator is experiencing heightened grief over the death of his spouse, the tone of this poem is melancholy. But because he entered into an imaginary discourse

with the raven and imagined it repeatedly uttering "Nevermore," it exacerbated his moral decline and misery (Afaf and Youcef 11).

Throughout the poem, the emotional tone of the conversation between the raven and the gloomy speaker fluctuates and develops as the speaker goes through various emotional states—from fury to rage to despair—in response to the raven's apparent precocity (Sova 165).

The raven's repeated use of the word "Nevermore" according to Stern, adds to the poem's mood in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*. Despair and desolation are evoked by "The Raven." The term "Nevermore" is used often by Poe because it perfectly encapsulates the poem's depressing tone. Additionally, the raven appears differently in the final two stanzas than it does in other verses, where it is typically a sign of evil. Currently, it stands for the "mournful and never-ending remembrance" (564).

Gloominess and grief are felt frequently throughout the poem, but they become more intense near the end. Although the narrator of the poem states at the outset that he feels "sorrow for the departed Lenore" this particular narrator is actively attempting to deal with his feelings of loss, grief, and sorrow. That is, until the raven enters the room and, consequently, the story, at which point, the narrator's emotions begin to change and remain in flux throughout the poem (Kaas 21).

Sova mentioned that the emotional tone of the conversation between the raven and the gloomy speaker evolves throughout the poem as the speaker transitions from being first pleased by the raven's precocity to being angry, then dejected. While the reader could be enticed by the bird's seeming bad characteristics and extraordinary propensity for answering the speaker's questions with "Nevermore" (156).

Lou Reed in his tribute to "The Raven" has claimed that "obsessions, paranoia, and willful acts of self-destruction surround us constantly" and that Poe's worries about dying and psychological breakdown are similar to our own.

Also, Kaas mentioned that "sorrow is the emotion present at the beginning of "The Raven", but it is a sorrow that the narrator is handling, through his reading. Towards the end of the poem, the sorrow has transformed, through hope and anger, to hopelessness – and the narrator is quite clearly in a worse place with the raven present" (22).

Therefore, the raven might be thought of as a stand-in for the narrator's unconscious mind. In other words, he talks to himself, or it would be more accurate to say that he argues with himself to stop hurting. Some people think that the raven "is nothing but an anthropomorphized rendition of the narrator's subconscious despair" (Jung 3).

By this time, a raven, a bird associated with bad luck, could be seen reciting the solitary word "Nevermore" in a sad tone at the end of each stanza of an approximately 100-line poem. While keeping the focus on finally or perfection at all times, the question was posed, "Of all sad subjects, what, in the ordinary understanding of humans, is the most melancholy." The only sensible option was to end one's life. Also questioned whether the most poetic subject matter was this depressing one. The answer is also simple given what was previously covered in great depth. "When it most closely relates to Beauty: Then the death of a beautiful lady is without a doubt the greatest poetical subject in the world, and equally is it beyond dispute that the lips best adapted for such subject are those of a devastated lover" (*Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* 1185).

Lastly, Pruette stated "the poems of Poe are songs of sorrow, beauty is in them, most often dead beauty, love is there, most often the love of those who are dead to him, and madness is there, as if the expression of the prophetic powers of his unconscious" he had had such terrible feelings coming to him in real life often enough in episodes of acute sadness while under the influence of

drugs or briefly going insane. This led him into situations he neither wanted nor thought would be beneficial to him (384).

“A Dream within a Dream” (1849)

The poem first appeared in the March 31, 1849, issue of the *Flag of Our Union*. Poe wrote "A Dream Within a Dream" seven months before he passed away, at a time when he was growing more frustrated with his writing and experiencing more profound sentiments of loss (Sova 59).

Similar to other poems like "The Raven" and "Eulalie," "A Dream Within a Dream" shows a miserable narrator who is overcome with loss and perhaps the poem has the strongest connection to the passing of his wife and cousin Virginia; we examine a letter he wrote to a fan, describing his feelings after it: "Every time I experienced the pain of her passing, I became more in love with her and became more tenacious in my attempts to hold onto her life. I am, nevertheless, unusually sensitive and anxious due to my constitution. With extended stretches of terrible sanity, I became nuts. I drank, God knows how much or how frequently, during these periods of complete unconsciousness. Naturally, my enemies blamed the craziness for the drinking rather than the drinking for the insanity. When my wife passed away, I had in fact all but given up on finding a long-lasting treatment", in this poem the anguish results from the narrator seeing his entire world disappeared before his eyes (Wilson 18).

The poem has two stanzas, each with 11 and 13 lines, make up the 24 lines that make up "A Dream Within a Dream". The first stanza's rhyme pattern is AAABBCCDDCC, and the second stanza's rhyme pattern is AABBBCCDDEEFF (Kaas 22,23).

All that we see is only a dream within a dream, the poet asserts at the close of the first stanza, raising the question of what is required to distinguish between the dream and reality. The poet pleads in the second verse, "Can I not grab / them with a tighter clasp?" he is tormented by his inability to grasp the sand grains in his hand. His final question of doubt is "Is all that we see or seem / But a dream within a dream?" after realizing that he cannot protect even one grain of sand from "the pitiless sea" (Sova 59).

According to Dabbagh, like the majority of Poe's works, "A Dream Within a Dream" is a complex journey through the poet's, the readers could also be the third person. One of his most literary analyzed poems is this one (1005).

Analysis of “A Dream within a Dream”

From the poem's title "A Dream within a Dream", we could tell that the author is attempting to convey a message. It could be an uncertain concept, yet Poe's skill never ceases to astound us. Throughout the poem he is attempting to explain to us that the world is really a dream, that nothing in life is real. Due to this our life might be compared to dreams, which can be either happy or unhappy. Here, he is departing, everything is fading away, making it a melancholy dream (Dabbagh 1006).

The speaker of this poem discusses loss and the anguish it causes. Although this poem is only a few lines long, each one is bursting with emotion and significance, making it obvious that the speaker was directly affected by the issues it addresses. This poetry is rife with regret and grief such that the words can practically be heard crying themselves! The speaker nearly seems to be pleading for a way out of their loss-related anguish. It may be difficult to tell, but it appears that the newbie is speaking to all people (Cook 1).

Poe begins the poem with a ceremonial farewell to his loved one in the first Stanza (lines 1 and 2). "Take this kiss upon the brow! And, in parting from you know," these two lines capture Poe's love

and sorrow over losing his loved one. Poe also depicts a kiss on the brow and separation, which subtly suggests that he and his loved one are initially breaking up.

The poem begins when the speaker of the poem gives an unidentified addressee a kiss as he bids farewell to this someone who is presumed to be a lover "Take this kiss upon the brow!". We can see there is a feeling of hurry, possibly even of desperation. The next two lines support this claim by showing that the speaker is, in fact, parting from the addressee at the moment ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 1-3).

In the fourth line the speaker responds, "You are not wrong" by this supporting the addressee's statement that the speaker's days "have been a dream". It is important to observe how vague the situation is, neither the speaker's identity nor the addressee's identity is known to the readers. This ambiguity, however, contributes to the poem's main concept, which holds that reality is ultimately illusory or unknown on some level ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 4-5).

What happens when hope fades away, the narrator questions "Hope has flown away/ In a night ,or in a day". He inquires as to whether it matters or not. Does it really matter if hope fades away or does it actually make a difference? For whatever reason, the narrator has lost all hope ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 6-9).

In the last two lines of the first stanza the poem reiterates its earlier assertion that life is merely "a dream within a dream" in an effort to heighten this feeling of doubt and uncertainty ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 10-11).

In the beginning of the second stanza the narrator tells of his position, alone, near the sea "I stand amid the roar- Of a surf-tormented shore". The speaker tries to clutch onto the sand to verify the reality of the world "I hold within my hand- Grains of the golden sand", but the sand keeps slipping through his fingers. The speaker's lack of assurance and control also seems to be conveyed by the shoreline's frequent movement. The speaker searches for something substantial to cling to "How few! yet how they creep- Through my fingers to the deep" ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 12-17).

The poet is weeping and the sand is slipping through his fingers at the same time ("A Dream Within a Dream" L, 18). It makes logical that he would be disappointed if clinging to the sand is how he connects to reality, to anything that is tangible. He is frustrated, which is why he keeps repeating the clause "while I weep". His grasp of reality is sliding from his fingers like the sand "the pronoun 'I' is repeated also to provide hints about the truthfulness of statements" (Dabbagh 1008).

In the nineteenth line the narrator turns to God. He asks God if he can hold the sand grains more firmly in his hand as they fall between his fingers, as if he were pleading for his life. This offers us an idea of the narrator's desperation to conserve the sand grains. He tries to establish the reality of things and dispel any illusions or dreams ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 19-22).

Towards the end of the poem, the narrator is truly debating whether or not everything we perceive, comprehend, and everything that appears is just a dream within a dream, compared to how earlier he merely stated it. He is still not quite prepared to believe that all we see is only a dream within a dream and nothing else, despite all of his sobbing and the sand that flowed through his fingers. He therefore leaves this query up to the readers at the poem's conclusion "But a dream within a dream?" ("A Dream Within a Dream" LL, 23-24).

His hope is slowly fading away, he now enters the most severe stage of depression as a result. Perhaps he is not yet ready to face his losses in life and the things that eluded him, like his love or

the sand, that ultimately slid through his fingers. Perhaps he believes that nothing happened at all and that everything was just a dream or an illusion (Dabbagh 1009).

Melancholism and Despair in "A Dream within a Dream"

In "A Dream within a Dream," the narrator displays both desperation and nostalgia. Standing on the seashore, he longs for days gone by. The beach contains the same grains of sand that he holds in his hand, but as the narrator states, he is holding only a few, signifying his life is almost over. This might be taken to mean that he has reached the end of his days, witnessing his entire world vanish is what causes the melancholy in "A Dream Within a Dream" (Kaas 23).

The speaker in this piece, who is a sufferer of unrequited love, uses a dismal, low, forceful, monotonous, and pessimistic tone throughout. It conjures up a melancholy image of the speaker alone on a shore, waiting as the sun of his life slowly sets. The speaker loses all hope when he leaves. He speaks to his loved one and informs her that all of his hope has vanished and that he no longer cares about the days or the nights. Whether or not he has a vision for his life is unimportant to him. He claims that none of these things can change how hopeless he feels right now. This is the pessimistic zenith. Though the speaker does not expressly state the cause of his melancholy or hopelessness, we might be surmised that perhaps he is leaving his beloved and that is why he is feeling this way.

The narrator draws parallels between reality and dreams because he is aware that everything in our lives is transitory, just like a dream. Nobody can stop life from moving on or hold onto anything for an extended period of time. "To Edgar Alan Poe life is nothing due to the fact that everything will vanish at the end. Nothing lasts, and when we look back on those things, it feels like a dream. Eventually, it leads to the concept that there is a dream inside a dream. Both of them are dreams and both of them fade away" (Dabbagh 1010). Poe's despair makes him realize that nothing in life is permanent; no matter how tenaciously we cling to it, everything will eventually fade away.

Diane Johnson starts her article, which she wrote to commemorate Poe's 200th birthday, by mentioning the free-associative elements of Poe's works "long before Sigmund Freud mapped the 'swamps' of the human psyche, Edgar Allan Poe roamed there... Poe gave us access to his own tormented unconscious with an openness" (1).

Commenting on the themes in Poe's writings, "life is, in Poe's vision, the thing to be defeated, to be transcended, or to be evaded in acts of an aesthetic character. These acts are simultaneously the destruction of the self and the creation of the perfect poem" (Moldenhauer 297).

"Alone" (1829)

Poe's poem "Alone", which was originally nameless when it was first written in Lucy Holmes' autograph book, was not released until September 1875 by E.L. Didier in *Scribner's Monthly*. In just 22 lines, Poe's deeply intimate poem "Alone" depicts in vivid detail the profound loneliness he felt early in life and the sensation of isolation that persisted with him until his passing (Sova 20).

Poe has deeply felt early loneliness and sense of isolation, which persisted with him until his death, are vividly expressed in "Alone" an intensely personal poem. The speaker acknowledges in the opening lines that "From childhood's hour I have not been / As others were—I have not seen / As others saw—I could not bring / My passions from a common spring." The speaker expresses his inability to share in others' happiness in the lines that follow, as well as his early realization that,

while others may experience the serenity and certainty of a "Heaven [that] was blue," he is destined to constantly see "a devil in my view" (Sova 29).

The poem "Alone," which depicts the author's sentiments of loneliness and inner suffering, is frequently seen as autobiographical. Poet Daniel Hoffman said that Poe's poem *Alone* was proof that he "truly was a haunted man." However, the poem, which Poe wrote while he was only 20 years old, is an introspective about his youth (50).

Close-Reading of "Alone"

The narrator of the poem describes his childhood's seclusion and loneliness in the opening lines "From childhood's hour". He claims that he has known he is different from those around him since the beginning of his life and that this difference is the result of the way he views the world and it turned into a significant aspect of his personality "As others were—I have not seen / As others saw", he saw the beauty in the dark and the unusual whereas ordinary people would only see passions and goodness in things lighthearted like spring "I could not bring / My passions from a common spring" because he cannot experience joy or happiness from the same things as others ("Alone" LL, 1-4).

This time, in order to emphasize that his sorrows are his own and not shared with anyone else, he continues, "From the same source I have not taken my sorrow," which gets the reader to the title of the poem, "Alone" he explains that his sorrow "From the same source I have not taken / My sorrow" did not come from the same place as everyone else's, the source of his pleasure was not the same also, "I could not awaken / My heart to joy at the same tone". Even in the things he loves, he feels alone. This same omnipresent, alienating pain echoes across everything he loves and touches "And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone", the things that the speaker "alone" likes, in other words, he is "alone" in his experiences ("Alone" LL, 5-8).

Also, as stated by Martins, the first eight lines express a passionate inner search for a sense of self that is separate from society. These sentences can be understood in the perspective of Poe's own life because his family's experience of community was considerably different from what he saw others experience "the poet may be expressing a response to feelings arising from profound and repeated loss rather than simply an expression of grief at the passing of a loved one" (133).

The ninth line reveals that the speaker is preparing to change the course of the poem. The narrator's life seems to be gripped by a mystery at some point during his childhood, and it appears that mystery still holds sway over him today "The mystery which binds me still". Not to forget that Poe is reflecting on his childhood when he writes this poem much later in life. In these lines, the author of "Alone" explains the mystery that looms over him like a dark cloud. Both the good and the bad in his life are encoded in this code, which he is unable to crack on his own and for which no one else has the answer. His mind is a mystery to himself. His tendency to despair and inability to perceive the positive aspects of this talent just serves to make matters worse for him. Poe struggled with several addictions and social problems as a result of his intense grief ("Alone" LL, 9-12).

In the next lines, the narrator mentions forms of water, such as, "torrent" or "fountain", which both symbolize life. A visual feeling is frequently evoked by color "gold" in "Autumn", in this season leaves take golden colors and fall off the trees, technically, Autumn is a transitional season. Poe highlights the actual hues in which his world is perceived by him. Also, forms of earth "mountain" and light "sun". The narrator is portraying his own transformation here, from a lost and bewildered youngster to someone with access to a very potent mystery. Poetically speaking, this change is also taking place ("Alone" LL, 13-16).

He notices the mystery in the thunder and storms he hears above him as well as in the lightning that shoots past him in the sky “the lightning in the sky”, “pass’d me flying by”, “thunder and the storm”. It’s certainly likely that the speaker is discussing all of these horrifying and upsetting things because they in some way, mirror his own inner struggles (“Alone” LL, 17-19).

Commenting on the use of pronouns and articles in the poem Dabbagh stated, “the pronoun ‘I’ is used many times to show the uncertainty and the depression the poet experience. The article a in a tighter clasp shows the poet’s psychological state that he only wants one grasp; one chance; one hope” The poem’s ambiguity and uncertainty are demonstrated by the repeated usage of the article ‘A’. The poet himself lacks confidence in his hope, which is why he employs the indefinite article ‘A’ to denote it. He is doubtful about his dream, his hope, and his life. This indicates the poet’s lines reflect his dejected disposition (1009-10).

The line “the rest of heaven”, in this context does not directly refer to the sky or the realm, Poe contrasts himself with the rest of the universe and the other inhabitants he is aware of. He is simultaneously enthralled and cut off from others. He still struggles with isolation because of the storm-like darkness persona. Finally, the loneliness suffocates his thinking. Thus, the author himself is the demon. He views his own distortion as a curse that always pushes him deeper into agony. While the world was normal for everyone else (the rest of Heaven was blue) and his imperfect self-awareness referred to as “the devil” was always with him (“Alone” LL, 20-22).

Martins argues that by putting the pair’s initial line in parenthesis “Poe is detaching it from the body of the poem, but one could also argue that he is drawing it back into the overall context because of the complete lack of punctuation. So this line is both a part and apart from the whole work” (134).

One can speculate that the first two stanzas of the poem gave Poe the opportunity to express and comprehend the uniqueness of his lived experience, leading him to accept his difference. One can also conclude that the poem’s final two lines express the poet’s natural justification for why his universe was distinct from others around him. The line “a demon in my view” “communicates his understanding that his vision is not precise, that it, in fact, is deceiving him, or in other words, he is expressing an intuitive awareness that his acquired cognitions of self and the other are inaccurate and even a traitor or a demon to him” (Martins 135).

Loneliness and Helplessness in “Alone”

The speaker has felt distinct from those around him since early childhood since his sources of “passion” and “sorrow” were different. He went through everything alone, while other people shared their happiness and sadness. Additionally, in his perspective, nothing is typical. He ends up living alone in a secluded world of the imagination because he can’t share his sights with others. Either way, his seclusion is a necessary component of his interaction with the dark, enigmatic depths of his own soul, the very depths of a poet as Poe.

Due to the usage of the first-person point of view, the narrator in “Alone” conveys intense sentiments of loneliness that the reader may relate to. The main purpose of the point of view narrative structure is to confine the reader’s perspective to what the narrator believes and feels, making the impact stronger. In this narrative poetry, the narrator portrays himself clearly and differently from his friends, which caused him to retreat from life and become lonely, missing out on its enjoyment (Afaf and Youcef 15).

The reader can see how Poe’s writing might have shielded him from the hardships he experienced as a youngster and teenager. His “demons” or flawed cognitions may have been banished by the

poem "Alone", which functions as a sort of conditioned association, allowing him to express his sentiments of adolescent angst, perplexity, abandonment, and solitude. Negative facets of his character may in part be attributed to the emotional trauma he endured from early childhood through to the late adolescent phase (Martins 138).

Ackyord specifically mentioned the significance of Poe's writing process for the formation of his identity. He also claimed that Poe appeared to have an overstated picture of himself and was frequently perceived as being arrogant throughout his adult life, that his writings gave him a feeling of self "he hardly seemed to know himself at all, but relied upon the power impassioned words to create his identity" (109).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this graduation paper has made it possible to identify and analyze the recurring themes that connect Poe's poetry to his personal life and philosophy. The following themes have often drawn attention: the feelings of loss, sadness, hopelessness, melancholy, helplessness, and despair.

Poe frequently portrayed loss and sadness in his writings, which was appropriate given the genre of the literature; Dark Romanticism is characterized by a fixation on emotions like dread, terror, and the monstrous side of imagination. By substituting death, loneliness, and alienation for happiness and peaceful solutions, the genre emphasizes how insignificant humans are. This genre is credited to Edgar Allan Poe as its originator. The genre is often thought to encompass many of his works. It can be concluded that Poe was well-versed in describing feelings of loss and despair. Demonstrating how his sadness and misfortunes worked as a primary source for the inspiration of his poems, his private life reflected his terrifying imagination. He had indeed experienced numerous catastrophes throughout his life. Poe's father abandoned his family when he was only a child, left him an orphan. Elizabeth Poe, Poe's mother, died young as a result of this neglect. Afterwards, his anguish was made worse by the passing of his brother Henry at the peak of his youth. Additionally, Poe experienced the loss of other ladies he had loved, among them was the death of his young and idolized wife, Virginia. All of these misfortunes impacted the theme of his writings. Because of its manifestation in a variety of ways, sorrow is a multifaceted emotion in Poe's poetry. The raven, who represents sadness in its physical form, serves as the poem's main motivator. In "The Raven," the narrator bears a heavy burden of sorrow and despair. As the culmination of a long-standing deteriorating process, death is an inevitable outcome in Poe's writings, though he does not always reach the same conclusion about death, especially in the case of "The Raven," which bears the name of a deceased woman yet takes an angle on the issue of the afterlife. The most poetical phrase employed here, "nevermore," really reappears uncannily as a distinctive poetic mark. The poem's narrator, who is dealing with the loss of a loved one, sees their memories as painful. The poet's choice of words such as, midnight, drear, weak, weary, nevermore, demon, evil, loneliness, raven, and many myths and symbolism including Pallas of Athena, Plutonian shore, Gilead, Aidenn, and nepenthe, allows the reader to experience the atmosphere of melancholy and terror which adds more emphasis to the concept.

In "A Dream Within a Dream" the narrator portrays life in a kind of slow motion as he observes the sea and grains of sand slipping through his fingers and life itself ebbing away "How few! yet how they creep/ Through my fingers to the deep". Poe's desperation helps him to recognize that nothing in life is eternal; no matter how tenaciously we hold onto anything, it will eventually disappear. He is dissatisfied if his connection to reality, to anything physical, is through his

grasping at the sand. He continues saying "while I weep" which indicates his frustration. Like sand, his grasp of reality is slipping through his fingers. When hope fades away, the narrator questions "Hope has flown away/ In a night, or in a day". Does it really matter if hope fades away or does it actually make a difference? Seemingly, the narrator has lost all hope.

Through the first opening lines the speaker acknowledges in "Alone" "From childhood's hour I have not been / As others were—I have not seen / As others saw—I could not bring / My passions from a common spring" Poe hopes to convey to the readers how different he was from the rest of society and how he had felt this way since his youth, as if he were a total outsider. He was unable to derive joy and sorrow from the same sources that other people could. Even in the things he loved, he felt alone. This same omnipresent, alienating pain echoes across everything he loved and touched "And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone", the things that the speaker "alone" likes, in other words, he was "alone" in his experiences. His individualism forced him to live alone in a closed-off realm of his imagination because he was unable to share his visions with others. In either case, Poe's seclusion is a crucial element, the reflection of the most cryptic depths of his own soul; the very depths of a poet as profound as Poe. His poetry might have protected him from the struggles and traumas he went through as a child and adolescent. The poem "Alone" may have helped him to overcome his "demons" or erroneous cognitions by allowing him to articulate his feelings of adolescent angst, confusion, abandonment, and solitude.

Edgar Allan Poe was a divisive character in the antebellum American publishing world. Despite living in poverty and misery, he was one of the nation's foremost creative geniuses. His eccentric demeanor is what brought him so many readers even after all these years, and due to his creative writing, even future generations would remember him.

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