

A study of despondency and trauma in Edgar Allan Poe's life and literature

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Introduction:

This MA Thesis focuses on exploring the life and literature of Edgar Allan Poe. My primary concern for this text is to analyze how Poe's literary works represents PTSD and trauma theory, and how his biography clearly reflects the development of a distressful and depressing existence. For this reason, there will be two main sections of this thesis, where the first will concern the biography of Poe, with the purpose of establishing an understanding of the struggles and difficulties he endured in his life (Mabbott 531-569, Pruette 370-395 & Odasso 13-14). With this in mind, I will first discuss Thomas Ollive Mabbott's extensive biographical account of the poet's life, in addition to Lorine Pruette's arguments concerning how environmental circumstances and natural inheritance, influenced his youth, upbringing, and adult years (531-569 & 370-395). Secondly, I will analyze fictional literary characters of Poe from a perspective of classical psychoanalytic criticism (Tyson 33-34 & Poe 420-423 & 195-207). To further specify, this section will examine how the psyches of fictional characters in Poe's literary works, exhibits characteristics and symptoms of PTSD, how trauma's core is enigmatic, and how the pathology of trauma include belatedness to overwhelming events (Caruth 3-10 & 417-420, Gargano 259-264, Rizvi 18, Carlson 168-174, Shackelford 109-122). To that end, the research argument for this thesis, claims that the psychology of fictional characters in "Morella" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," exemplifies how trauma and its paradoxes are represented in literature, because the mentalities of these characters are confronted with concepts such as anxiety, fright, loss, delusion, and pain (Caruth 3-10, 417-420 & Poe 420-423 & 195-207). In order to prove this, the first literary analysis will examine the narrator's relationship to a woman named Morella, and how her intellectual superiority over the husband, produces an intrusive image and the desire, which the narrator chooses to suppress. Ultimately, this manifests states of fright and a delusional condition in the narrator, which are realized in the husband's relation to his daughter, after the death of his wife (Caruth 2-4, Gargano 259-264, Rizvi 18, Carlson 168-174 & Poe 420-423). In the second and more extensive analysis, I will be looking at "The Fall of the House of Usher" and its illustration of Roderick's depressed state, and how this condition manifests symptoms of schizophrenia, that eventually develops into grief and hallucination.

Furthermore, this examination will also discuss how this condition significantly affects the narrator and Roderick's psychology throughout the tale (Caruth 3-10, 417-420, Shackelford 109-122 & Poe 195-207).

Historical context:

Poe was an American poet, writer, critic, and editor who was widely recognized for cultivating short stories and poems, which focused on mystery and the macabre (Cestre, "Edgar Allan Poe"). The information concerning the facts of Poe's life, have been hard to determine for several decades after his death in 1849. Before his demise there were disturbing rumors that circulated about the author, which were further emphasized and manifested by the impact of Rufus Griswold's work. The relation between these two individuals was originally established through a promise, where Poe entrusted Griswold who was a notable anthologizer, to preserve and care for his literary papers (Levine 683). However, according to Robert S. Levine, instead of fulfilling this promise, the legacy and reputation of Poe was sullied through Griswold's campaign of character assassination, where false claims, forgeries, a deceitful obituary, and rewriting of Poe's correspondence, resulted in alienating the author from friends as well as the public. For decades these false claims circulated and remained unexposed, thereby significantly shaping the perception of Poe, until other biographers were able to collect enough reliable information to confirm the inaccuracy of these accusations, and what were the actual facts (683).

A majority of Poe's collected writings reflect on his criticism and everlasting ambition to achieve the status of a powerful critic, because he intended to influence the development of American literary history. In his first tales and poems he copied the structure of British examples, while his critical concepts were originally materialized in treatises produced by eighteenth-century Scottish Common Sense philosophers (Levine 686). These treatises "emphasized the aesthetic importance of moral sympathy" (Levine 686). In later works he modified his literary approach by incorporating ideas from Romanticists such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and A.W. Schlegel, where the human

ability to conceive the notion of beauty was highly emphasized and of importance. Still, despite modulating his literary theories, Poe's critical principles remained consistent, considering that he was convinced that poetry should only appeal to the sense of beauty, while disregarding the legitimacy of informational poetry, or any variety of didactic poetry (Levine 686). Levine suggest that the inspiration behind Poe's decision to sustain this perception of true poetic emotion, as he regards it, was from the work of art itself, because even though it placed Poe in opposition to realistic details in poetry, it promoted the prose tale, where the truth as one object can benefit from cautious use of specific details (686). Moreover, it is important to bear in mind Poe's famous artistic treatise, titled "The Philosophy of Composition," where he declared his skepticism toward "the possibilities of transcendental vision untethered by the material realities of body and aesthetic form" (Levine 687). In correspondence with Ralph Waldo Emerson and other transcendentalists, Poe argued that the imagining phantasm that occur in the artist and reader, is the result of their complex connection to the conventional qualities of the work of art itself (Levine 687).

In today's age, however, Poe is mainly remembered for his poetry and not his criticism, considering that works such as "Ulalume," "To Helen, and "The Raven," provided international fame and influenced poets, prose writers, and modernists such as William Faulkner and T.S. Eliot. One of the reasons for this considerable recognition, has been the difficulty in classifying Poe's tales, because there are satiric exaggerations of well-known designs of fiction, in addition to indications of attempts to alter such forms. In response to John P. Kennedy in 1836, who categorized his work as "serio tragicomic," Poe responded by stating that he regarded the majority of his tales as an equal amount of satire and banter, even though it might not have been evident for the author at the time of their creations. With this in mind, it is important to consider that Poe might have deliberately confused his audience, because he understood the audience's desire for distraction and appeal toward new stories, which focused on compelling cultural, philosophical, and psychological matters. This included violence, repression, and irrationality in human cognizance, in addition to the isolation of democratic mass culture and social institutions. By dedicating his efforts and creativity to tales concerning self-

tortured killers, aristocratic maniacs, neurotic necrophiliacs, and other wicked individuals, he believed he could “produce, as he wrote in ‘The Philosophy of Composition,’ the greatest possible effect on his readers” (Levine 687).

Methodology:

In this thesis, I will conduct two interpretive strategies. In the first, I will be utilizing New Criticism’s close reading perspective on Mabbott’s extensive biographical account of Poe, and Pruette’s argument’s concerning the environmental circumstances and natural inheritance of the author (531-569, 370-395 & Tyson 129-135). For this reason, it is important to establish how New critical reading operates before it can be applied in this thesis.

According to Lois Tyson, New Criticism was the dominating interpretive strategy during the 1940s and 1960s, where the importance of textual evidence was emphasized, including how specific and concrete examples from the text itself, could validate the reader’s interpretations. However, the development of “close reading” became a reality after New Criticism replaced biographical-historical criticism (129). During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, biographical-historical criticism supported the idea that one could only interpret a literary text, by examining the author’s life and times, such as diaries, letters, essays, and biographies, in order to determine the authorial intention behind the literary work. As a result of this perception, New Critics became determined to establish the text itself as the sole source of evidence, in order to provide accurate interpretation of literary works. Although they agreed with the sentiment that that the author’s life and times are of interest to the literary historian, they still maintained that these concepts “do not provide the literary critic with information that can be used to analyze the text itself” (Tyson 130). In addition, they also argued that the author’s intended meaning is often not of availability, because we cannot contact authors that no longer exist, and therefore, they created the term intentional fallacy. This term maintained that literary texts do not always reflect the author’s intention, considering that the text itself

sometimes underperforms or provides more complexity than originally desired. In light of this, New Critics also stated that “knowing an author’s intention, therefore, tells us nothing about the text itself” (Tyson 130).

To further support this ideal, the New Critics established a term called, affective fallacy, where they argued that the reader’s emotions might dictate their judgment of characters, actions, and developments in the text. For example, if the reader do not approve of a fictional character’s decisions, this character may be solely regarded as evil, thereby reflecting on how the reader’s emotions produces affective fallacy (Tyson 130). Furthermore, it is also important to address that when affective fallacy results in impressionistic responses, it also establishes relativism, where the reader thinks that texts means whatever assumption the reader develops. With this in mind, New Critics were convinced that due to these factors we are only left with chaos, because there is no standard for interpreting or evaluating literature, and therefore, the text itself become significantly important. In essence, New Criticism regarded the literary text as “a timeless, autonomous (self-sufficient) verbal object,” considering how readers and opinions change, but what remains is the content and structure of the text (Tyson 131). The meaning it presents “is as objective as its physical existence on the page, for it is constructed of words placed in a specific relationship to one another,” because this structure of specific words, establish a complex meaning that is impossible to reproduce with a different combination (Tyson 131). For this reason, the only way to determine the author’s intention is to carefully examine a literary work through close reading, where the text’s language, symbols, point of view, characterization, plot, and setting are analyzed, in order to provide evidence that can present the intention of the author. These components have been categorized as formal elements (Tyson 131). Therefore, Tyson argues that close reading can only achieve a meticulous examination by combining the text’s formal elements and its theme, which presents a complex relationship that reflect on the text’s organic unity. As a result of these factors, New Criticism firmly believed that literary texts could efficiently be interpreted by understanding the text’s form, with particular focus on literary language, where association, evocation of meanings,

implications, and suggestions, presents an arrangement of words that makes the content inseparable from its meaning (135 & 132).

The second interpretive approach I will be utilizing in this thesis, is classical psychoanalytical criticism, with specific emphasis on psychoanalysis of literary characters. This will be applied in my final chapter concerning literary analysis of Poe's texts (420-423, 195-207 & Tyson 33). Within the field of classical psychoanalytic theorists, there is a substantial amount of disagreement concerning how human personalities are shaped and formed, and how dysfunctional behavior can be treated most efficiently. Furthermore, literary critics also disagree on how psychoanalytic concepts "can be best applied to our study of literature" (Tyson 33). As a result of this, certain questions have been established, such as to what degree should the author's literary output matter in a psychoanalysis of his or her life, and more importantly, "to what extent is it legitimate to psychoanalyze literary characters as if they were real people?" (Tyson 33-34). When these questions are raised, we need to prioritize the psychoanalytic theorists that provides the best insight, and how do the reader's role matter in regard to their tendency to project their own desires and conflicts onto the work that they are reading (Tyson 34). Still, it is important to note that these questions are primarily subjects that belong to reader-response criticism, and the connection between psychoanalysis and reader-response theory, which will be further discussed in the first chapter concerning Elisabeth Wright's arguments on psychoanalytic criticism (113-119). To that end, Tyson unequivocally states that our primary objective when we read psychoanalytically, is to understand how concepts operate within the text, in order to enrich our comprehension of the work (34). From the perspective of classical psychoanalytic theory, it is therefore, reasonable to address either the representation of psychosexual dynamics or family dynamics in the work, or "what the work can tell us about human beings' psychological relationship to death or to sexuality," or how "the narrator's unconscious problems keep asserting themselves over the course of the story" (Tyson 34). With this in mind, it is important to confirm that these concerns are exactly what I will be focusing on in the literary analysis chapter of this thesis, by examining the psyche of the narrator in "Morella," and the narrator, in addition to Roderick, in "The Fall of the House of Usher," as if these mentalities

belonged to real people. Under this circumstance, this study will emphasize how their mental behaviors exhibits symptoms that correspond with Caruth's arguments concerning PTSD and trauma in actual human beings (3-10 & 417-420, Gargano 259-264, Rizvi 18, Carlson 168-174, Shackelford 109-122, Poe 420-423 & 195-207). Still, in order to justify this interpretive approach, we may consider Tyson's argument regarding that some critics have opposed the utilization of psychoanalysis, in order to understand the behavior of literary characters. The reason for this, is because these critics claims that literary characters possess psyches' that are impossible to analyze, due to the fact that they are not real people. In response to this sentiment, it is contended by Tyson that by psychoanalyzing the literary character's behavior, the reader might discover the most appropriate way to utilize this theory (34). More importantly, other critics have also defended this strategy by strongly emphasizing that "when we psychoanalyze literary characters, we are not suggesting that they are real people but that they represent the psychological experience of human beings in general; and it is just as legitimate to psychoanalyze the behavior represented by literary characters as it is to analyze their behavior from a feminist, Marxist, or African American critical perspective, or from the perspective of any critical theory that analyzes literary representations as illustrations of real-life issues" (Tyson 34).

Chapter overview:

The structure of this thesis consist of an introduction part and four chapters, followed by a conclusion. The first chapter focuses on Wright's arguments concerning the development of modern psychoanalysis and the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism. The purpose of this section is to discuss the history between psychoanalysis and literature, and how the combination of these concepts provide insight into the author's psyche, concerning the intention behind literary compositions (113-119). First, I will reflect on how alterations in the critical practice of psychoanalysis and literature, have contributed to the establishment of a link between language, author, reader, and text. Furthermore, this section will also present how psychoanalysts came to

regard literature as a necessary instrument, because it could contribute additional knowledge when analyzing the psyche of the author. With this in mind, I will discuss Wright's assessment of Sigmund Freud's contributions to the establishment of this relationship, with particular emphasis on his essay "The Uncanny," and how it presents a case concerning examination of the psyches of E.T.A Hoffmann and the literary character in *The Sandman*, within classic psychoanalytic reading (113-114). Following this section, I will present how classical psychoanalytic criticism gained recognition during the 50s and 60s, by reflecting on the contribution by various influencers, and the development of a relationship between reader and text within this field. The arguments of Wright will also concern a deep insight into our expectations of a text as we read it, and how a transaction between the reader and the text help us to understand the link between psychoanalysis and narrative (114-119).

The second chapter of this study will first discuss David Bromwich's arguments concerning the relationship between biography and critics, considering that this thesis include a good deal of biographical data. According to Bromwich, there are many critics who disregards biography due to their individual pride over their work, however, he explains that biography is often inescapable because critical analysis may only be achieved through unity between the text, and anything related to it (232). In light of this, it is also argued that critics have contributed to a common misconception, where extensive knowledge of the author can only be obtained through examination of additional literature. For this reason, biography is therefore an essential component, because it determines whether an interpretation of an author is credible. To exemplify biography's justifiable role in critical interpretation, the chapter will discuss the biographies of John Keats, James Joyce, and Robert Frost (Bromwich 233-240, Black 176, Fix 244-254 & Gerber, "Robert Frost").

Furthermore, this chapter will also implement Roger Luckhurst's examination of Cathy Caruth's theories, in regard to the universality of trauma, the belatedness of trauma, and the incomprehensible impact of a traumatic experience. This section is intended to introduce and reflect on Caruth's concerns regarding how trauma do not

operate as simple memory registration, and how a traumatic experience can lead to a paradox because of the belatedness of trauma (4-5). Furthermore, the following paragraph will establish how Caruth have come to question how the diagnosis of PTSD have been inefficiently determined, because it has resulted in making trauma more difficult to analyze as a disease or condition, which in effect, complicates the definition of its pathology. In addition, it is important to note that this section will also reflect on why the definition of trauma have become a significant concern within various research fields, and therefore has presented a general consensus for PTSD, how trauma's pathology incorporate belatedness to overwhelming events, how trauma's core is enigmatic, and how an individual's traumatic recall can present an unreliable record of the past (1-2 & 417).

In the third chapter of this thesis, I will focus on Mabbott's extensive work "Annals" and Pruette's "A Psycho-Analytical study of Edgar Allan Poe" (531-569 & 370-398). The structure of this chapter consist of a chronological development of Poe's life, where I will analyze Mabbott's research from a close reading perspective, while simultaneously reflect on how Pruette's arguments either supports or contradicts Mabbott's research. The purpose of implementing Mabbott's data in this thesis is to establish context regarding Poe's distress, struggles, loss, and the emotional and mental pain he endured. This will be particularly exemplified in the demise of his biological parents, the conflict that transpired between him and his foster father, John Allan, the development of his formal education, his dismissal from West Point Military Academy, and the lack of emotional affection from his foster mother, which caused him to seek it elsewhere. Furthermore, this section also reflects on the author's struggle to survive off his literary publications, his developing alcohol addiction, his short lived employment at various journals and periodicals, and his mental and physical decline after his wife's death, that in effect, resulted in Poe failing to establish new romantic relations with other women (531-569 & 370-398 & Tyson 129-135). As a final note, this chapter is quite extensive, but I find it necessary to be of such length, in order for the reader to truly understand the development of how Poe's existence became gradually more melancholic as the years passed by. At the end of his life, he felt alone and

detached from the world, despite succeeding with his literary pursuits, and as a result of this and the death of his wife, he came to regard his physical existence as only a state of despondence.

In the fourth chapter and final chapter of this thesis, the short stories “Morella” and “The Fall of the House of Usher” will be examined from a classical psychoanalytic reading point of view, where the psyche of the main fictional characters in these tales, will be analyzed accordingly to Caruth’s statements concerning symptoms of PTSD, how trauma’s core is enigmatic core, the belatedness of trauma, and the complications involved in traumatic recollection (3-10 & 417-420, Tyson 33-34 & Poe 420-423 & 195-207). In the first analysis I will discuss the arguments of James W. Gargano, concerning how they reflect on the narrator’s complicated relationship with Morella. In this section the compassion and astute intelligence of Morella will be emphasized, in order to illustrate how these factors influences the psyche of her husband. Taking this into account, the tale concerns a narrator who struggles to understand the origin of his growing hatred for his wife, who falls ill and loves him regardless of him not providing a returned affection. As the tale unfold the husband start to fear the continuation of her identity after her demise, thereby allowing him to realize the trauma he has experienced throughout their mentor and pupil relationship. Accordingly, the narrator come to associate his wife’s name with a feeling of terror, that lead to further psychological distress, which is realized in the narrator’s relation to his daughter (259-264). By examining Gargano’s focus on the narrator’s mentality, and how these arguments correspond with the author’s tale, we are presented with thoughts, desire, fright, mental anguish, delusion, and pain, that in effect, reflect on him being a victim of the belatedness of trauma, considering that he is able to acknowledge his trauma after its occurrence, and due to the consequences, that transpires after his wife’s death (259-264, Caruth 3-4 & Poe 420-423).

The second analysis will concern “The Fall of the House of Usher” and how it focuses on the psychological developments of the narrator and Roderick Usher. This tale is presented in a retrospective chronological narrative, by a narrator who provide a

recollection of his episode with a friend named, Roderick, who's behavior, communication, and habits changes gradually into symptoms of schizophrenia, while the narrator is visiting the Usher estate. Throughout this analysis, I will reflect on Lynne Piper Shackelford's arguments concerning a shared psychic disorder between these two characters (195-207 & 109-122). With this in mind, it is important to affirm that I will emphasize how Shackelford's research exemplifies how the narrator is experiencing symptoms of PTSD, enigmatic visions, the belatedness of trauma, and traumatic recollection, because Roderick's personal trauma, which is manifested in the process him losing his sister Madeline, causes the narrator to experience a psychological breaking point, which is finally manifested in him believing Roderick's delusion. Furthermore, it is essential to address that Roderick is exhibiting symptoms that reflect on how trauma consist of an undefinable pathology, because his behavior do not provide a definite answer to the severity of his trauma. In addition, I will also discuss how he exhibits symptoms that suggest he is being haunted by an image, due to his strange and irrational behavior, and finally exemplify how the narrator's psyche experiences the complications related to traumatic recollection (109-122, Caruth 3-10, 417-420 & Poe 195-207).

Chapter 1: The development of psychoanalytical criticism

Wright:

When it comes to the relationship between psychoanalytical theory and literary criticism, Wright argues that both subjects have endured misfortunes on the account of developments within their domains (113). The result of this process has ultimately altered critical practice due to its contribution to the shift of critical focus, where the reader's psychology has replaced that of the author, and established relations between reader, author, language, and text. However, the reason why it is acceptable for psychoanalysis to discuss literature, is primarily due to its recognition for contributing additional knowledge to the understanding of language (Wright 113). This is first and foremost grounded in how the relationship between patient and analyst, is largely built on a dialogue, where diagnostic material is provided and conveyed through linguistics. Yet, the utilization of literature within psychoanalysis was founded upon an unreasonable relationship, where literature's only function was to serve as a means to validate psychoanalysis's clinical findings (Wright 113).

Traditionally, psychoanalysis labeled literary works as only the imaginable wishful thinking of a particular writer. The reason behind this interpretation was the result of preconceived ideas within classic psychoanalytical reading, where literary works were recognized as the author's attempt to rehabilitate a specific symptom, and therefore, initiated psychoanalysis of the author (Wright 114). By examining Freud's first study of the controlling device behind unconscious utterance in speech, Wright argues that he was able to ascertain that there were certain mechanisms operating in puns, dreams, and slips of the tongue, which revealed a similarity that corresponded to specific linguistic and mental processes (Wright 113). In light of this observation, Wright claims that Freud's insight applies particularly well to literature, considering that literature cultivates ambiguity, multiple interpretations, figurative devices, and canons of works that are either hated or loved (113). In order to exemplify this, she refers to Freud's 1919 essay "The

Uncanny,” as the first attempt to apply psychoanalysis to literature (Wright 113). In this work, Freud focuses on Hoffmann’s *The Sandman*, which presents a primary concern to analyze the uncanny effect of Hoffmann’s story, by emphasizing the infantile complex of the main character, while also establishing a universal comprehension of language through interpretation of symbols in Hoffmann’s work (Wright 114). In light of this, Wright suggest that from Freud’s perspective, both of these assumptions relate back to Hoffmann’s psyche, considering that the assumed purpose behind *The Sandman* is to confirm psychoanalysis’s claim, where the author’s work reflect on his desire to provide a “secret gratification of an infantile and forbidden wish lodged in the unconscious” (114). However, Freud identifies the term “unconscious” as a dynamic sub-system, where conflicting sources operate within a larger network. Inside this sub-system there are instinctual drives that are connected to representations such as childhood desires, which attempts to reach the consciousness in order to activate themselves. When these repressed thoughts are able to succeed, they are usually transformed into compromised formations, such as jokes, dreams, and slips of the tongue, because the individual recognizes them as uncivilized behavior. For this reason, Wright contests that these mental drives continue to strive for instant release, regardless of how they will be interpreted in the real world.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that psychoanalytic terminology recognizes such ideas as concepts regulated by a primary process within the mental apparatus, where certain mechanisms create a free flow of energy that operates everyday tasks, and the configurations of works concerning art and literature (114). More importantly, Wright also believes that Freud’s extensive analysis of Hoffmann’s psyche, also represents a case of how classic psychoanalytic reading operates in regard to fictional characters. Taking this into account, it is important to declare that classic psychoanalysis maintains a belief that fictional characters requires examination, because they are convinced that these characters possess their own complexities within their own fictional universes, and therefore correspond with Freud’s analysis of the character in Hoffmann’s work (114). As a result, Wright attest that classic psychoanalytic criticism characterizes literary works as

representations of the author's desire, because this criticism believes that a detailed examination could reveal the psychology of the creator (114).

Another essential aspect in regard to this matter, is the rise of classical psychoanalytic criticism during the 1950s and 60s, and its contribution to the development of pioneering works, in regard to the relationship between the reader and text (Wright 116). In fact, many of these papers were inspired by the work of Ivor Armstrong Richards, and according to Wright, the ideologies of this criticism were built on a topographical model of the mental apparatus, namely the "structural model." With this in mind, Freud argues that this model consists of components, which divides the psyche into three groups of functions, including the instinctual drives of the "id," the ability to control and reject these drives that is found in the "ego," and the critical judgment function of the "superego" (116-117). As a matter of fact, one of the earliest influencers who contributed to the development of ego-psychology within psychoanalytic criticism, was Ernest Kris, who introduced the theory of creativity in 1952. In 1968, Norman Holland expanded on this theory by questioning the relationship between the reader and the text, because he believed that this relationship reflects on id-fantasies and ego-defenses, considering that he regarded the pleasure, which literature provides, as the result of unconscious desires and fears that are converted into culturally acceptable meanings. The origin behind Holland's interpretation stems from him recognizing literary texts as concealments, where a coded system enforced a complicity between the author and reader (Wright 117). As a result of these concerns, Wright argues that the form of a text is also a mode of concealment, because the content attracts the reader by expressing "what we desire to hear, as much as we protest we do not" (117). However, the success of this process is determined by the efficiency of the content's disguise, where it tricks the individual into believing that the text is respectable, while also being inadequate enough to provide the unconsciousness with insight into the unrespectable. Accordingly, this development causes Holland to acknowledge the reader's passive role in regard to the text's transition from concealed to obvious information, because the text does all the work. This also explains why it is essential for Holland to rectify the equilibrium between reader and text, by focusing on the organizing principle in the reader, instead of the text (Wright 117).

On the other hand, the encounter between a reader's expectations and the text can develop a challenge, because defensive strategies such as transformation of meanings might become active in order to secure a unity between the reader's identity and the text's content. It is for this reason, why Holland finds it essential to compare diverse responses to the same text, along with the connection between the reader's "free associations to the story and their personalities" (Wright 117). Wright on the other hand, argues that this reverses the balance, considering that the text becomes irrelevant, because everything now happens in the reader who reestablishes a unique identity through reading. By referring to Holland's interpretation of Poe's "The Purloined Letter," where a reading transaction classifies the text as a story about burying sexual secrets, Wright is able to exemplify how Holland fails to acknowledge that contemporary reading of Poe's text, is simultaneously private and public, and more importantly, how the intersubjective process of reading focuses on improving upon another's meaning. In this example Wright scrutinizes Holland's idea of a reading transaction because he is determined to believe that the simple act of reading, provides diverse responses to Poe's text, which from her point of view are transactions that deprives the text of meanings (117-118). Clearly, this shows that the word "transaction," questions the intersubjective nature of comprehension and how new and justifiable meanings develop. Yet, the contribution of classical psychoanalysis have established a transaction between analyst and patient, where insight into narrative structure concerning author, reader, and text, have been provided. In fact, a common feature between literature and psychoanalysis, is that both focuses on the narrative in regard to structurization of conveying stories, but the latter focuses on the past in order to make sense of the present (Wright 118). As a result, the intelligence of psychoanalysis is therefore, not reduced to a plain code of meaning, because it deals with something that is familiar to all narratives, which is to rationalize reality through a fictitious construct (Wright 118). This confirms also that classical psychoanalytic criticism established a link from psychoanalysis to narrative and rhetoric, by mainly contributing to the development of desire, in regard to the resolve and structure of texts (Wright 118-119).

Chapter 2: Justification of biography and the establishing of PTSD and trauma theory

Bromwich:

The relationship between biography and critics is a complicated one, considering that even though some critics pride themselves in declaring that their work will not concern biography, they may not escape the fact that biography is a part of their examinations (Bromwich 232). It is for this reason, why Bromwich argues that a combination of biography and criticism is essential, because the conviction of several critics strongly attest to the significance of interpretation, which creates the unity of the text, and anything related to it. However, because of these circumstances, it seems that the primary concern of such a criticism is to cultivate a form of persuasion instead of providing the truth (232). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the interpretation of a text, arguably have been reduced to analogies, reductions, or revealing anecdotes, which explains the selection of a self-contained gesture, action, trope, or image, as long as the text's subject and audience allows it (Bromwich 232-233). The common misconception of comprehending texts, is therefore, reflected in the process of understanding an author by examining additional literature, in order to discover implicit information. With this in mind, Bromwich claims that any observation is connected to the reader's awareness of other potential and powerful discoveries that could have been made (233). It is therefore crucial to include biography because it determines the limit of credible interpretations of an author, due to the fact that "they do so no matter how thoroughly we try to prevent them, because we read biographies as instructive stories, and cannot help connecting them with the stories we tell about texts" (Bromwich 233).

Now, in light of these arguments it is essential to reflect on Bromwich's examples regarding how biography has influenced critical interpretation. The purpose of the following cases is to illustrate and justify the utilization of biography in critical analysis, in order to reflect on the justification of biography in this thesis. In the first example, Bromwich establishes a firm consensus, which focuses on the relationship between an

author and his work that has surpassed the awareness of its audience (233). This example concerns the biographies John Keats by W.J. Bate and Richard Ellmann's James Joyce, where the significance of the lives of these authors are emphasized, due to their attention towards fascinating stories without too many details, and more importantly, compares Keats and Joyce to one another. The reason why this is of concern to Bromwich, is because both authors have been recognized as culture-heroes (233). During the short time of Keats's life, a small body of work was composed, along with him being considered a radical within politics and a sensationalist in literature. He was well known, but also despised by respected critics of his time. Joyce, however, developed an advanced hatred toward the reading public, and therefore, eliminated any possibility of mainstream interest in his works during his lifetime. Still, he remained committed to a Flaubertian ideal throughout his career, which concerns that the reader is aware of metaphoric dimensions in order to uncover hidden words, but Joyce used it to create conflict within the reader (234 & Black 176). One example is Joyce's construction of a dream narrative during his final years, that ultimately, was even incomprehensible for his most faithful admirers. In light of this observation, Bromwich questions why Joyce was presented as an available hero of culture. Keats's status as a hero, however, could be explained by Lionel Trilling's essay "The Poet as Hero," considering that it was published prior to Bate's biography and describes Keats as revitalized due to his distinctiveness towards the advanced culture of the twentieth century. Furthermore, this essay also emphasizes Keats's virility and search for sincerity, along with his enthusiasm for ordinary contentment, because these features established a forgotten but independent image of the artist that belonged to a bygone era in a modern world. Nevertheless, Keats was not concerned with such matters during the 1820s, where it seems that he would rather have sustained his literary freedom, by excluding subjects such as sexual passion and refinement (Bromwich 234). It is for this reason, why it is difficult to determine if Keats was indeed praiseworthy, considering his hesitancy on the tendencies he commented on in the 1820s. Yet, the aesthetes of the 1890s regarded him as a brave explorer, due to his decision to live a life of pleasures, and the fact that his literature reflected the art of encapsulating the greatest moments of his existence (Bromwich 235). As a result, the modern Keats is recognized as a triumphant creation, because it is associated with the

ascetic ideal that many critics and scholars strive to defeat, in order for it to “be restored and delivered into the custody of the future, which alone can make a unifying gesture of appreciation” (Bromwich 235).

The reason why Joyce is also perceived in such a manner, can be owed to the passion of the first generation of his readers. Between the 1930s and 40s, there were several pseudo academic modernists who identified with the avantgarde philosophy of Joyce, who then attempted to advocate for his public support, by translating the wisdom of his phraseology, in order to transform Joyce into a humanist which could establish a widespread acceptance of the author (Bromwich 235). Comparatively, Bromwich notes that most readers agree on that *Ulysses*, represents the author’s capability to show sympathy. The problem with this interpretation, nevertheless, is that humanism exposes a more general virtue, which is hard to associate with the self-alienation of Joyce (235). It is for this reason, why Bromwich compares the heroic conception of Joyce in the twentieth century, to that of John Milton in Samuel Johnson’s eighteenth-century novel. In the last passage in *Life of Milton*, there are several features that relate to Joyce, such as the main protagonist never receiving any support from his contemporaries, nor any gratification or praise for his works, while simultaneously producing his most acknowledged literature under disapproval (236 & Fix 244-254). Furthermore, Bromwich argues that he would portray Joyce in a similar manner to Ellmann, but also acknowledges that Ellmann’s research does not provide anything certain that could be substantial enough to credit this version of Joyce’s life (236). In addition, there is also a significant difference between the rebelliousness of Milton and Joyce, whereas Milton’s insatiable savagery transpired through the propaganda of a political movement he never abandoned, while Joyce’s greatest works are regarded as noteworthy contributors to his recognized genius (Bromwich 236). Moreover, there is an implied comparison between Joyce and Swift from Johnson’s *Life of Swift*, where both share similar features such as arrogance, malignance, fastidiousness, reclusiveness, gloominess, and the difficulty of analyzing a character on the basis of intellect, who takes great pleasure in exploring ideas of disgust (Bromwich 236-237). In this regard, Bromwich suggest that Ellmann’s biography do not attempt to answer why Joyce’s intellect conceive such ideas, while

Bate's biography primarily focuses on celebrating Keats's ability to present uncorrupted qualities of the mind. As a result, it confirms that the successful biographies of an age have more in common with the biographers, rather than the heroes they discuss, due to the people's trust of a sustained and accustomed judgment of the artist's image, where he "struggles nobly, in solitude, on behalf of his civilization" (Bromwich 237-238). More importantly, it is important to consider that modern critics are no longer criticized by professional societies, for their interest lays in other matters than Keats and Joyce's abilities to transmit qualities of the mind. The critic will, however, be entering a discussion that is not of their professional concern, but it does not change the fact "that criticism has established a certain way of thinking. But a more remote and more powerful cause is that biography has made certain facts unthinkable" (Bromwich 238).

The second example that reflect on how biography has affected critical interpretation, is Lawrence Thompson's three-volume biography concerning the life of Robert Frost, which was published between 1966 and 1976. From Bromwich's point of view, the emphasis of Thompson's work consist of an outspoken documentary chronicle of strategic egocentrism, in addition to friends and acquaintances of the poet arguing that it is written from a sinister bias (238). Bromwich finds this understanding to be reasonable, considering that the contract between Thompson and Frost lasted over two decades, resulting in the book being continuously delayed, due to the displeasing task of adding new information after each passing year (238 & Gerber, "Robert Frost"). Nevertheless, the work itself does not suffer from any inaccuracies, but it has been argued that Thompson's determination is an attempt to unmask Frost, and therefore, presents a clear misinterpretation of the essence of biography. With this in mind, Bromwich argues that unmasking is a common gesture in moral narratives, and more importantly, had been imposed on Frost, because he was able to maintain an image of "himself as a good-natured teacher of the ways of the heart" (238). Taking this into account, the significance of Thompson's work becomes evident, considering its ability to change an interpretation of Frost by manifesting his craft as a persistent representation of self-reliance. In effect, Thompson established a comprehension of Frost where Frost's craft became recognized as a dangerous strength (Bromwich 238). On the other hand, this development has also

contributed to Frost's poems being regarded as more valuable, especially in contemporary times, because they are now described in a less stereotypical style. The effect of Thompson's bias and crudeness, is therefore, able to establish a compelling picture of Frost that produced the possibility to examine the author through a sensitive criticism, which surpassed any prior representation (Bromwich 239).

On the other hand, in the following years after Thompson's publication of the first two volumes, Richard Poirier argued that Frost's poem "Provide, Provide" represented a personal conflict with the 1930 literary consensus. In Poirier's justification of this claim he referred to a poetry reading, where he realized that the last stanza in Frost's poem "is not as an ironic condemnation of the Protestant Spirit of commerce, but a piece of advice Frost was urging directly on his readers, from the depth of his own experience" (Bromwich 239). In light of this, Bromwich recognizes Poirier's analysis as a case of personal hate toward Thompson, and therefore finds it unprofessional, because it is directed at the biographer and not the biography (239). On the contrary, Bromwich argues that the biographies of Keats and Joyce represents an ideal that neglects unaesthetic particular features, while in Thompson's case, the audience is presented with a complete and individual portrait, where the biographer fails to implement a discussion of Frost's poems into his preconceived conception of the author. As a result, this generates a separation of labor between biographer and critic. In certain cases, such as this, the biographer is unable to comprehend "how the person whose image he has changed could have written the works he once loved with a simple trust" (239). The biographer who undergoes this process, often decides to reject their creations, whereas the critic who focuses on implementing two opposing ideas, chooses to interact with biography in a light or passing manner (Bromwich 239-240). Still, the tendency to preserve this separation, is considered to be the outcome of rejecting the metaphorical process of reading the poem from a natural standpoint, where its profoundness, structures, shallowness, intimacy, inconsistency, and extraneous features becomes insignificant. Under these circumstances, the unglorifying critics might be recognized as biographers, which creates a reluctance toward this recognition, considering that their preconceived notion argues

that criticism consist of an intellectual prestigious discipline, and that narrative writing requires a different talent (Bromwich 240).

Luckhurst:

In the introduction to *The Trauma Question*, Luckhurst attest that his primary concern is to establish a dominant model for cultural trauma, although he admits that his research only covers a small part of its complex, multi-disciplinary history. Regarding this statement, he turns to the work of Caruth, who is regarded as a central figure within this field of study, because of her emphasis on the unresolvable paradox “aporia,” and ultimately, contributed to the progress of cultural trauma theory in the 1990s (4). Furthermore, it is stressed that Caruth suggested in a special issue of “*Psychoanalysis, Culture and Trauma*” from 1991, that trauma “extends beyond the bounds of a marginal pathology and has become a central characteristic of the survivor experience of our time” (qtd. in Luckhurst 4).

In this issue, she argues that trauma can be acknowledged as an innately paradoxical experience, due to certain events being able to overcome the psyche’s defenses, where the process of normal memory registration is disrupted. Certain events of trauma, can therefore, conceal themselves from the distortions of subjective memory, after entering a person’s psyche, and thereby making it “a symptom of history” (Caruth, qtd. in Luckhurst 4). Luckhurst finds this understanding to be reasonable, considering that this unorthodox memory registration, might reflect how overwhelming traumatic experiences remains unnoticeable in conscious memory. To further emphasize his support for Caruth’s argument, Luckhurst implements Caruth’s formulation of a traumatic experience, where a definitive paradox is possibly the outcome of a traumatic experience, as long as a violent event is so severe that it is impossible for an individual to comprehend the experience (4). In addition, he remarks that the intensification of paradoxes is especially evident in critical instances, where undisclosed memories exist within the mind because of trauma, and therefore, creates a history that can only be grasped “in the very

inaccessibility of its occurrence” (Caruth qtd. in Luckhurst 4). In order to properly explain the connection between a temporal structure and the belatedness of trauma, Luckhurst refers to Caruth’s idea of the belatedness of trauma, where traumatic events cannot be experienced while they occur, and is therefore “in connection with another place, and in another time” (5). Still, it is important to acknowledge that Caruth’s idea represents a paradox, because she regards trauma as a “crisis of representation, of history and truth, and of narrative time,” in addition to the fact that literature and psychoanalysis are recognized as “particularly privileged forms of writing that can attend to these perplexing paradoxes of trauma” (Luckhurst 5).

Caruth:

After the Vietnam war the research fields of psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and sociology became increasingly interested in determining the definition of trauma. The reason for this, is because in 1980, The American Psychiatric Association acknowledged shellshock, delayed stress syndrome, combat stress, and traumatic neurosis, as symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, because they are responses in both human and natural catastrophes (Caruth 1). The acknowledgement of this pathology also provided a category of diagnosis, where responses to child abuse, rape, dissociative disorders, and other violent occurrences were included in the diagnose of PTSD.

For this reason, Caruth therefore, argues that this development has not contributed to solidify an explanation for trauma as a disease, instead, the impact of trauma as a category and concept have become easier to diagnose, but at the cost of disrupting conventional methods of understanding how it can be cured, while also complicating the comprehension of what constitutes pathology (1). In order to exemplify the negative impact of this outcome, she refers to the American Psychiatric Association’s definition of PTSD, where “category A,” debates if traumatic events can operate “outside the range of usual human experience” (qtd. in Caruth 1), and how closely PTSD needs to be associated with specific events, or whether trauma can be considered pathological, when

distortions are produced by wishes, desires, and repressions (Caruth 1). In light of this definition, it is argued that the satisfaction of locating and classifying different symptoms of PTSD, have gradually contributed to the dissolve of the boundaries necessary to construct modes of understanding (Caruth 1-2).

Disciplines such as psychoanalysis, sociology, medically oriented psychiatry, history, and literature, has therefore, been called upon “to explain, to cure, or to show why it is that we can no longer simply explain or simply cure” (Caruth 1-2). As a result, it is suggested that the limitations of understanding trauma, is the outcome of the phenomenon of trauma becoming all-inclusive, because sociology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and literature, are connected “through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience” (Caruth 2). For this reason, Caruth’s primary focus is not to define trauma, but to analyze how trauma forces us to reconsider our understanding of experience, in regard to therapy, communication, psychoanalytic theory, and literature (2).

Chapter 3: The autobiographical unfolding of Poe's life and a psychoanalytical assessment

The reason why it is important to reflect on the biographical history of Poe, is to understand the development of his life, in regard to his upbringing, education, family relations, romantic relations, and his own personal demons. With that in mind, Mabbott's extensive autobiographical account of Poe's life, provides information that presents the entire development of the author's existence. It is a substantial and detailed work, but in this case, it is more reasonable to focus on significant events, developments, conflicts, relations, and relationships, in order to reflect on how these factors cultivated mental and emotional distress within the author (531-569 & Pruette 370-398). Furthermore, it is important to confirm that the poet's biological mother will be referred to as "Arnold" in the following paragraphs, while Poe's wife will be referred to as "Mrs. Poe," in order to prevent any confusion. Still, this rule will be excluded in any quotations, granted that sufficient information is provided in order to separate these two individuals.

Mabbott and Pruette:

At the beginning of her study, Pruette argues that a combination of environmental circumstances and natural inheritance were determining factors which ensured, that Poe was destined to find himself in a position of dreariness and volatility (370). She supports this argument by claiming that any psychoanalyst who concern themselves with the first details of Poe's life, will discover links and structures that forth shadows the developments that transpired in later years (Pruette 370). With that in mind, Poe was born into the family of Elizabeth Arnold and David Poe Jr., in Boston, on January 19, 1809. Both of his parents were actors, but his mother was a prominent one, unlike her husband who struggled frequently to make ends meet (Mabbott 531). Pruette labels both of Poe's parents as dirt poor, both of status and wealth, because this was a commonality among actors at the time (370). On the 18th of October in 1809, Poe's father decided to retire from his acting career at the young age of twenty-six, with his last performance as Captain Cypress in

Richard Leigh's *Grieving's a Folly* (Mabbott 531). His wife alternatively, continued with her acting career for another two years, providing a performance at the Park as Howard Payne's leading lady between March and July of 1810. From August 18 to September 21, she appeared in productions in Richmond, until her work took her to Charleston on January 23 in 1811, and she finally retired after her last performance on the 11th of October in Richmond, Virginia. In contrast to his wife, Poe Jr.'s performances were rarely praised, and often remembered as mediocre. In addition, he also had a high temperament and a reputation for drunkenness on and off the stage. In fact, he once threatened a critic with physical violence for making fun of Arnold's costume (Mabbott 531-532). With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that Pruette categorizes the poet's father as a victim of consumption, and therefore, labels alcohol as the culprit of his victimhood and not his independent and clearheaded actions. She also universalizes the feeling of this victimhood, by associating it with the struggles that Poe's wife must have endured, in her encounter with her husband's addiction to intoxication (371). To define Poe Jr's condition as a form of victimhood is definitely suitable, considering that according to Susana Onega, the 1989 edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary* categorizes victimhood as "(someone who) perishes or suffers in health (or because of) some enterprise or pursuit voluntarily undertaken" (qtd. in Onega 92).

On December 8, 1811, Arnold died due to complications caused by an illness, she was surrounded by her children at the time of her passing, including Poe, his sister Rosalie who was born in 1810, and the poet's older brother, William Henry (Mabbott 532 & Pruette 371). Arnold's funeral took place on December 10 at Old St. John's burial ground and was recorded by the *Virginia Patriot* newspaper. On the other hand, the date of Poe Jr.'s demise, is hard to determine according to Mabbott, considering that different sources claims different moments in time. Furthermore, Poe himself expressed in a letter to Judge Beverley Tucker on December 1, 1835, that there were only a couple weeks separating the deaths of both of his parents. The idea behind Poe Jr. outliving his wife, nevertheless, is only substantiated by the argument that Arnold was never listed as his widow (Mabbott 532). In light of this information, it is important to remark that the poet's father, was originally educated for the law but realized that the profession was too tedious

for his own desire, and therefore decided to become an actor after meeting Arnold. Pruette argues that these details “indicate a decided neurotic taint in Poe’s paternal inheritance,” where escapism from reality, manifested itself in this family early on, and later became more accessible through alcoholism, which provided erethism (371). However, the relationship between Poe and his mother after her death, seem to be difficult to characterize, considering it might have been deemed as unnecessary on December 10 to bring the young poet to his mother’s funeral, and thereby eliminating the possibility of him seeing her after her demise (Mabbott 531). Mabbott also remarks that the letter Judge Tucker received on December 1, 1835, included a statement by Poe where he explicitly expresses that he had no recollection of his mother (532). This is further elaborated on in “A Psycho-Analytical study of Edgar Allan Poe,” where it is addressed that little is confirmed in regard to Poe’s maternal inheritance. Arnold is said to have been gifted with artistic abilities, such as acting, painting, and singing, and it seems that Poe must have inherited some of these talents, considering he had a passion for music, and aptitude for drawing (Pruette 371). However, there is a discussion of Anna Cora Mowatt in the *Broadway Journal* from July 19, 1845, where Poe presents an impersonal point of view towards his pride for his mother’s noteworthy stage career (532). Pruette also confirms this, by reflecting on that the poet would consistently declare his pride for being related to a woman who was regarded as noble, in addition to being honored and respected within her profession. Still, it is also suggested that his affirmations were intended to convince others as well as himself, considering that the only real connection between Arnold and her son, that remained after her departure, is the fact that Poe kept a picture of his mother, and a striking resemblance between them (532).

Following a fire at the Richmond Theater on December 26, 1811, Poe, and his sister Rosalie, were adopted by two separate families, the latter became a family member of Mr. and Mrs. William Mackenzie, while Poe was taken in by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan. Mr. Allan was regarded as a respected merchant in Richmond, due to his partnership with Charles Ellis who he together with ran a general store called “Ellis & Allan” (Mabbott 533). In January 1812, Poe was baptized and renamed by the Reverend John Buchanan, and probably acquired the surname “Allan,” due to the fact that Mr. Allan was his godfather.

Still, despite renaming and raising Poe as their son, he was never legally adopted by the Allans (Levine 684). He did, however, receive some affection from his foster mother, but it has been suggested that she never related to his genius (Pruette 372). During the summer of 1814, the Allan family usually spent their time in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, where Poe frequently demonstrated his young ingenuity by reading the newspaper for people they encountered. In the Allan household, he learned certain courtesies, such as addressing and toasting to the ladies that attended their dinner parties, and he was often granted with a glass of sweetened wine. Some individuals, although not specifically named by Mabbott, regarded this act as spoiling the child, in addition to him often being lavishly dressed by his foster parents (534). From Pruette's point of view, it appears that these developments were originated by Mr. Allan's conflicting feelings towards the poet in the early years, considering that he took pride in the boy's premature skill of reciting newspapers and poetry, but at length it must have been straining for the young sensitive child (372). Furthermore, Allan was also a poor disciplinarian, because of his tendency to alternate between praising or scolding Poe, whenever the poet was disobedient (Mabbott 534). To support this argument, it is important to remark that his foster parents would rather spoil the child, instead of indulging with his personal problems, even Poe himself, according to Pruette, said "that he never received the parental affection or family sympathy for which he longed" (372). In the first months of 1815, Poe attended the school of Mr. William Ewing in Richmond, but unfortunately was unable to continue, due to Mr. Allan's decision to establish a new branch of his firm in England. By October the family had reached London through Newcastle and Sheffield, and for the next two years the young poet attended the boarding school of the Misses Dubourg, in Chelsea, at 146 Sloane Street. In 1818, Poe was placed by Mr. Allan in a boarding school in Stoke Newington, which was established by Reverend John Bransby. Here, he gained recognition for his aptitude in French and Latin by his mentor, while also becoming aware of the lore of the classics (Mabbott 535 & Pruette 373). For the next five years, the poet resided at this institution, and according Pruette, it made a significant emotional impact on the young child, considering that it prevented him from establishing a normal relationship with his foster parents. As a result of his absence from the Allan family, it became impossible to develop ties of affection, and it is, therefore,

suggested that it would influence their attitude and behavior towards each other in later years (373).

In 1819 Poe remained a student at Stoke Newington, regardless of the financial struggle that Mr. Allan's business branch was experiencing at the time. Taking this into account, it appears that Mabbott tries to implicate the importance of an instance, where Mr. Allan's business venture does not impact the stability of Poe's upbringing. To further elaborate, Mabbott continues by turning to the Allan family's permanent return to Richmond, on August 2, 1820, where they were invited to live in the home of Charles Ellis, because Mr. Allan's business in London was a nonsuccess. It is essential to bear in mind that the Allan family was most likely desperate at the time, considering that Mr. Allan's enterprise was probably the only or primary source of the family income, and how dire their living situation must have been, in order for Ellis to open his residence as a shelter for the Allans. However, it does not change the fact that this clearly exemplifies how Allan's decision making would determine the stability of the young poet's upbringing and education (535). More importantly, as Poe matured, he came to realize that he occupied a bizarre role in the family household, considering that he was never regarded as an equal by the arrogant and aristocratic sons of Richmond. Despite being acknowledged for his intellect in school, he was repeatedly reminded of his biological ancestry by his fellow students, in order to prevent him from enjoying the privileges and high eminence that the Allan family represented. Taking this into account, it is important to acknowledge that there is an element of personal envy in this picture, because many of these students were brought up to hold in high regard an extravagant pride for their ancestry. As a consequence of these constant reminders, Poe developed an unnatural moodiness, because it deprived him of common companionship within an educational institution (Pruette 373). This is further supported by the fact, that the poet was finally able to cultivate a solid friendship with Ellis's son, Thomas, who he befriended outside of school. Together they would learn how to swim, skate, and shoot, which are clear representations of them cultivating a companionship (Mabbott 353). In autumn of 1820, the young poet became a student at the school of Joseph H. Clarke, here, he exhibited a profound understanding for Latin and French, while also expressing a preference for

poetry over prose (Mabbott 535). At an early age he became familiar with the works of Julius Caesar, Virgil, and Ovid, and in 1822 the young poet composed a series of poems, that he freely gave to little girls in Richmond. In fact, the printing of these poems was conducted by Mr. Allan, who was advised against this action by Clarke, thereby indicating that Mr. Allan encouraged his godson's passion for poetry. Nevertheless, the relation between Poe and Mr. Clarke remained intact, despite this debacle, considering that they both kept in touch after Clarke decided to close the school, and at the farewell ceremony the young poet read an ode in English before the faculty (Mabbott 535).

On April 1, 1823, Mr. Allan decided to enter Poe into the school of William Burke. Taking this into account, it seems that Mabbott's tries to emphasize the insignificant role that Poe possessed in the Allan household, considering that the structure of this sentence reflect on how Poe had no say in where he would receive his education (535). While studying at this institution between 1823 and 1825, the poet became friends with three other students, including Creed Thomas, Robert G. Cabell, and Robert Stanard (Mabbott 536). Thomas became a lifelong friend, while the mother of Stanard, Jane Stith Craig Stanard, had an immense emotional impact on Poe. She expressed a genuine kindness towards the young man, which resulted in him developing a pure affection for this woman. This affection, according to Mabbott, might be considered as "the strongest of his life," because after her illness and death in 1824, Poe would frequently accompany her son on visits to her grave (536). Pruette takes this even further by arguing that he would attend her grave on solitary visits during the night, in order to preserve a warm memory of a woman who had been kind to him. In fact, he became her humble adorer and to him, she was "the confidant of all his boyish sorrows and the redeeming influence of his turbulent and passionate youth" (378). The impact of her demise was clearly significant to the poet, given that his nightly visits reflected a feeling of bereavement, in addition to him witnessing the loneliness of her son, which introduced Poe to thoughts concerning the perishing of beautiful women, and more importantly, sparked the idea that the dead are not dead to the consciousness of the living (Pruette 378 & Mabbott 536). With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that Poe has incorporated this theme into notable works, such as the revival of a dead wife in "Ligeia," and the return of Lady Madeline in "The Fall

of the House of Usher.” It is, therefore, suggested that the death of Mrs. Stanard could have developed a foundation for Poe’s comprehension of the afterlife (Pruette 378).

On the other hand, in the remaining months of 1824 the partnership between Allan and Ellis dissolved, which led to further complications between the young poet and his godfather. The reason for this, as stated by Mabbott, is because prior to the end of Mr. Allan’s business partnership, there had been several occurrences where Poe had sided with his foster mother during partner disputes in the Allan household (536). It is implied in “Annals,” that in order to deal with the emotional distress of these domestic conflicts, the young poet at the time composed the “Oh Tempora! Oh, Mores!” a satiric rhyme that focuses on “ridiculing a socially minded drygoods clerk,” named Robert Pitts, which seems to be a mocking caricature of Mr. Allan (Mabbott 536). However, this was also a time of financial uncertainty for Mr. Allan, considering his previously failed business venture in London and the termination of his partnership with Mr. Ellis. It seems that Mabbott tries to convey to the reader, without including a substantial amount of information, that the partner disputes in Poe’s household concerned the economic instability of this family. To further support this argument, the following paragraph begins with stating that Allan’s financial worries were only temporary, because in March of 1825 he inherited several hundred thousand dollars from his uncle, William Galt. The fact that Mabbott starts with information that presents a sort of relief from the prior passage, therefore, emphasizes the likelihood that Mr. and Mrs. Allan’s conflicts were of the economic nature (536). Still, it is also important to acknowledge that this also justifies Poe’s decision to side with his foster mother during the domestic conflicts, considering that Mr. Allan’s business endeavor had greatly affected the family in the past (Mabbott 536).

During the year of 1825, the young poet fell in love with a girl named, Sarah Elmira Royster, and as a result they became engaged without parental approval (Mabbott 536). However, in the poet’s youth there had been a relationship of similar interests between him and his godfather. According to Mabbott, both shared an admiration for poetry, whereas Mr. Allan preferred Shakespeare over Byron, while Poe would later decorate his

college dorm room with pictures of the latter (537). By referring to Edward M. Alfriend's examination of this relationship, Mabbott reveals that Allan would read poetry to his godson on their walks, in addition to acknowledging his godson's intellect at the time, "Edgar is wayward and impulsive... for he has genius ... He will someday fill the world with his fame" (qtd. in Mabbott 537). Unfortunately, for Allan, he did not live to see the publication of "The Raven" in 1845, which became Poe's most recognized and honored work (Mabbott 537).

On the 14th of February 1826, Poe began his studies at the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville. Here, he attended classes in Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, and French. Professor George Blatterman, who taught at the University, praised the poet for his verse translation of a passage by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (Mabbott 537 & Aquilecchia, "Torquato Tasso"). As a result of his knowledge for various languages, Poe achieved a high academic standing and was able to translate all of these languages at sight. He was also recognized for his skillful draftsmanship, due to having several sketches and caricatures of Byron and his professors on his dorm room walls. During his time here the young man also established relations with fellow students such as Thomas S. Gholson, Miles George, Zaccheus Collins, William M. Burwell, and Philip Slaughter (Mabbott 537-538). Taking this into account, it has been argued by Pruette that Poe possessed many noble qualities but due to his previous experience with the aristocratic students of Richmond, he had developed a reserved personality that caused him to possess few intimate associates at the University, which is clearly reflected in Mabbott's account of Poe's small circle (374).

Nevertheless, this was also a period of disorderliness for Poe, considering that he would often indulge in an exaggerate intake of alcohol at the University. Eventually, this tendency developed into a habit, where the completion of drafts relied on a glass of brandy. At the end of his first and only year at the institution, the poet remained in Charlottesville for a couple of days, even though classes had ended in mid-December (Mabbott 538). The reason for this, is because an investigation of a faculty at the University was conducted, which required him to testify on the 20th of December in a case

concerning “Hotel-Keepers playing cards or drinking with students” (qtd. in Mabbott 538). At the same time, it is important to establish that he had accumulated a substantial amount of debt, because of his participation in these gambling circles, and according to Levine, it had intensified the development of Poe’s drinking habit. Above all, as his debt increased, he continued to gamble in hope of bailing himself out of this endeavor, but unfortunately, it only resulted in Poe being no longer able to finance his education, after Mr. Allan refused to compensate for his godson’s monetary loss (684). From Pruette’s point of view, in regard to this matter, it is argued that gambling and drinking were common features among the students at the University of Virginia. As a matter of fact, it was Thomas Jefferson who was the founder of this University, and upon its establishment, he proclaimed that no student of this institution should experience any form of restrictions, except for the expectation that they would conduct themselves as gentlemen (374 & Ellis, “Thomas Jefferson”). As a result of this statement, many of the students who were of high lineage and wealth, developed a lifestyle of reckless extravagance, that included drinking and gambling, which was essential to their idea of a gentleman at the time. Nevertheless, there were those such as the poet who came to experience the bleak reality of ignoring the dangers of such a lifestyle (Pruette 374).

Upon his return to Richmond, the poet came to discover that Royster was now engaged to a man named Alexander B. Shelton (Mabbott 538) This was of some surprise to Poe, considering that his relationship to Royster had withered severely due to his drinking at the University (Odasso 13). However, during the year at the University he had mailed her several letters within this timeframe, but these were unfortunately intercepted by her father. In fact, she only received only one of these letters, indicating that Mabbott’s intention here, is to reflect on the feeling of unfairness that Poe experienced upon his return (538). As previously stated, their engagement was without parental approval, and the reason for this is because her father was uncomfortable with the age gap between her and the poet (Mabbott 536 & Pruette 379). In light of these factors, it is reasonable to believe that upon Poe’s return, he encountered a sorrow which he experienced as threatening for the self-assurance he had cultivated through the recognition he had gained in academia up until this point (Pruette 379). In Mr. Allan’s case, on the other

hand, there was a certain criticism directed towards the merchant after his godson's return, considering that it was expected among most of the prominent families in Richmond, to provide financial aid in situations where family members struggled. Mr. Allan, however, was not born into substantial wealth, unlike some of these families, and therefore, never ascertained this attitude. Taking this into account, it appears that Mabbott wants to rationalize the cold-heartedness of Mr. Allan, but it does not reduce the ruthlessness of Poe's godfather, considering there is no argument indicating that Mr. Allan is trying to make his godson understand the consequences of his actions (538). Furthermore, Pruette states that Allan "had refused to pay Edgar's gambling debts which the boy regarded as debts of honor, and so had placed him in a position of galling humiliation at the University" (391-392). Clearly, this emphasizes the fact that the only implication of an understanding between the two, is that it must have been impossible for Allan to sympathize with Poe's unfortunate decision making (Mabbott 538).

In March of 1827, a conflict between Mr. Allan and the poet escalated to the point where "Poe left his guardian's house and took a room in the Court-house Tavern" (Mabbott 538). After a few days the young author left for Boston, where he worked as a market reporter for P. P. F. DeGrand's paper, *The Weekly Reporter*, before enlisting in the United States Army on May 26, under the name "Edgar A. Perry." While being stationed at Fort Independence, in the Boston Harbor, he completed a collection of poems, titled, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, which were "printed and published by Calvin Frederick Stephen Thomas" (Mabbott 539). There were a small number of these copies that circulated, in addition to being noticed by two magazines, but it gained no significant recognition (Mabbott 539). At the end of October, the battalion was transferred to Fort Moultrie, located in Charleston, South Carolina, where Poe worked as the company's clerk, granting him the rank of Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. In the last months of 1828, the battalion received orders to transfer to Fortress Monroe, in Virginia. However, prior to this transfer, there had been an exchange of letters between Poe and Mr. Allan, where the former had expressed his remorsefulness in regard to their past. On the first of January 1829, the poet was promoted to the rank of sergeant major, but unfortunately, in the following month, Mrs. Allan died at the age of 45 (Mabbott 540 & Hammond 73). After

receiving the news of his foster mother, he returned to Richmond the following day of her funeral, where Mr. Allan and Poe agreed on a partial reconciliation (Mabbott 539-540). This agreement was probably realized due to Poe's letter of remorse, and it resulted in Mr. Allan promising his godson to arrange a meeting with West Point Academy. Nevertheless, during the time in the Army, where Poe had plenty of leisure, he committed himself to study the works of Shakespeare and Milton. In addition, he abandoned the criticism of Byron, for the purpose of developing "Al Aaraaf" and a shorter version of "Tamerlane," which were included in an 1827 pamphlet, that eventually became a small volume. In May, he traveled to Philadelphia, in hope of getting his volume published by The firm of Carey, Lea & Carey, but unfortunately had to decline their offer, because he was unable to advance the firm with one hundred dollars. Poe did, however, ask Mr. Allan for financial assistance in this situation, but it was due to Allan's refusal that the deal never fell through. Mabbott's description of the event, suggest that the poet's godfather must have reached a point where he no longer saw it necessary to assist his godson in his endeavors, which is strange considering that he financed the poet's trip to Boston, granted that he would enter some form of business, which Poe had finally succeeded at (540 & 539). Nevertheless, the volume was eventually published in December 1829, in Baltimore, by Hatch and Dunning (Mabbott 540).

After the publication of Poe's small volume, *Al Aaraaf*, *Tamerlane*, and *Minor Poems*, the poet once again experienced that his work sold poorly, but it gained some critical attention. In a brief review of the Boston *Ladies' Magazine* from January 1830, it stated that "The author, who appears to be very young, is evidently a fine genius, but wants judgement, experience, tact" (qtd. in Mabbott 540). John H. Hewitt's review of the work, in the *Minerva* and *Emerald*, praised several of the minor poems, but regarded "Al Aaraaf" as a culmination of unprincipled insults. John Neal, on the other hand, to whom Poe had devoted "Tamerlane" to, complimented the new version of the poem for its traditional transparency and eloquence. In his conclusion of the review, he expressed that if this young author should fulfill his potential "he will be foremost in the rank of real poets" (qtd. in Mabbott 540). During the last weeks of June in 1830, Poe entered a class of eighty seven students at West Point Academy. While studying here, he developed fictional

stories concerning his past, which he shared with other roommates. One as such was him boasting about a trip to South America, who had actually been attended by his brother Henry. The poet also demonstrated a disinterest towards the Academy and its principles of acknowledgment and respect, considering that he composed several comedic verses that included his officers and fellow cadets. He would also have occasional visits to the tavern of Benny Havens. At the same time, he found himself in a strained economic position, and therefore, contacted Mr. Allan in hope of being provided with an allowance. After receiving Allan's refusal for this request, the poet subsequently effectuated a plan to get himself expelled from the Academy. After several months of disobeying orders, refusing to attend obligatory classes, and church gatherings, he was finally court-martialed on January 27, 1831. Taking this into account, it appears that Poe's personal matters with Mr. Allan would dictate his determination, to whether or not uphold a minimum required standard to be allowed to continue at the Academy, considering how his actions at West Point after Allan's refusal, reflects a realization of discontent (Mabbott 542). More importantly, Pruette further elaborates on this subject, by referring to A. B. Magruder's remark, who states that the poet's "great fault was his neglect of and apparent contempt for military duties" (qtd. in Pruette 376), which either made him totally oblivious or indifferent to a standard routine (376). Furthermore, it is important to consider that Poe's relation to his foster father was completely severed at this point, due to the fact that Mr. Allan had quickly remarried after the demise of Mrs. Allan in 1829, who in reality, was the only real incentive for Mr. Allan to maintain a relationship with the poet (Pruette 376).

In the aftermath of his court-martial, Poe was able to establish contact with Elam Bliss who was a New York publisher, before the poet was finally expelled from West Point on February 19. Within this timeframe, Poe also received a permittance after the court-case to offer subscriptions to the cadets at the Academy for his new upcoming volume (Mabbott 542). However, despite building up expectations for this volume, the 1831 publication of *Poems by Edgar Allan Poe*, received only a small number of sales, even with the subscribers prior to its release. In order to improve his sale numbers over the years, Poe made extensive revisions to "Al Aaraaf," "Tamerlane," and earlier poems, but eventually decided to abandon these modifications. The work contained six new poems,

including "To Helen" and "Israfel," but even some of the cadets were disappointed of the final product, considering that it contained perfunctory satirical verses that were used for amusement among Poe and his companions at West Point (Mabbott 542-543). Following this endeavor, the poet remained for a short duration in New York but continued to struggle financially. Again, he vainly attempt to improve his situation by appealing to Mr. Allan for financial assistance but was met with rejection. He returned to Baltimore in May, where he was invited to live with his aunt, Maria Clemm, who also resided with Poe's grandmother, Elizabeth Cairnes. On the first of August 1831, the poet's brother, Henry, died at the house of Mrs. Clemm due to complications brought on by alcoholism (Mabbott 543 & Odasso 14).

A couple years later, in 1833, Poe would often submit various stories to the *Saturday Visiter* and in October it resulted in granting him with the first price in a magazine contest, where he won with the tale "MS. Found in a Bottle" (Mabbott 544 & Odasso 14). This provide him with a certain degree of national attention, considering that at the end of the year, he was approached by a magazine titled, *Lady's Book*, who offered to purchase his story "The Visionary." As a result of accepting this offer, the tale appeared in the January 1834 issue and became his first production to be included in a wider circulation. In the first months of 1834, the poet returned to Richmond after receiving word of Mr. Allan becoming extremely ill at the time. Despite their past disputes, it is possible that Poe answered this call simply out of formality. Still, its occurrence did not improve their relationship in any manner, considering that upon his arrival, the poet was immediately asked to leave the property. However, after insisting on meeting with his godfather, Poe was subsequently confronted with a sick and angered Allan who threatened him with a cane, while banishing the godson off the property. On March 27, 1834, Allan died due to complications relating to his illness. In his will, he acknowledged both his legitimate and illegitimate children, but made no recognition of his relation to Poe (Mabbott 544). Pruette claims that many of Poe's stories reveal a conscious and obvious death wish towards a man, for example in "The Tell-Tale Heart," where there is a murderer who is not satisfied until he mutilates the corpse of an old man. She is convinced that every tale concerning this theme, originated from the poet's relationship with Mr. Allan, because "there had

never been love or understanding between the two. He had brought up the gifted boy as his son, giving him his name, then had cast him off without a cent” (391). It is therefore reasonable to believe that Poe, did eventually grow to despise his godfather, considering that the poet might have inherited Allan’s fortune if his demise came at an earlier convenience, or if Allan did not remarry at all. This is further supported by the fact that in the aftermath of Mr. Allan’s death, Poe came to experience years of destitution and struggle, while lacking the funds to provide his wife with food, or more importantly, the medicine she sorely needed as her tuberculosis advanced in 1846 (392). However, throughout the remaining months of 1834, the poet continued to reside in Baltimore, where he composed fiction that intentionally maintained a focus on somberness, including works such as “King Pest” and “Berenice” (Mabbott 545)

By March 1835, Poe had established a partnership with Thomas W. White, who was a publisher for the Southern Literary Messenger, and this ensured the poet with a position as a book reviewer for the magazine. After being promoted to White’s editorial assistant at in august, 1835, the poet returned permanently to Richmond, where he acquired a significant role in regard to the daily obligations within the journal. In addition to his poems and stories appearing in the Southern Literary Messenger, the author was also able to cultivate a noticeable reputation due to his ruthless reviews, thereby granting him the nickname, the “Tomahawk Man.” Nonetheless, this was also a time when Poe began drinking again, and it therefore, contributed to “fits of despondency” that gradually compromised the relation between White and the poet (Levine 685 & Mabbott 545).

In August 1835, the poet received a letter from Mrs. Clemm, which revealed that a cousin named, Neilson Poe, intended to claim Virginia Clemm’s hand in marriage. According to Mabbott, Poe immediately responded on August 29 with a letter written in a hysterical manner, where he requested to become the future husband of Mrs. Clemm’s daughter (546). In light of this, it is important to acknowledge that the poet had for some time resided with his aunt and her daughter in 1831 and 1834, and this must have contributed to the development of an emotional connection between Poe and Mrs. Clemm’s daughter (Mabbott 543-545 & Pruette 379). As a matter of fact, in September,

the poet returned to Baltimore in order to secure a marriage license for himself and his future wife. The couple “were privately married by the Reverend John Owen of the First Presbyterian Church,” before being publicly married on May 16, 1836. Many of the ladies of Richmond frowned upon the public marriage, due to the fact that the bride at the time was barely fourteen, while Poe was twenty-six years of age (Mabbott 546-547 & Odasso 14). Pruette argues that there is a correspondence between Poe marrying his cousin, and the strong attachment between him and his aunt. This correspondence is exemplified by how Mrs. Clemm provided Poe with something he never received by either his biological mother or his foster mother, for that matter, which is a woman “laboring and suffering for him as would a mother for an only son” (378 & 379). Considering that Arnold met an untimely death, when the poet was only two years old, and how Mrs. Allan provided him with only luxurious clothes and a certain degree of affection, it is quite possible that he never experienced the satisfaction of love and approval, until Mrs. Clemm invited him into her home (Pruette 371 & 378-379). It must have been enticing for Poe to take his cousin’s hand in marriage, because it would ensure him the maternal and dedicative care of Mrs. Clemm, where a sense of refuge and safety from the disapprovals of the outside world was offered (Pruette 379).

In 1836 the poet became an editor for the *Southern Literary Messenger* and remained in this position throughout the year. The reviews that were published in this timespan, were not all written by Poe, but he assumed responsibility for all of them. Among these reviews he had appraised the works of Joseph Rodman Drake, Dickens, and Fitz-Greene Halleck, in addition to providing a criticism of other authors who would have been forgotten, if it were not for Poe’s biting sarcasm (Mabbott 546). At the beginning of 1837, the *Southern Literary Messenger* announced that the poet would resign from his position as its editor, but the truth was in fact that White fired him on accounts of his drinking, in addition to how Poe had simultaneously complicated the daily operations at the journal, by contradicting White’s business decisions. Still, despite the outcome of these circumstances, the magazine continued to publish the poet’s works for another two months, including two poems in the January issue, and a second installment of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* in February (Mabbott 547 & Levine 685). Following

his dismissal, the poet, along with his wife and Mrs. Clemm decided to move to New York during the month of February, and here they remained until 1838 (Mabbott 547). In the winter spanning from 1837 to 1838, Poe decided to reestablish his contact with his connections in Baltimore, which resulted in the poet donating the prose poem "Siope" to The Baltimore Book of 1838. More importantly, in the month of July in 1838, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym was published by a company called Harpers. Some of its copies were shipped to England and were immediately pirated, resulting in a higher circulation outside of the U.S. As a result of this, the poet was experiencing extreme poverty at the time, and therefore, decided to move his family to Philadelphia (Levine 685 & Mabbott 548). In fact, the conditions of his financial struggle became so severe that on July 19, 1838, he wrote to "James K. Paulding, then secretary of the Navy," where he vainly begged "for any kind of clerkship," regardless of being stationed by land or sea (Mabbott 548). To exemplify Poe's struggles even further, Mabbott refers to Lambert A. Wilmer's "Recollections," where Wilmer states that this was a time when Poe came to realize that "he could not possibly live by literary labor," and therefore decided to abandon this profession (qtd. in Mabbott 548). Coincidentally, during this period of financial difficulty, the poet was working in a Philadelphia printing house, along with an Englishman named James Peddler. The reason why this is of significance, is due to the fact that Peddler's daughters, Anna, and Bessie, would sometimes visit Poe's residence, and according to their recollections of their visits they could confirm that this was a family in great need. In their recall, they remarked that Poe, along with his wife and Mrs. Clemm, would often live on molasses and bread for weeks on end. Peddler also commented at a later occasion, that the poet was a man of great manners and nobility, but feared that because of his friend's erratic temperament, it could one day result in Poe finding himself in a madhouse (Mabbott 548). Certainly, there is some truth to this statement, considering that Pruette also acknowledges that the poet had the ability to impress people with his intelligence and charm, however, it was his erratic conduct that caused him to alienate himself from his friends, in addition to acquiring more enemies than associates. Accordingly, it was because of his neurotic tendency, that he developed an enthusiasm where he continually searched for new friends under new circumstances, in hope of a new opportunity that eventually was sabotaged by "the vagaries of his own conduct" (377).

On August 11, 1838, the Saturday Evening Post included a poem that was directly addressed to the poet by a man named Horace in Philadelphia, in addition, it also contained a note by Wilmer, who welcomed the author “back to the field of letters” (Mabbott 548-549). This resulted in Poe’s return to professional writing and in the following month, a new Baltimore magazine, titled, American Museum, which was established by two friends of Poe, included his proudest composition, “Ligeia” (Mabbott 549). During the first months of 1839, the poet worked alongside with Professor Thomas Wyatt in order to produce *The Conchologist’s First Book*, where he was complimented with fifty dollars to appear as its author. In April, the American Museum received his poem “The Haunted Palace,” and in May, his story “The Devil in the Belfry” appeared in the Philadelphia Saturday Chronicle. In the following month, Poe acquired the position as coeditor for *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, while simultaneously contributing to the development of *A Synopsis of Natural History*, that was mainly attributed to Wyatt’s efforts, and released in June 1839 (Mabbott 549). Between December and May 1840, there was a partnership that included Burton’s magazine and the newspaper *Alexander’s Weekly Messenger*, which provided Poe with the opportunity to develop a series of cryptograms for this paper (Mabbott 550). On the other hand, at the end of 1839 the release of Poe’s collected *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* was published by the firm of Lea and Blanchard, where its author had dedicated the work to Colonel Drayton. It only issued 750 copies and received a small number of reviews, resulting in being sold at a very slow pace. However, according to a woman named Sarah Josepha Hale, it had received favorable reviews in the January issue of *Godey’s Lady Book* in 1840 (Mabbott 550).

In 1841, the poet supplied *Burton’s Gentleman Magazine* with an anonymous serial, titled, “The Journal of Julius Rodman,” but he was later discharged from the magazine in May due to his excessive drinking and quarrels with its proprietor. Between September and the last weeks of October, the author struggled to find stable employment, and therefore, continued to grow weary of his financial situation. After Burton decided to sell his magazine to George Rex Graham, in November 1840, the poet was granted the opportunity to provide *Graham’s Magazine* with his compositions (Mabbott 550). On

February 20, 1841, it was announced in the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post, that Poe had become an editor of *Graham's Magazine* (Mabbott 550-551). Furthermore, the poet also established employment with other periodicals during 1841, including the Saturday Evening Post, which praised his prediction of the outcome of *Barnaby Rudge* by Charles Dickens (Mabbott 551 & Pedlar 27). In addition, the November 27 issue for this periodical, also incorporated Poe's short story "Three Sundays in a Week," where it depicts a romance between a hero and his cousin, who is only fifteen years of age. This introduced an autobiographical aspect to the poet's work, and it was further explored in the appearance of the enigmatic short story "Eleonora," in the Philadelphia annual, *The Gift*, in 1842. The premise of this fantasy narrative presents two wedded cousins, where the man falls into deep despair after the lady's demise. Strangely enough, its printing process took place in autumn of 1841, which was only a few months prior to the first awareness of Mrs. Poe's serious illness. However, before providing further elaboration of Mrs. Poe's sickness and its impact on her husband, it is important to reflect on the established partnership between Poe and Griswold in the spring of 1841 (Mabbott 551). The purpose of this collaboration was rooted in the poet's ambition, to develop an extensive and authoritative anthology of his biography, which he hoped that Griswold could provide. As previously stated by Levine in the introduction of this thesis, this accord did not produce the desired representation of Poe, that was agreed on between the poet and his autobiographer (683 & Walker 19). With this in mind, it is essential to acknowledge that there are scholars such as Levine, who condemns Griswold for his literary persecution of Poe's legacy, but, on the other hand, there are also those such as Ian Walker, who believes that the poet himself, ensured that Griswold's final product would not reflect the truth of his associate's life, considering that Poe provided his autobiographer with highly inaccurate and distortive information (683 & 19). Even more, Walker states that "almost every aspect of Poe's life was altered or fabricated in order to mask his real origins and circumstances and to project an image of himself in keeping with his literary ambitions" (19). For this reason, we may consider that Poe is partly the reason why Griswold provided such an inaccurate representation of the poet, still, this is a discussion that is not of concern for this thesis, but it is important to not neglect its existence, should one venture into the search of the truth behind Griswold's intentions.

At the beginning of 1842, Mrs. Poe started to experience hemorrhaging from her lungs while singing, and after a further examination she was diagnosed with tuberculosis. She never fully recovered from this disease, and its complications caused the author to develop an ongoing struggle with alcoholism (Levine 686 & Odasso 14). Poe at the time, also fell ill for a short duration, before he returned to Graham's office, where he had been replaced by the editor, Charles J. Peterson (Mabbott 551). The poet, therefore, left Graham's office in May, and continued to develop several works throughout the year, including "The Masque of the Red Death," "Life in Death," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Gold-Bug," and "The Black Cat." Many of his short stories were also composed into a collection, titled, *Phantasy Pieces*, but its publication was never realized (Mabbott 552). During the first months of 1843, Poe came into contact with Thomas Cottrell Clarke, and together they established a partnership with the purpose of producing and publishing the poet's very own magazine, titled, *The Stylus* (Mabbott 552). The influence of a collaboration with Clarke was essential to Poe, considering that Clarke was the publisher of the *Saturday Museum*, a weekly paper in Philadelphia. In March 1843, the *Saturday Museum* published the earliest printed biography of the poet, which was rendered with inaccurate information and over exaggerated fiction that was provided by the author himself. Within the same month, Poe also travelled to Washington in order to apply for a government job, in addition to acquiring subscribers for *The Stylus*. While he was staying here, he began to drink excessively and went on a bender where he criticized President John Tyler, and as a result, returned to Philadelphia both jobless and penniless after only a couple of days. The detail of this account is somewhat unclear, but it suggest that Poe might have been drunk during his job interview, where he most likely also criticized the president (Mabbott 553). In the aftermath of these developments, the publication of *The Stylus* was postponed twice, before being finally cancelled. The poet continued to accept subscriptions for his fictional magazine until the end of his days, thereby reflecting his intense bitterness in regard to its termination (Mabbott 553). With this in mind, it is important to emphasize that Pruette regards the outcome of Poe's magazine, as a contributing factor to the poet's growing hate towards Mr. Allan, granted that if Poe had inherited Allan's fortune, he could have realized the dream of establishing *The Stylus* (392). This is of course not a certain fact, because it neglects the potentiality of other

preventions that could have provided the same actual result. Nevertheless, the argument is still substantial to a certain degree, because it is plausible that Poe at the time could have blamed his foster father for his current financial situation.

During the last months of 1843, the poet started a career as a lecturer by delivering his lecture "Poetry of America" on November 21, 1843, in Philadelphia. In the following year, he gave a lecture on American poetry in Pennsylvania, as well as at the University of Baltimore, before moving his family to New York in April. In New York, he arranged a series of seven newsletters to be transported to Eli Bowen, who was then an editor for a magazine, titled, the *Spy*, which was located in Columbia, Pennsylvania (Mabbott 554). At the end of the year, the family had moved to a farmhouse, owned by Patrick Henry Brennan, that was situated near the Hudson river. Here, Poe and his wife would spend quality time together while gazing upon the river in peace. According to Mabbott, there is no doubt that the final preparations of "The Raven" were completed here, and following the finalization of the poem, it was first offered to Graham, who refused it, but it was then accepted by George Hooker Colton, who was a member of a new magazine, titled, the *American Review: A Whig Journal*. Both Colton and Poe remained friends until the former passed on December 1, 1847 (Mabbott 555). On January 29, 1845, "The Raven" appeared in the *Evening Mirror*, and was an immediate success (Mabbott 555-556). It was subsequently parodied, copied, recopied, and eventually, anthologized in a schoolbook within weeks of its release. At the end of February, Poe gave a lecture at the New York Society Library, on the "Poets of America," where he praised Frances Sargent Osgood's contributions to the poetry genre. Although she did not attend this lecture, the two met briefly after, and developed a romantic friendship through the exchange of poems (Mabbott 556). As a result of the success of "The Raven," Poe became a coeditor among Charles F. Briggs and Henry C. Watson, for the *Broadway Journal*. While working for this periodical, he reprinted several of his poems and short stories, but for the majority of the time his original work was centered around reviewing. One example in regard to his assessment of other works, was the composition of a series that included five articles focusing on a proclaimed plagiarism of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, where Poe intentionally sought to aggravate Longfellow, in order to tantalize his admirers (Mabbott

556). According to Pruette, this was a symptom of the poet's conflict with the idea of superiority. She argues that he decidedly focused on the depiction of beauty and horror in his poems and stories, in order to remain in a field where he remained dominant, and this approach also transitioned into his work as a critic. By emphasizing that beauty was the sole motive of poetry in his reviews of other poets, he was able to maintain a position where his critical approval was predominant. Nevertheless, this also resulted in him degrading the works of others, such as Longfellow, where he claimed that his scathing criticisms were a devotion to truth but were actually constructs of his own egotistic desire (375). Certainly, it would be neglectful to generalize the entirety of Poe's career as a critic on this singular incident, as Pruette has done above. However, it is important to acknowledge that the poet's persecution of Longfellow's work, resulted in reflecting badly on the reputation of the Evening Mirror, and therefore, proves that Poe prioritized his personal ambitions despite its repercussions (375 & Mabbott 557).

Following the success of "The Raven" in 1845, the poet became more evident in the society of literary people. He was invited "by the Philomathean and Eucleian Societies of New York University to read a poem at commencement exercises on July 1, but was unable to write a new poem and pleaded indisposition" (Mabbott 558). During the month of July, the Broadway Journal was in the process of finalizing its first volume. At the time, Briggs considered to terminate Poe's position at the periodical, in addition to John Bisco's who was its publisher. Yet, in the end, Bisco was able to secure his and the poet's employment, and from July 12, the following issues were edited by Watson and Poe. Immediately following this development, the Broadway Journal was purchased by Poe, who had gone on to borrow money from Horace Greeley, Halleck, Griswold, and Thomas Dunn English, who was a physician and friend the author had become acquainted with in Philadelphia in 1839 (Mabbott 549 & 558). In the monthly issue of October, it read at the masthead "Edgar A. Poe, Editor and Proprietor" (qtd. in Mabbott 558). According to Mabbott, this must have granted Poe with a significant personal satisfaction, however, it also entailed a guaranteed indebtedness to those he had relied on for financial support (558).

After meeting with James Russell Lowell in New York in May 1845, the poet was invited to the Boston Lyceum on October 16, granted that he would be reimbursed with fifty dollars to produce and perform a poem (Mabbott 559). In a similar fashion to his invitation to the Philomathean and Eucleian Societies of New York University, the author was unable to compose a new poem, and therefore, settled on a reading of "Al Aaraaf." The Boston Courier referred to the three-hour reading as "an elegant and classic production ... containing the essence of true poetry," but the audience grew bored of the performance's length (qtd. in Mabbott 559). On the other hand, the Boston Transcript regarded it as a failure, resulting in the poet retaliating in the Broadway Journal, where he claimed to have been inebriated while deceiving the audience with a composed poem that was produced when he was ten years old. Yet, the truth is that he became drunk after the event because he regretted his attendance (Mabbott 559).

In the last months of 1845, the Broadway Journal acquired James E. Murdoch as a contributor to the drama column of the magazine. Watson, on the other hand, left his position without any conflict, and following his resignation, other contributors were employed, such as William Gilmore Simms, and Philip Pendleton Cooke, who was a friend of Poe's from Virginia. Unfortunately, however, at the end of the year the Broadway Journal was struggling financially, and ultimately, had to cease its operations following the publication of the January 1846 issue. With the conclusion of the journal, the poet began to develop a series, titled, "The Literati of New York City," for the magazine, *Godey's Lady's Book* in May 1846. The sketches included in this composition discussed the men who Poe had previously been in conflict with, in addition to an unjust attack on Dr. English (Mabbott 560). This quarrel eventually evolved into a court case between Poe and Augustus W. Clasen, Jr., who was the proprietor of the New York Evening Mirror. According to the poet, the Evening Mirror had printed several attacks on him with the assist of English. Moreover, he was also accused of forgery by English, but was eventually able to win the trial on February 17, 1847. Despite being cleared of these charges, the poet's reputation after this event did not maintain its integrity, considering that it was confirmed by the testimony of two witnesses, that the poet had acquired an addiction to intoxication. These two witnesses included Freeman Hunt, the editor of

Merchant's Magazine, and Major Mordecai M. Noah, who had worked alongside the poet as a subeditor, for the *Sunday Times* in 1844 (561 & 553). With this in mind, it is important to consider that others also could confirm that Poe at the time, struggled with moderating his alcohol intake. According to R. D. Unger, who was a newspaperman that the poet befriended during a trip to Baltimore in 1846, there had been several accounts where the author “was drinking steadily, although less excessively than on some occasions” (Mabbott 561).

Nonetheless, during the year of 1846, the Poe family resided in Amity Street at a house located at Turtle Bay on the East River. Still, this was only a temporary living solution, given that the family relocated to the Fordham Cottage after just a few months. It is important to acknowledge that the poet’s family must have found themselves in a severely strained economic situation, within this timeframe, considering that Poe was able to rent a house here for an annual fee of one hundred dollars. At the same time, this was also when Mrs. Poe’s tuberculosis advanced for the worse, causing her to require frequent nursing, which she received from Mrs. Clemm and Marie Louise Shew (561). Despite their hard efforts Mrs. Poe died on January 30, 1847, at an age of twenty four. She was buried on February 2, and her funeral was attended by George P. Morris, Mrs. Ann Stephens, Mrs. Shew, Mary Starr Jennings, Mrs. Edmund Morton Smith, and Mary Valentine (Mabbott 562). Mabbott suggests that the poet himself did not make an appearance, however, further evidence of this argument is not accounted for. Still, it is reasonable believe this statement, considering the emotional impact and loss he must have experienced as a result of her demise (562). To justify this argument, one only needs to reflect on the letter to his wife from June 12, 1846, where it reads “My Dear Heart, My dear Virginia! our Mother will explain to you why I stay away from you this night. I trust the interview I am promised, will result in some substantial good for me, for your dear sake, and hers ☐☐ Keep up your heart in all hopefulness, and trust yet a little longer ☐☐ In my last great disappointment, I should have lost my courage but for you ☐☐ my little darling wife you are my greatest and only stimulus now, to battle with this uncongenial, unsatisfactory and ungrateful life” (Ingram 111). In a similar fashion, Pruette also confirms that Mrs. Poe’s passing provided a lasting impact on the poet’s emotions and psyche. By

referring to a letter, dated January 4, 1846, that was intended to a friend of Poe, it is revealed that during the six years of Mrs. Poe's partial recovery, the poet came to experience the agonies of death at different intervals, and more importantly, made him cling to her life with pertinacity. In order to drown his sorrows, he drank beyond his ability to recollect, causing him to drift into absolute unconsciousness and insanity. However, the letter also discloses that the author's insanity was not a symptom of his intoxication, but an escapism from his current reality (386). Yet, the poet's attempt to cope with the reality of Mrs. Poe's illness, only provided him with "never ending oscillation between hope and despair" (qtd. in Mabbott 386), which makes him acknowledge the limits of his psyche, by stating that his mentality could not have endured this suffering for much longer (Pruette 386). As a result of these factors, Pruette concludes that the timeframe of Mrs. Poe's illness must have provided an unforgettable impression on the poet's brain (386). Furthermore, it is important to remark that the poet became extremely ill after his wife's demise, and he was therefore, cared for by Mrs. Clemm and Mrs. Shew (Mabbott 562). The circumstances that unfolded during this year caused Poe to never regain his former capacity of productivity, and he therefore, settled on contributing little prose to the field of literature within this period. The most noteworthy composition was the creation of "Ulalume," which is considered as one of his most peculiar poems (Pruette 395 & Mabbott 562). In the summer he returned to Washington, before travelling to Baltimore, where Unger "found him drinking rather steadily, and depressed" (Mabbott 563). Unger also noted that Poe's behavior indicated that the man did not care whether he lived for a day or a year, considering the severity of his drinking at this point. In addition, Poe also explicitly stated to Unger in Baltimore while they were discussing a translation of Fouqué's *Sintram and His Companions*, that each man possessed their own devil (Mabbott 563).

In the first months of 1848, Poe was in the process of finishing a work concerning cosmology, and on February 3, it was delivered in a lecture, titled, "The Universe" at the New York Society Library Lecture Room. This lecture was further developed and expanded into his book, *Eureka*, which was published in July by Putnam. At the same time, an intimate relation between Mrs. Shew and the poet established itself, as he would frequently visit her in Greenwich Village. Together they would attend gatherings at the

local Episcopalian church, causing her to develop a genuine and profound affection for the author. Still, this intimate relation was not substantial enough to convince Mrs. Shew to leave her current husband, in order to marry Poe. In the months that followed, the relationship between Mrs. Shew and the poet fell gradually apart, and eventually resulted in no contact between the two of them. It is suggested by Mabbott that she was prompted to cease all contact with Poe, considering that a young student of theology, John Henry Hopkins, Jr., contacted her in regard to the agnostic tendencies that he found in Eureka, however, this is not further supported by additional arguments or evidence (563). Concurrently, the author was invited to hold a lecture at Lowell, Massachusetts, on July 10, which was organized "through the offices of a relative of Mrs. Osgood, Jane Ermina Locke" (Mabbott 564). More importantly, at this event, Poe became acquainted with Nancy Locke Heywood Richmond, and in similar fashion to Mrs. Shew, they developed an intimate relationship that did not transcend beyond familiarity. In the month of September, the poet travelled to New York in order to reestablish a romantic connection with Sarah Helen Whitman, who he had exchanged poems with in the previous months of 1848. The intimacy of this relationship advanced quickly and resulted in Poe proposing to Mrs. Whitman after only a short time of reconnecting. At first, she refused his proposal, but she came to accept it after a while, as long as her husband would honor her reservations, which included the right to divorce him if she ever witnessed him in an intoxicated state. Furthermore, she also legally transferred all property associated with her name, to her mother and sister (Mabbott 565). The relationship between Poe and Mrs. Whitman, according to Mabbott, was primarily developed around an idealistic idea of being in love with the feeling of love, but there was also a mutual respect between the two because of their recognition for their individual nobility (566). This is further supported by Pruette, who claims that the letters that were exchanged between the two, illustrates an author writing about love, and not a lover expressing his passion for another. These letters were literature that was written under the format of love letters, similarly to his other works such as stories, critiques, and poems. She supports this argument by revealing that Poe at the time, was also exchanging letters with a woman, named, Annie Locke Richmond, who he referred to as, "Annie," and in these letters, on the other hand, there was an unequivocal essence of confidence and love (397). After the publication of

these documents, Mrs. Whitman felt a sense of betrayal, but from Pruette's point of view, it appears that the poet only remained true to his nature, considering that the approval of several women was more appealing to him, than the devotion of one (397). It also explains why he was in contact with Mrs. Richmond during the last weeks of October, while travelling between Lowell, Boston, and Providence. In one of the letters to Annie, he disclosed that he felt distraught and "had taken a dangerous amount of laudanum," which is a mixture of ten percent opium and alcohol that was used to treat pain and insomnia (Mabbott 566 & Schwarcz, "Opium and laudanum history's wonder drugs"). Unfortunately, he developed a weakness for this substance, given that after he delivered a lecture on "The Poetic Principle" on December 20, at the Earl House in Providence, he recalled an audience of sixteen hundred, which was far beyond the number of attendances. Mabbott confirms that it was during this visit that Poe's engagement to Mrs. Whitman came to an abrupt end (566). Taking this into account, Pruette remarks that any relations between the poet and his female friends, after the death of Mrs. Poe, represent the author's pitiful attempt to reestablish himself, because he intentionally sought out individuals that affirmed his self-respect (397-398). In the aftermath of Mrs. Poe, he tried to maintain his domestic agreement with Mrs. Clemm without success, considering that she "was then too old and broken to afford him the solace and safety he so hopelessly craved" (Pruette 398). Moreover, Pruette emphasizes that he was unable to develop any new form of genuine attachment to any woman, which ensured that peace, faith, and a renewed interest in life, became unrealistic actualities for the poet (398). The reason for this is probably due to the fact, that even though he expressed deep sentiments of affection to his female associates, such as Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Stanard, and Mrs. Whitman, it appears that Poe preferred the adoration and approval of women, rather than regarding them as sexual conquests (Pruette 378 & 380). This is exemplified in his poems, where feminine idealization is worshipped, by idealizing women as poetical sentiments, while simultaneously disregarding them as actual humans of warm flesh and blood. The poetry of Poe, therefore, reflects on two subjects, one being a severe case of introversion, and the other, an escape from reality, because his passions were primarily of the mind (Pruette 380 & 381). More importantly, Pruette further suggests that his libido is solely represented in his compositions, and in his love for his wife. In addition, she also regards

his laudanum ingestion in Boston as an attempted suicide, and it is because of these factors, that she concludes that he found himself in a deep state of melancholia, because it was impossible for him to cultivate a new profound attachment to another human being (398 & 381).

In the final year of Poe's life, he continued to contribute to the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Graham's Magazine*, while simultaneously working for the *Boston Flag of Our Union*. The latter was a tacky popular weekly, which the poet despised, but it paid quite handsomely. Furthermore, he was also able to correspond with E. H. N. Patterson, in this year, who was a newspaperman from Illinois. The two of them began to develop chimerical plans concerning the publication of *The Stylus* (Mabbott 566). In July, the poet sold his work "The Bells" and "Annabel Lee" to John Sartain of *Union Magazine*. The latter composition had been written in May, and although it was purchased by Sartain, the author decided to circulate it in manuscripts, because it is suggested that he was under the impression that it would be his final poem, and therefore, would do everything in his power to ensure that the world would take notice. With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that Poe at the time was experiencing symptoms of heart trouble "of a terrifying kind" (Mabbott 567). In the last week of June, he made a visit to Philadelphia, where he drank himself into a heavily intoxicated state. He was later discovered by Sartain, S. D. Patterson, George Lippard, and a few others, while he was experiencing delirium tremens, which is a symptom of alcohol withdrawal, and is characterized by tremors, nausea, anxiety, vomiting, and insomnia (Mabbott 567 & Toohey, "Delirium Tremens (DTs)"). After recovering from his withdrawal symptoms, Poe went on to spend two happy months in Richmond, where he met his sister, his childhood friends Stanard, Cabell, Royster Shelton, and others. During these months he proposed to Royster Shelton, who was now a widow, and she accepted, despite the disapproval of her two children (Mabbott 567). After reaching Baltimore on September 28, the poet began drinking heavily, and on the third of October, he was discovered by Joseph W. Walker in an extremely ill condition near Gunner's Hall in Baltimore (Mabbott 568-569). He was immediately moved to Washington Hospital by carriage, accompanied by Dr Joseph Evans Snodgrass, and Henry Herring who was his uncle by marriage. At the hospital, he

experienced unconsciousness, deliriousness, and lucid intervals for long periods of time. Poe died early in the morning on October 7, 1849. His funeral took place on the 8 of October, at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Baltimore, the attendees included his cousin, Neilson Poe, his schoolmaster, Clarke, Reverend William T. D. Clemm, who was a relative of Mrs. Clemm, Dr. Snodgrass, Henry Herring, Edmund Morton Smith, and Collins Lee, who was a classmate from the University of Virginia (Mabbott 569). On October 9, the Baltimore Clipper stated that the poet's demise was caused by a congestion in the brain, but there was no death certificate to confirm this. The last two years of Poe's existence marks a time of severe despondency, where he frequently alternated between the idea of hope and despair, while his body and mind gradually deteriorated, as it "checked now and again before its approaching dissolution to turn and attempt to struggle back to sanity and health, yet never quite succeeding" (Pruette 394-395).

Chapter 4: Symptoms of PTSD and trauma in Poe's fictional literary characters

"Morella"

Poe's short story "Morella" was first published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835 (Carlson 173). The tale is told from a first person perspective of a narrator, who remains unnamed throughout the work. At the beginning, we are introduced to a man who is married to a woman, but the text provides no explanation concerning the origin of this marriage. Furthermore, it is revealed that the narrator has never loved his partner, which has developed confusion regarding his feelings for his wife. When the husband describes his partner's virtues, the significant and unparalleled knowledge of Morella is emphasized. Due to her profound intelligence, she develops a dedicated interest in John Locke's theory of "Personal Identity." As a result of this compulsive interest in her studies, she becomes obsessed with Locke's theory, and therefore begins to question if personal identity and consciousness can be transferred from one soul to another (Rizvi 18). However, as her health starts to deteriorate due to a mysterious illness, the narrator begins to avoid his wife, which eventually transforms avoidance into hatred. In light of this, the husband never succeeds in acquiring a reason for his hatred, but instead, it continues to grow up until the point of Morella's demise, where she finally gives birth to their daughter. The daughter, nevertheless, provides a continuation of the mother's identity, which is manifested in the fact that the daughter suddenly dies on her tenth birthday, when the narrator finally gives her the name "Morella." In the aftermath of these events, the narrator feels perplexed and can only resolve to entombing his daughter, in hope of achieving some form of closure. Still, as he approaches his daughter's tomb, he comes to realize that his wife's body is missing from her final resting place, causing the narrator laugh manically, while the tale comes to its conclusion (Rizvi 18).

Eric Carlson's assessment of the tale categorizes it as a story of psychological conflict, which he supports by referring to how it was included in the *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, and it has been recognized by Richard Wilbur in 1959 as one of Poe's greatest "prose allegories of psychic conflict" (qtd. in Carlson 168). In addition, Carlson

also regards the entire volume as a focus on dramatizing themes such as demonic compulsion, crime, psychological struggles, and punishment (168-169). However, the primary concern for this thesis is to reflect on how the narrator's psyche, presents symptoms that relate back to Caruth's theory of the belatedness of trauma (3-4). It is for this reason, why the following paragraphs will examine the arguments of Gargano, in order to discuss certain significant developments, events, and consequences, in Poe's tale, because they present a clear presence of the belatedness of trauma in "Morella." Still, before this analysis can commence, the intention of Gargano's examination must first be addressed (259-264 & Caruth 3-4).

From Gargano's point of view, there have been few critical interpretations of Poe's tale that concerns the overall meaning of the text. Accordingly, Marie Bonaparte focuses on transforming the short story into a case history that neglects its art and theme, because she is too concerned with proving Poe's sadistic necrophilism. Moreover, Allan Tate do not account for the essentialism of the narrative, considering that he is too occupied with formulating an arresting thesis, that is made up of Laurentian psychology and social criticism. There are, however, those of Lee Richmond and David Haliburton, where Richmond "emphasizes the intensity of Morella's volition and her victimization of the narrator," while "Haliburton recognizes the heroine's destructive power and her fated role as an agent of an eternal will" (Gargano 259). With this in mind, Gargano addresses that the experience and painful anatomy of the narrator have been severely underemphasized (259). His first example is the scene of the wife's death, where the narrator repeats her name four times, as a sort of religious response. From Gargano's point of view, this illustrates how the narrator tries to ensure that his wife's name and identity, perishes with the body (260). The reason for this, is because the narrator have come to associate his wife's name with a feeling of personal terror, which has been enforced for some time in her physical existence, due to how her superior intelligence have influenced the husband's mentality (Gargano 260). To further elaborate, in Poe's tale, Morella is depicted as a powerful intellectual who possess the role of a dominant mentor, and therefore guides the narrator in his study of German mystical literature (Carlson 173). The problem, nevertheless, is "that Morella excites and will not satisfy his consuming

intellectual passion to see beyond experience to final reality” (Gargano 261). Her role in this tale is that of a gentle and highly manipulative temptress, who entices the intellect of the narrator at first, but never leads him to a conclusive answer. In effect, this originates frustration and doubt within the narrator. This is particularly exemplified in how she utilizes her comprehensive knowledge of Lock’s theory, in order to foster an obsession with the idea of identity within the narrator, that ultimately makes him obsessed with the insoluble question, of whether individual identity is eradicated by death (Gargano 261).

Furthermore, this also awakens a feeling of nervous anguish in her husband, which results in the narrator being unable to interpret the meaning of his examinations. With her profound influence she is able to determine the limits of his human knowledge because she becomes essential to his understanding of his own research, and therefore, exemplify how she “possess an inexplicable and supernatural prescience” (Gargano 261). On the other hand, it is suggested by Gargano that Poe’s implementation of the narrator’s ignorance, is to develop a psychological-dramatic device that unconsciously suppresses the narrator’s desire, which are the death of his wife and the possibility to forget her name (261). It is, therefore, implied that the special significance to Morella’s name, is also reflected in how her individual embodiments are perceived by the narrator, who regards her as a representation of recurring human insufficiency and death. Taking this into account, Gargano suggest that the narrator perceives Morella as the personification of death itself, and therefore cannot die (262). To exemplify this, the husband starts to believe that Morella is death’s first avatar because she lures him into prohibited literature, and from there, enters him as a forbidden spirit that eventually result in a marital union, thereby binding the narrator to a perpetual compact (Gargano 262-263). The narrator also illustrates a fear concerning the possibility of death transitioning from one soul to another, and this is essentially reflected in his refusal to name his daughter, because he is convinced that she is death’s second avatar. With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that the origin behind this particular fear, derive from his wife’s dying wish, where she begs her husband to name the child after her as she gasps for her last breath. For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that the narrator refuses to give his daughter a name, which he only associates with a feeling of personal terror (Gargano 263).

Moreover, it is important to note that the narrator also tries to regain control over a reality that is perceived as irrational from his point of view (Gargano 263). This is exemplified in his recognition of recognize certain resemblances between the mother and daughter, such as the child's smile, eyes, fingers, the high forehead, and her musical tones of speech (Carlson 174). More importantly, this contributes to his growing fear, of witnessing the actuality of his wife's academic obsession, which is the continuation of a person's identity after mortal demise. As a result of these factors, the narrator finds himself in a complexing conflict with intrusive thoughts and a personal desire, because in truth, he wants to be relieved of anything connected with his wife's identity, and therefore, attempts to suppress her identity by refusing to name his child, which paradoxically, constantly reminds him of his wife's wish (Gargano 263) Still, the narrator eventually succumb to his wife's dying wish, because the fear and paranoia he is experiencing is too severe, and therefore, the wish is perceived by the narrator as a possible relief of his intrusive thought of Morella's identity continuing after her death (Gargano 263).

Furthermore, it is important to consider that the death of the narrator's daughter, represent a certain symbolic virtue in regard to the human comprehension of mortality. Gargano claims that the cerebral protagonist in "Morella," which inhabits both the mother and the daughter, illustrates how death is reborn in every new life, because it reasserts "the human mind of human limits; it provokes unanswerable questions about the endurance of identity beyond the grave," and provides a perspective into the incomprehensible "abyss of nothingness, from which reason shrinks" (263). Still, despite the narrator's conflicting feelings towards his wife, it is important to remark that Morella is also affiliated with the divine, considering her willingness to forgive her husband for not loving her. In addition, she also reveal that his unwillingness to comprehend the nature of their relationship, will only ensure that the narrator paradoxically persecutes himself, and therefore results in him becoming more influenced by her manipulation (Gargano 264). For this reason, Gargano claims that she is given the role of both victim and siren because if she is rejected by her husband, and therefore finds herself in an inharmonious marriage, she will continue to push him into a maze of philosophical contradictions (264).

In light of these observations, it is important to recognize that Gargano's comparison of the wife and death itself, is only substantiated by the narrator developing a profound state of paranoia. Yet, the evidence that Gargano provides concerning the agony and mental torture that the narrator experiences, confirm the existence of the belatedness of trauma within "Morella" (259-264). The narrator is able to identify what exactly haunts him, which is his conflicting desire to see any trace of his wife perish from the mortal realm (Poe 421). However, he is not able to understand the origin of this haunting image, until the moment of his wife's death. At this moment he comes to realize, the significant mental control that Morella possessed over him, and it makes him acknowledge that their relationship has traumatized him (Poe 422). This is a clear example of the abstract pathology of trauma, where a traumatic experience or reception of one, is not completely assimilated or understood as it occurs, and therefore, the individual experiences it belatedly and repeatedly. The belatedness of trauma is represented in the narrator confirming the existence of his traumatic experience, by reflecting on why he is unable to name his daughter after the mother, because by doing so, he is convinced that he ensures the continuation of an identity that will seek to dominate and manipulate him (Caruth 3). Furthermore, it is important to remark that the that the narrator's haunting images, are manifested in his growing hate for his wife, along with his desire to see her demise, in addition to the fear of a continuation of her identity (Poe 421-422 & Caruth 3).

Moreover, it is important to note that his decision to not name his daughter, is also amplified by the certain resemblances between the mother and daughter, which reflect on how a traumatic symptom that cannot be regarded as a misconception of reality, is established by traumatized individuals who are haunted by an image (Poe 422-423 & Caruth 3). To further specify this argument, the narrator exemplifies how he suffers from a haunting image by refusing to name his daughter, due to his personal history. On the other hand, the narrator's conflict with his feelings regarding his wife, stems from his inability to understand why he wishes for the demise of a woman, who is able to forgive her husband for not loving her (Gargano 264). This intrusive thought is clearly his subconsciousness contesting the exceptional manipulation of his wife, that over time has

limited his ability to comprehend the metamorphosis of their relationship. However, there is an indication that the narrator's personal agony is just his self-produced paranoia, considering that the teachings of his wife, only result in his personal frustration, because she is more concerned with the theoretical aspect than with providing conclusive answers. This pupil and mentor relationship, where the narrator is dependent upon his wife's insight in regard to his examinations, is unsustainable due to the fact that both have different analytical approaches and intentions. However, this indication only stretches so far, because Poe knowingly maintains the narrator's ignorance throughout most of the tale, and therefore, emphasizes how powerless the husband is to his wife's influence. As a result, we are presented with a symptom of the belatedness of trauma, considering that Morella's influential deception, creates a husband who tries to suppress ideas he cannot explain, such as his growing hate and a desire for her death, which corresponds with traumatized individuals who might carry an incomprehensible history, in order to not become "the symptom of a history they cannot entirely possess" (Caruth 4 & Gargano 259-264).

"The Fall of the House of Usher"

In many aspects, "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a story of psychological distress, which therefore allows us to analyze the mentalities of the fictional characters, and how they present symptoms that correspond with a general consensus for PTSD, and the ambiguous pathology of trauma. For this reason, the following paragraphs will reflect on the psychology of Roderick Usher and the narrator, and how their individual psyches evolves throughout the tale. In order to do so, Shackelford's arguments concerning the manifestation of a shared psychic disorder in Poe's story will be examined (109-122 & Caruth 3-10 & 417-420). However, it is essential to acknowledge that Shackelford's evaluation of psychological disorder in Poe's tale, is primarily rooted in how these two characters contribute to each other's gradual descent into anxiety, paranoia, fear, and mental anguish, and therefore, there will be representations of trauma theory that concerns both of the fictional characters (109-122 & Caruth 3-10 & 417-420).

According to Shackelford, Poe's tale presents a unique examination of shared psychotic disorder, where an individual that suffers from psychosis is able to generate delusions or hallucinations in a healthy person. The intention of her study is to analyze how Roderick Usher represents the role of the inducer, and the narrator as that of the induced. As the tale materializes, Roderick begins to display more and more attributes of schizophrenic personality disorder, while the narrator struggle to maintain his rationality, until he succumbs to Roderick's superstitious beliefs. This is primarily exemplified in the narrator finally believing Roderick's delusion, when Madeline Usher escapes from her coffin in the family vault of the mansion. The narrator's conviction, however, is rooted in witnessing his friend's dramatic mental and physical decline. In an attempt to alleviate Roderick's sorrow, fear, and mania, by showing him instinctual sympathy, the narrator is pulled into a shared case of psychic disorder through Roderick's strong articulation and reasoning, which is amplified by the depressed and isolated environment (109). At the end of the tale, the narrator acknowledges that he has undergone an overwhelming event, because his recall of the encounter with the Usher twins, only provides him with feelings of personal anxiousness and pain (Shackelford 109). Taking these factors into account there is a clear correlation between the general consensus of how PTSD operates, and what transpires in the psyche of the narrator. The fact that he is only able to understand that he has experienced an overwhelming event after its occurrence, reflect on the delayed response in PTSD, where the individual relives the traumatizing experience through intrusive thoughts or hallucinations, which the narrator does through his recall of his traumatic experience (Poe 195-207 & Caruth 2-3).

At the end of her analysis, Shackelford notes that the narrator feels compelled to disclose what he has endured, because he is unable to recover from his shared psychic disorder with Roderick (122). In light of this, it necessary to acknowledge that the testimony of the narrator is actually written after the traumatic event, and therefore, reflect on how trauma transpires beyond individual and historical isolation, and is communicated through cultures, making it unbound by time. For this reason, his testimony exemplifies how his traumatic belatedness removes him from the isolation imposed by the event (Caruth 10). Certainly, this needs to be further examined by focusing on additional

evidence, and it is therefore, essential to explore the depth of Roderick and the narrator's friendship, and how it plays a central role in their descent into madness.

At the beginning of "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe presents a sincere relationship between the two main characters involved. Their companionship is old but still maintains a significant strength, considering that the narrator unquestionably accepts Roderick's request to journey to his estate, even though they have not seen each other for several years. In the letter that the narrator receives, Roderick informs about his feelings of distress and despair, because he is now confronted with his own mortality after witnessing his sister's physical decline. However, the letter also reveals an intimate relation between the two characters, where the narrator is referred to as Roderick's "only personal friend" (Shackelford 113 & Poe 196). This indication of intimacy is further established by the narrator's recall of their boyhood friendship, where Roderick is remembered as one of his "boon companions," and more importantly, how the two of them had been "intimate associates" (Poe 196 & Shackelford 113). As a result, the narrator willingly travels a considerable distance to Roderick's mansion, where he decides to remain "for an undetermined number of weeks, hoping to alleviate Roderick's physical and mental distress" (113). More importantly, the relationship between these two characters, enables Poe to depict symptoms and conditions that correspond with features associated with shared psychotic disorder, which in the nineteenth century was labeled as *folie à deux*. To further elaborate on this subject, Shackelford reflects on the medical literature concerning this condition, in order to understand how Roderick's psychotic behavior and articulation affects the narrator's mentality and perceptions (110).

Apparently, the term *folie à deux* was coined by Jean-Pierre Falret and Charles Lasègue, after their publication of an influential paper in 1877, where they described "clinical cases and conditions that led to shared delusions" (Shackelford 112). In this paper, they discovered certain preconditions that needs to be in place in order for "contagion of delirium" to develop (qtd. in Shackelford 112). One of these preconditions sustained that when two individuals share a form of madness, the one that is the most intelligent and aggressive, is usually the creator of the delusion. From here, he or she will

gradually influence the other, who is more passive, until that person is willing to accept the delusion (112). The second precondition they discovered, is that these two individuals must be living in the same environment, which involves the same manner of living and emotions. In the third precondition, it revealed that the probability of such a delusion, increases significantly when the individuals have a shared past experience. However, both Falret and Lasègue maintains the idea that the recipient's delusion would disappear, if the passive individual were to be separated from its creator (Shackelford 112). The study was taken even further in 1942, by Alexander Galnick who published a highly regarded review, where he defined this type of shared disorder as "a psychiatric entity characterized by the transference of delusional idea and(or abnormal behavior from one person to one or more others who have been in close association with the primarily affected patient" (qtd. in Shackelford 112). In light of this, Shackelford argues that Galnick's epigraph of *folie à deux*, perfectly applies to how Roderick's fright and hypersensitivity is able to have a profound emotional impact on the narrator, considering that his experience with the Usher twins is so intense that it continues to resound in his haunting narrative (Shackelford 113).

When the narrator arrives at Roderick's estate, the reader is presented with Poe's nuanced characterization of the induced (Shackelford 118). This is reflected in the narrator's examination of the surrounding environment that has engulfed Roderick's manor, where he refers to it as a "natural images of the desolate and terrible" (Poe 195). This extensive consideration of the environment reveals the narrator's natural susceptibility to the superstitious, while he gazes upon his friend's mansion, and in a similar fashion to Roderick's despair, he begins to sense a feeling of crushing despondence that can only be described as a depression of the soul. However, Shackelford argues that due to his uncontrolled imagination, he cannot be regarded as the voice of reason, because his imagination has already ensured his failure to consciously repress the enigmatic visions that imposes on his mind (118). Similarly, the narrator also present a vivid response to the interior and decorations of the manor. The walls, ceilings, floors, and tapestries, are all objects that he remembers from his childhood youth, but instead of providing him with a feeling of familiarity, they now create an

atmosphere of sorrow and somberness (Shackelford 118). These observations are the first examples of how the pathology of trauma, focuses on the structure of a traumatic event that is not fully assimilated or experienced at the time, and therefore, the individual experiences the event belatedly, considering that the narrator is not yet aware of the magnitude of these interpretations, and how they will contribute to an overwhelming event (Shackelford 118 & Caruth 2-3). Furthermore, the narrator's assessment of the exterior and interior of Roderick's manor, illustrate the predominant trait of his active imagination, but also gives us insight into the narrator's deteriorating mental control, considering that he fails to suppress these images. This process, therefore, precipitates a submissive and dominant power dynamic that is about to unfold between Roderick and the narrator. However, this dynamic is first implied in the letter, where the narrator unquestioningly accepts his friend's request, thereby reflecting on the commanding role of the inducer, and that of the induced who submits (Shackelford 118 & 119).

In the first encounter with Roderick, the narrator provides a detailed description of his friend's appearance and behavior (Shackelford 114-115). He is confronted with a man of irrationality and discrepancy, that emanate from an ineffective struggle to triumph over habitual dreadfulness and excessive nervous agitation. Roderick also exhibits unnatural sensory responses, including rejection of most types of food, he cannot endure the smell of flowers, he projects an intolerance to several garments, and avoids bright lights and sounds (Shackelford 115). According to Shackelford, all of these symptoms correlates with the condition of schizotypal personality disorder, but his most severe is his self-imposed isolated living conditions within the manor, where he spends most of his days creating abstract paintings (115). The reason for this, is due to the fact that Roderick and Madeline have resided in this mansion for several years, thereby allowing them to develop a strong, intimate, and affectionate bond, which is of immense importance to Roderick, considering that she is his last living relative (Shackelford 115). Now, in light of Roderick's conduct and the narrator's interpretation of his friend's behavior, it is clear that there are aspects here concerning the problem of defining the pathology of trauma. At first it appears that Roderick's demeanor and mannerism, are symptoms of him being haunted by the image of his sister's illness, however, during the first encounter between the two

fictional characters, the reader is introduced to the narrator's limited ability to comprehend the severity of Roderick's depressed condition (Poe 195-199). With this in mind, Caruth argues that the problem surrounding the definition of the pathology of trauma, is that the pathology cannot be defined by the event itself. The reason for this is because the event might not traumatize everyone equally, and it cannot "be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it" (3). The difficulty in defining the pathology of trauma, is therefore exemplified in the narrator's first analysis of Roderick. Considering that the narrator perceives Roderick's tendencies and concerns as strange and irrational, we are presented with how the narrator fails to understand how Roderick is traumatized by the realization of losing his sister. Moreover, this also exemplifies how the pathology of trauma does not provide certain distortions in order to confirm the severity of the trauma, considering that the narrator's description of his friend, only focuses on emphasizing his own ideas and interpretations of what he perceives, and therefore, illustrates how he is presented with a condition he is not able to properly analyze. Another essential concern is how Roderick's appearance, isolation, and sensory responses, suggest that he is being haunted by an image. In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that because of his personal attachment to his sister, it is Madeline who is the creator of his traumatic event. For this reason, we may regard Roderick's symptoms as representations of the belatedness of trauma, because these symptoms occur after his acceptance of Madeline's fate (Shackelford 114-115, Poe 198-199 & Caruth 3).

Another concern of Shackelford is that Roderick exhibits every characteristic that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders uses to diagnose schizophrenia, including abnormal motor behavior, delusions, negative symptoms, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking revealed through speech (115). One example that concern his irrationality, is his obsession with a looming evil presence, that allegedly has penetrated and poisoned the mansion as well as its landscape, which for decades has represented the long line of Usher's heritage (Shackelford 115). Furthermore, Roderick also believes that the fungi on the stones surrounding the Usher mansion, in addition to the decaying trees, are indications of the terrible fate that awaits the Usher

family. Here, the narrator appears rational considering that he categorizes Roderick's illusion as a disordered fantasy, but he is not able to sustain this rationality for long. While Roderick conveys his concerns, the narrator is struck with the realization that it reminds him of his own assessment of the environment surrounding of mansion, and it is further amplified by the fact that he came to these conclusions before even being greeted by Roderick (Shackelford 119 & 118). As a result of this, the narrator attempts to rationalize his friend's delusions, by envisioning that this unnatural presence has oppressed his friend's spirit to the point, where Roderick is seen as a shackled slave, that has been imprisoned by a paranormal entity of terror. However, this marks the first step in the narrator partaking in a shared psychic disorder (Shackelford 115). With this in mind, Shackelford argues that Roderick is trapped in a self-fulfilling prophecy, where his terror is rooted in his fear of losing his life as well as his rationality (115). To exemplify this, she refers to Roderick confession to the narrator, where he feels "that the period will sooner or later arrive" when he must abandon both life and reason, "in some struggle with the grim phantasm, Fear" (qtd. in Shackelford 115). On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that Roderick is unable to exactly identify, what it is that is threatening to cause the fall of the house of Usher. At the same time, he also struggles to realize that he is being possessed by thoughts and hallucinations, which originated from him being traumatized by accepting his sister's ensured demise. In light of these factors, we are presented with examples of how a traumatic experience forms the center of the pathology of trauma, because the pathology exists as a result of history (Shackelford 115-119 & Caruth 3-4). The history is Roderick's acceptance but considering that he has failed to recognize it as an overwhelming traumatic event, he is therefore, carrying an incomprehensible history, that is demonstrated in his inability to acknowledge his delusions as possessing and irrational (Poe 199 & Caruth 4).

In the aftermath of Madeline's death, Roderick starts to forget his standardized daily tasks and interests. Eventually, this results in him roaming needlessly from room to room in his mansion. In light of this strange behavior, his isolated living condition, and the unnatural sensory responses, the narrator's long lost childhood companion struggles to maintain healthy patterns of working, sleeping, and eating (Shackelford 115

& 116). These symptoms clearly confirm that he is experiencing feelings of agony and anxiousness, because they reflect on his grief regarding his sister's death, and the terrible realization that he is the last living family member of the Usher lineage (Shackelford 115 & 116). As a result of these factors, Roderick finally exhibits a significant feature that suggests that his psyche has finally broken. This is exemplified in how he starts to gaze "upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound" (Poe 204). However, Shackelford argues that this indicates that Roderick is suffering from a condition called, catatonia. In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, this condition is classified as a state where the individual exhibits a lack of consciousness, while remaining unresponsive to its surroundings, in addition to performing stereotypical repetitive actions that have no purpose (116). With this in mind, and Roderick's roaming and long uninterrupted gaze, it is quite reasonable to conclude that he is indeed suffering from this condition (Shackelford 115 & 116).

In regard to how Madeline's death affects Roderick and eventually results in a state of catatonia, it is important to consider how this reflects on Caruth's arguments concerning symptoms of the belatedness of trauma (3-7, Shackelford 115-116 & Poe 204-206). Caruth argues that the individual often experiences the event belatedly and repeatedly, because in order to be traumatized, one must therefore, be haunted by an event or image (3). Still, in order to understand trauma, one must be able to decipher its peculiar paradox, where trauma's immediacy may take the form of belatedness, when numbness acts as confrontation with a traumatic reality (Caruth 5). This traumatic reality, is clearly Roderick's confrontation with realizing Madeline's demise, considering that the following symptoms represent a numbness to his surrounding environment, which is manifested in his state of catatonia (Shackelford 116). Furthermore, Caruth also claims that the immediacy of the traumatic experience, creates a central gap that transfers the event's impact at the expense of knowledge and simple memory registration. This creates a paradoxical effect, where the individual's understanding collapses after encountering the force of the experience, which is also exemplified in

how Roderick fails to acknowledge his irrational behavior, after encountering the force of his sister's death (6 & Shackelford 115-116).

As previously stated, the narrator exhibits a natural predisposition to be superstitious, and taking this into account, along with the confined and gloomy conditions of the Usher household, in addition to Roderick's demonstration of paranoia and depression, it is reasonable to consider that the psychology of the narrator is gradually weakening as the tale unfolds (Shackelford 118 & 120). In his attempt to understand Roderick's condition by analyzing his actions, behavior, and personality, but ultimately, fails to eradicate Roderick's state of melancholia, the narrator starts to fear that his friend's condition might consume him as well. This is explicitly exemplified in the narrator's statement, where it reads, "It was no wonder that his condition terrified-that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions" (qtd. in Shackelford 120). With this in mind, Shackelford claims that this statement represent the narrator's self-diagnosis of shared psychotic disorder (120), despite the fact that it is more common that cases of shared psychotic disorder transpire between siblings, parents, or a child and a parent (114). In effect, this supports the idea of a profound bond between Roderick and the narrator, which "transcends their long separation and makes Roderick's influence upon his friend credible" (Shackelford 114).

After the narrator observes Roderick's state of catatonia, during their sleepless night, Roderick utters a horrified shriek where he condemns the two characters as madmen, because due to his escalated nervous agitation, in addition to his paranoia and depression, he has reached the conclusion that the narrator and him have buried his sister alive (Shackelford 109-120). Following this realization, Roderick's voice transitions from huskiness to a trembling quaver, which the narrator notes as a state of extreme terror (Poe 203-204 & Shackelford 116). To emphasize the intensity of this situation, it is important to note that when the narrator tries to engage with Roderick through reading, during the stormy night, he notices that Roderick's lips starts to tremble. As a result of this development, Roderick's ability to communicate with the narrator is reduced to rapid

inaudible murmuring, and it is therefore argued by Shackelford that the utilization of unintelligent speech, in this section of Poe's story, is intended to signify a response to a state of shock or fright, that originated from Roderick realizing that Madeline is still alive (116-117).

However, in order to silence the skepticism of the reader, regarding whether Madeline is able to escape from her sealed coffin, the author establishes the most dramatic symptom of Roderick's schizophrenia, a hallucination. The authenticity of this hallucination is manifested in Roderick's fixation on sound, where he "hears first her weak movements in the coffin, then the violent opening of the coffin, the rasping sound of the iron hinges," and eventually the beating of his twin sister's heart (Shackelford 117). At this point, it is also important to acknowledge that the narrator have become highly receptive to Roderick's delusion, because his predisposition to be superstitious, in addition to the state of the Usher mansion, and how Roderick is able to rationalize his condition through reasoning and articulation, have contributed to the narrator's deteriorating mental state (Shackelford 109 & 118-120). For this reason, that the narrator struggles to maintain his rationality when Roderick's hallucination reaches its climax, as the last remaining Usher in a fit of desperation and terror, screams, "I tell you that she now stands without the door!" (qtd. in Shackelford 121). In effect, the narrator develops a visual hallucination, that makes him lose his rationality, because the the two of them are confronted with the emancipated, bloody, and trembling figure of Madeline Usher, which transitions the narrator's hallucination from "mere suggestibility to a full-blown psychosis," that is further intensified by the "visual details of Madeline's clothing and her form," in addition to her terrifying weeping (Shackelford 121 & 110).

On the other hand, it is also essential to acknowledge Shackelford's claim, concerning that the narrator's first point of view throughout the tale fails to illustrate what Roderick is actually witnessing. This is exemplified in how it is mostly concerned with Roderick's dialogue, in addition to focusing on the fabricated sounds that he allegedly hears (121). As the narrator flees from the mansion after witnessing the end of his friend's self-fulfilling prophecy, which is concluded by Roderick being frightened to death by the

climactic encounter with his sister, the narrator turns around and beholds the collapse of the Usher mansion, where it falls into a dark hole under a “blood red moon” (Poe 207 & Shackelford 121). In the midst of this event, Shackelford concludes that the narrator’s mentality is ultimately broken, considering that his final remark, reads, “my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder” (121 & Poe 207). Taking this into account, it becomes clear that the narrator is experiencing an overwhelming traumatic event, and more importantly, that the chronological retrospective narrative of Poe’s tale, in its totality, is a representation of images that haunts the narrator after his psychological breakdown at the end of the tale (Shackelford 121, Poe 195-207 & Caruth 3). This also suggest that the narrator is experiencing how trauma is enigmatic, considering that he is unable to recover from his encounter with the Usher twins, because he feels compelled to inform the reader of his sojourn, at the expense of reliving this traumatic experience. The images presented in “The Fall of the House of Usher,” are therefore intrusive for the narrator, and operates in a similar fashion to trauma’s enigmatic core, where the insistent return focuses on the severe impact of a delayed response, in understanding or the witnessing of an overwhelming event Caruth 3-4, Shackelford 109-122 & Poe 195-207).

Still, Shackelford also claims that there is a correspondence between the process that the narrator goes through in his ordeal with Roderick, and Gralnick’s arguments concerning psychosis. To further elaborate, Gralnick “asserts that a recipient’s shock in witnessing the psychosis of an inducer and strain in caring for one who is mentally ill, combined with sympathy for the inducer’s plight, can produce a psychosis,” which clearly reflect on the narrator’s instinctual sympathy, his failure to separate Roderick from despair, and his eventual surrendering to a hallucination (121-122, 109-110 & 120). For this reason, “The Fall of the House of Usher” may be categorized as a case of psychosis, and therefore, ultimately makes it an unreliable record of the past, considering that in its entirety, it is the narrator’s recall of a traumatic event (Poe 195-207, Shackelford 121-122 & Caruth 3). Now, Caruth argues that traumatic recollection do not operate as a simple memory, because the impact of the trauma, prioritizes the preserving of the belated force of an experience that is not yet fully endured, at the expense of the individual’s knowledge and simple memory registration. For this reason, traumatic recollection is not able to

present a reliable record of the past (417). Moreover, “while the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control” (Caruth 417). The process behind this, according to modern researchers, is due to the amnesia that accompanies the return of graphic and detailed flashbacks from the event, and in effect, develops a temporal paradox. As a result, Caruth concludes that this paradox entails that the victim achieves recollection only through flashbacks, that survives on the cost of conscious thought and willed memory (418). However, in order to recover the past, the traumatized must therefore enter their consciousness through a personal denial of active recollection, where trauma is paradoxically linked to the inability to access it (Caruth 419). In effect, the truth of the event and its incomprehensibility, is conveyed through the reenactment of the traumatic flashbacks, which establishes a predicament for historical understanding, and ultimately, it becomes evident that trauma depends on integration, in regard to testimonial account and rehabilitation, but its transformation into narrative memory, where it can be communicated and revealed, may sacrifice the exactitude and impact of traumatic recall (Caruth 420). Taking this into account, it seems that Poe’s tale, reflect on how the narrator is suffering from the consequences of traumatic recollection, considering that his interaction with Roderick’s behavior, articulation, manipulation, in addition to the overwhelming climactic collapse of Usher’s mansion, are representations of images and flashbacks that haunts him. The reason for this is because they eventually result in his psychological breakdown, which is ensured by a chronological retrospective narrative. It becomes clear that “The Fall of the House of Usher,” in its totality, present a case of psychosis that attempts to provide a detailed account of an overwhelming traumatic experience, but in fact, present an unreliable record of the narrator’s past, due to how the narrator exhibits symptoms of how traumatic recall is grounded in preserving the belated impact of the traumatic event, instead of exact details that correspond with historical accuracy (Shackelford 109-122, Caruth 417-420 & Poe 195-207).

Conclusion:

So, in conclusion of this MA thesis, I can wholeheartedly confirm that the mentalities of the characters in "Morella" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," clearly exemplifies that trauma and its paradoxes are represented in this literature. In "Morella" we are presented with a man who struggles to come to term with the trauma he has experienced, while being a husband of Morella. His anxiety is manifested in his idea of Morella's identity continuing after her death, which is a name he has come to associate with a feeling of personal terror. His fright, on the other hand, is exemplified in his self-produced paranoia where he starts to believe that the daughter is the continuation of Morella's manipulative and dominating presence. Yet, the loss he encounters after his wife's death, finally grants him the ability to understand that his wife's manipulation has traumatized him, considering that he intensely wishes to be separated from anything associated with her identity. However, this also entails the origin of a delusion, exemplified by regarding his daughter as death's second avatar, and is therefore amplified in how he perceives the resemblances between the daughter and mother. As the tale reaches its end, the narrator finally decide to grant his daughter a name, that results in a state of pain, which he can only cope with by laughing manically. In the culmination of all these factors, we are presented with a narrator who experiences a traumatic event belatedly, considering that he acknowledges his trauma after its occurrence, yet there are symptoms that transpires afterwards, and therefore, reflects on how he carries an incomprehensible history he cannot entirely possess (Poe 420-423, Rizvi 18, Gargano 259-264, Carlson 168-174 & Caruth 3-4).

Before summarizing my analysis of "The Fall of the House of Usher," I must first admit that the complexity of this story is far greater than I could imagine. My examination in itself, is probably only a small fraction of how many ways this tale can be interpreted, which leaves me with a feeling of astonishment. As for my findings, I have concluded that the main example of anxiousness exhibited here, is manifested in the narrator's recall of his encounter with Roderick and Madeline Usher. The depth of his emotional connection

to the brother, is without a doubt substantiated by Shackelford's examination of their relationship, and it solidifies how he is left with feelings of uneasiness and pain. In effect, this establishes symptoms in the narrator, that correlate with Caruth's definition of how PTSD operates, considering that he is able to understand that he is haunted by images of the past, which reflect on him experiencing a delayed response to his trauma. Furthermore, the narrator's emotional and psychological response to the Usher mansion's exterior and interior, confirms a case concerning the obscure pathology of trauma, because the narrator is not able to fully assimilate the impact of these impressions as he experiences them. The elements of fright, loss, and delusion are also of great importance in this tale, but their existence is only determined by the emotional process of Roderick Usher. Roderick's fright is mainly manifested in losing his sister, but once he is able to accept her unavoidable fate, he starts to exhibit symptoms that correspond with the belatedness of trauma. At the same time, it is important to not neglect that the narrator's interpretation of his friend's habits and behavior, illustrate a case of how the pathology of trauma concerns ambiguous distortions, because it is impossible for the narrator to accurately analyze his friend's traumatized condition. When Madeline finally dies, we are presented with her brother's loss, which combined with his intensified fright of Madeline escaping from her tomb, establishes a delusion that eventually overcomes the narrator's rationality, after it has been broken down by Roderick's paranoia and well-articulated reasoning. As a result, we are left with the realization that the retrospective narrative of "The Fall of the House of Usher," concludes with an overwhelming event that finally breaks the psyche of the narrator. For this reason, we find a correlation between the narrator's recall and symptoms of psychosis, that ultimately suggests that the narrator suffers from traumatic recollection, thereby making the entire recall untrustworthy (109-122, 3-10, 417-420 & Poe 195-207).

Now, Poe's life began with the death of his biological parents, which left him with no form of affection to either his mother or father. In the years he spent under the guardianship of Mr. and Mrs. Allan he was frequently spoiled and poorly disciplined, causing Poe to never receive the respect and genuine affection he truly needed. These feelings were mainly manifested in how he was never legally adopted, the years at Stoke

Newington, and how the conflicts with his foster father originated due to the volatility of his formal education. Among his fellow students in his youth, he was never respected as an equal, due to the origin of his ancestry, thereby depriving him of necessary companionship. As a result, this process, the young poet sought to gain respect and recognition through academic achievements and poetry and prose writing. However, along the way he could not evade a profound attachment to the first woman who gave him a feeling of the mother and son relationship that he longed for. In the end, this left a lasting sorrowful impact on his developing conception of death, which would later manifest itself in his writing. His year at the University marks the beginning of his literary pursuits, but also the beginning of his downfall.

By publishing various volumes during his time in the military, which received little to no attention, he was introduced to a harsh reality that would later become much more severe. As I have previously stated in the introduction of this thesis, Poe is no longer recognized for his criticism, but rather because of his literary works. However, despite achieving an immortal level of recognition with "The Raven," and also gaining employment at various periodicals including the Southern Literary Messenger, Burton's Gentleman's Magazine, Alexander's Weekly Messenger, and the Broadway Journal, Poe's life and literary career is truly a story of despondence. In his continuous struggle to realize his literary ambitions, he experienced the death of his wife, the inability to cultivate new romantic relations after this event, a financial struggle that remained throughout his life, which also affected those closest to him, and a lack of parental affection, that he thought he could obtain through his relationship with Mrs. Clemm (Mabbott 531-569, Pruette 370-398 & Odasso 13-14). In light of everything that Poe went through, I am struck with a lasting impression, or in better words, a warning, that I have come to realize that we need to be weary our dreams and ambitions, because they might cost us more than we can afford.

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