

Exploring the Aspects of Dark Romanticism in 19th Century American Literature

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Bachelor of Arts

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled “Exploring the Aspects of Dark Romanticism in 19th Century American Literature” submitted by M Shahriar Moazzem 15203016 of Fall 019 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts on Dec 15, 2019.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all of my deceased cats and my Grandmother, who passed away earlier this year.

Abstract

Dark Romanticism in 19th century America was popular among the readers, but not entirely in literary circles where writers were focusing more on transcendentalist writings, like “Nature” of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Writers like Thoreau and Whitman are also notable of this school of thought. The works discussed in this thesis therefore, show stark contrast to the prevalent style of that era. The style of writing of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson was contrary to the style of popular transcendentalist writers of contemporary period. Hawthorne’s works like “The Birth-Mark” are excellent representations of Gothic conventions and critique Transcendentalist idealism. Poe’s works like “The Raven”, “The Masque of the Red Death” and some of his non-fictions are considered a staple in understanding this contrast. Similarly, Emily Dickinson’s poems, “I felt a Funeral in my Brain” and “Tis so appalling--it exhilarates—“etc. are essential to comprehend Dark Romanticism. All these works are heavily constituent of Gothic conventions, motifs, symbolism and often elements or allusions of the supernatural that have been strived to identify and elucidate in this thesis. It further tried to assess its impact on literature and establish a contrast with Emersonian ideals.

Keywords: Gothic Literature; Symbolism; American Literature; Dark Romanticism

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

American literary scene in the nineteenth century has been characterized by multiple unique aspects. The most prominent of those is recognized to be Transcendentalism. Other aspects include the dark and Gothic approach in the composition of poems, novels, short stories. This Gothic approach would incorporate aspects of the melancholia, death, perverse representation, human fallibility, symbolism in dark motifs etc. This has also been dubbed as Dark Romanticism that explored the destructive nature of humans and treated it as an innate one, stood in stark contrast with the contemporary literature composed by both mainstream Victorian and other American writers and poets. This thesis would explore the aspects of Dark Romantic literature by assessing the Gothic conventions in 19th century American literature. This would be done by looking into texts of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and certain writing aspects of Emily Dickinson by looking into her poems and letters. It would further include the contrast between the Transcendentalist ideals and Dark Romanticism and try to understand the impact this stylistic literature had on subsequent 20th century American literature.

1.2 Rationale

The purpose of this dissertation would be to identify the aspects of Dark Romantic writing. This would be done by the reading and analysis of the literature of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson. Because in the 19th century the Transcendentalist movement was on the premiere focus, it is often implied that Dark Romantics were given their due literary attention in the following century. Even then, for instance, Poe is occasionally referred for his significance in inspiring detective stories rather than the fundamental Gothic conventions explored in his literature. Emily Dickinson went unrecognized throughout her life, and it was only after her death that her poems were published. And Nathaniel Hawthorne, while immensely popular as Poe, was often perceived in a different light than other authors, notably by transcendentalists. This is discussed by the critic, Larry J. Reynolds, who argued that Hawthorne's stay in Concord enabled him to pursue "a career surrounded by a group of thinkers, writers, and artists whose ideas, values, and activities challenged his own." (Reynolds 10)

Hence, the purpose of this dissertation would be to identify certain Dark Romantic aspects in the writings of these three extremely talented literary figures and methodically explore their nature as much in depth as possible with the help of academic sources.

1.3 Methodology and texts

The texts to be looked into for the discourse would be Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* and "The Birth-Mark"; Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" and "The Raven" and Dickinson's "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain", "Tis so appalling--it exhilarates--", "How noteless Men and Pleids, stand" and her collection of letters. The methodology would be to take into account and analyze the gothic or dark romantic aspects in these works. The fundamentals would be to delve into the thoughts of the characters, as penned by authors, their decisions, realizations, aspects,

narratives et al. Aside from understanding the dark romantic aspect, this might also identify the nature of composition.

A determinist composition (or even partial influences) assigns the darker nature a sense of inevitability, while other ones would attribute the destructive nature using freewill of characters. Also, secondary sources would be included to broaden and substantiate the process. Additional texts of the same or contemporary authors would be looked into for certain relations, gothic aspects, narrative tone, dynamics, motifs, other minor plot devices and symbolism; and taken into account in identifying the dark romantic aspects. For example, in Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" the character Aylmer's obsession with female perfection in a partner signifies a motif that is not only crucial his tragedy, but detrimental to Aylmer's mental constitution. The placement of this motif resonates with all other gothic elements of the story. In Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun*, often dubbed as a biblical allegory, he concludes with the coming of age of Donatello through guilt. The narrative style heavily influenced by gothic undertone and bleak representations.

Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" and "The Raven", either have prominent motifs, objects or symbolized creatures as centerpieces with negative connotations of varying degrees and categories. To exemplify the degrees, the raven as the central symbol is regarded with dark supernatural inferences with multiple attributions to afterlife, and the black cat as symbolic of fear and could likely have emerged out of superstition.

Chapter 2

Identifying Poe's Gothic Conventions

2.1 Melancholia and Symbolism

During his lifetime, Poe came to be known as the author of “The Raven”, a most celebrated gothic stylized poem. In the poem, a Raven is portrayed as a sentient speaker in a dialogue with the first-person narrator, which added with the narrator's internal monologue essentially constitutes the entire poem. Even as a monologue, the abundance of dark motifs and gothic undertone assigned in the poem exhibits a unique trait of dark romantics by introducing a supernatural aspect of a talking raven. A comparison with English literature could be drawn. Unlike Samuel Coleridge's “The Rime of The Ancient Mariner”, the avian in Poe's poem does not display a temperament that is guided by understanding of sin, punishment and redemption like the albatross. But Poe's raven rather provides a stern demeanor and is described by narrator as, “ “Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!— Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore, ...” (Poe 85) This stance about the raven is reflected as evil and likened with devil, as the narrator is dismayed consistently by the uniform remark(Nevermore). This specifically illustrates what the narrator thought of the raven, a foreboding presence, and that each of his negative and identical response registered differently to the narrator's queries. The contrast could also be further explained by Poe's disfavor of didacticism as explicated in his essay “The Heresy of Didactics”. For instance, the query following the likening with the devil has the narrator ask about the “balm in Gilead”, a direct reference to the Old Testament. With the balm serving the symbolism of a positive aspect as it implied a figurative universal cure, the certain declining of the raven assigns a negative connotation based on the Old Testament.

Such allusions to mythology are also abundant in “Ulalume”, “To Helen” as well. In “Ulalume”, the goddess Astarte is identified from the symbolic star. Even more so, the metaphorical journey to the underworld is symbolized with “To the Lethean peace of the skies— Come up, in despite of the Lion” (Poe 45) as Lethe is one Hades’ five rivers and the Lions were possibly symbolic of the integral symbol of Astarte. Similarly, in the poem, “The Raven”, the symbols of raven and Pallas present their own mythological symbolism. Poe has been identified as an avid classicist by the critic, Darlene H. Unrue, because of such presence of classical symbols in his works. For instance, she wrote about “The Raven” as, “The essential meaning of the poem lies in the carefully crafted symbolism of the raven, traditionally the scavenger, the bird of ill-omen (as Poe acknowledges in “The Philosophy of Composition”), the foreboder of foul weather and death. In creating his poem, Poe drew on the mythology of the raven and accounts of the bird in literature, much of which Poe no doubt knew.” (Unrue 117) This classicism could be argued to be reflected in the dark heroes and villains in his story too, as almost none of them, if any, are portrayed as generic and bland characters. Instead, much like the self-stylized narrators of “The Raven” and “Ulalume”, the characters from Gothics like Roderick Usher in “The Fall of the House of the Usher” and Fortunato in “The Cask of Amontillado” are imbued with a semblance of the elite. The critic, Lima, described this as Poe’s own reflection on the Gothic characters he penned. She wrote about Poe’s work as being “transgressive stories that expose the creative process as a destructive practice common to science and art.”(Lima 24) And this process, according to her, must have had a similar origin as the habits that affected his life destructively. Lima wrote, “Being both the artist and the criminal and dominated by the same demoniac impulse that destroys personality, Poe's creative process inevitably had to have much in common with many of the perverse plots created by his criminal characters.”(24)

The presence of the dark and melancholia in “The Raven” has been romanticized vividly by the poet. The queries and repeated pleas of the narrator display a harmonized and cyclic sense of anguish. The narrator engages in these dialogues in repetition that represents an affinity of the anguish from the Raven’s declining answer (Nevermore). This aspect of the narrator, that celebrates the sorrow and despair, has been designated as his unavoidable urge by Poe. In his essay “The Philosophy of Composition”, he wrote that the narrator,

“propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird ... but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the expected “Nevermore” the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrows.” (Poe 5)

2.2 Gothic Representation of Nature

In his short story “The Masque of the Red Death”, Poe created a personification of death. His central character, Prince Prospero, is shown to be self-absorbed, superficial and a character of grandiose characteristics. This character displays a callousness that starkly contrasts the prevalent traits of contemporary American literature, namely the transcendentalists. While transcendentalists celebrated the inherent goodness and nature, Prince Prospero does quite the opposite as he neglects his obligation as ruler to a plague ravaged community by confining himself with his cohort to a sanctuary.

This gothic fiction heavily exhibits elements of dark romanticism and symbolisms. These symbolisms often illustrate Poe’s characteristic dark narrative approach. Furthermore, the substantive idea could also reflect a sense of irony and dark humor with the fateful aftermath of Prince Prospero. The aspect of nature could also be analyzed as a feature that has been portrayed metaphorically by Prospero’s masquerade ball. The nature in the story, unlike in a transcendentalist celebratory manner, is devised from a destructive perspective. The backdrop of the ball contains an array of motifs that signify death, like the black clock, or the symbolic colors of the chambers. Even the arrangement of the rooms has been speculated to be metaphorical by critics like H. H. Bell. He identified Prospero’s lifespan with the rooms, which, along with color representation, would be elaborated later, and the long corridors with the aspects of birth and death. (Bell 102) The motif of the “red death” could be identified as an element of destruction as it eradicates the land of commoners. The nature, thus pervasive of this destructive representation, is reduced to a desolate state reflecting the essence of death. This aspect of dead or dying nature is especially in antithetical to Prospero’s narrative description of “Happy, Dauntless and Sagacious” and the conduct of the ruler Prospero who resigned himself to festivities of a Masquerade ball. And it has been argued, by Vanderbilt, that Prospero strived to craft an imitative figuration of nature in his castle because Prospero was

Poe's idea of a self-indulgent person with sophisticated and grandiose taste. And the taste is evinced by his artistic ambition of devising, containing and preserving his simulacrum of nature. According to the critic this was done in an illustration of Prospero being driven by an artistic vision, reflecting an interpretation of Poe's essay, "The Poetic Principle". He wrote, "Objective nature outside having been ravaged by the plague, Poe's hero will employ his taste and imagination to create a symbolic equivalent of nature's elements—a combination which can transform earthly reality into the artist's liberating vision of immortal beauty." (Vanderbilt 380) Vanderbilt rationally identified Poe's idea of artist in "The Poetic Principle" with Prospero as a man with taste, yet devoid of intellect or moral sense.

Poe's use of color in the story has prompted many critics to speculate about probable symbolism or representation. Vanderbilt, for instance, identified a resemblance of nature in the story with the colors of Prospero's chambers in his castle. The color schemes are in order of blue, purple, green, orange, white and ultimately black, representing the stages of life, a symbolism also recognized by critics like Bell (Bell 103). Vanderbilt identifies the colors as Poe's deliberate motifs to illustrate Prospero's conception of the nature, which in reality was plague ravaged outside, by employing his artistic liberation. Referring to Shakespearean age of man and the general cycle of nature, Vanderbilt's exegesis of the colors is,

"the cold, blue eastern room, one recognizes the image of dawning human life. It is succeeded by the purple room—an infusion of blue with the warmer tone of red—suggesting perhaps the quickening of life. The third room of green connotes growth, aspiration, youth; and the orange room, corresponding to the high noon of existence, becomes the harvest or fulfillment of human labor and ambition. The next room is white, at once all-color and no-color, a sudden and chill contrast which evokes decline, old age, decomposition, and approaching death." (381)

The perception of reproduction of the nature by Prospero, however, could be discerned otherwise. Since the premise of the story is based on a containment of space, symbolized by seemingly impregnable and lofty walls, the gates of iron, retreating of a select group of people and welding the castle doors shut, the import of Prospero's masquerade ball could be an independent and atypical display of his taste and not deliberately intended to recreate the nature for artistry, even with the imitative characteristics of the ball. This would seem plausible if the tale is looked at without the precepts of Poe's ideation of art in "The Poetic Principle". Martin Roth has theorized the story's backdrop as reflecting of Roderick Usher of "The Fall of the House of the Usher" as it representing "ordinary desire for a self-sustaining, self-present inside, an inexhaustible presence" (Riddell qtd in Roth 51) Critics like Roth have drawn parallels between the aspects of the outside with the inside in the story, with the castellated abbey and everyone inside representing the inside and the red death, the outside. He regarded nature and everything outside as, "I am not tempted to identify the ghastly masquerader as anything-the plague, death, life, the Philistine world, etc. - other than an "outside." " (Roth 50) Vanderbilt's idea of outside or real nature could also be, to an extent, identified with Roth's concept of it, but his idea did not address conjoining of the two perspectives like Roth. And Roth's idea of this outside is manifested by the red death. He perceived his nature as, "He is outside the bounds, both spatially and psychologically."(51) Roth highlighted a trait of the story that follows coalescing of the inside and the outside, manifested in particular by the examination of personified red death by other inhabitants. The void of any material figure inside the robes was symbolic of blurring of the inside and outside, which Roth found symbolic of a mobius strip or a Klein bottle where the sides are exchangeable or confusing. Roth wrote about this analogy as, "If this figure represents the successful penetration of the outside into the impenetrable abbey, he also represents the emergence of the inside. He is a characterological duplicate of

both the black chamber and its ebony clock. His costume is informed by the doubling of individual and architectural structure so prominent in "The Fall of the House of Usher" (52)

But the fact still remains that "The Poetic Principle was published a while before "The Masque of the Red Death" and it is more likely to reflect the precepts on the latter. And as Roth classified the elements of the story in two categories, his reflection of metaphors is more founded on the aspects of the elements functional to the story, rather than the abstract aspects. This is especially true in his idea of the clock's chime as, "whose chiming imposes a stop-start movement on the festive company and whose "life" goes out with the last of the company (Poe had featured the equation of the heart and a watch in "The Tell-Tale Heart")" (51) Since, in relation to dark romantic works the subliminal aspects and interpretation are often as essential as perceptible ones, it could justify the presence of symbolic nature in the "The Masque of the Red Death". Because as evident with many other works of Poe like "The Raven", he emphasized the importance of symbolic ideas in literature. Among two things he identified, were adaptation and suggestiveness. The latter was said to, "impart to a work of art so much of that richness" in his essay "The Philosophy of Composition". (Poe 9) This would certainly assign the conceptual nature a significance.

The aspect of nature in Poe's writing represents a bleak outlook that is deemed corrosive, hostile and fated to decimate. His representation of nature in "The Masque of the Red Death" is destructive, consuming and plague ridden, which are while essential elements, are macabre and pervasive in the story. Prospero's emblematic pastiche of nature in his Masquerade, unburdened by the grim attributes, portrays a struggle with the eternity. He employs a multitude of motifs and grandiose décor as tinted glasses, colors, masques et al to properly effect his imitation, which Vanderbilt explained as, "-represents Prospero's imaginative re-ordering of actuality. He has created a setting which can evoke the magic and unearthly visions of the liberated sensibility" (Vanderbilt 382) It is where Prospero, the artist-

hero, also faces the stark inevitability of fate in the climax, where he realizes the futility of escaping the confines of nature. Vanderbilt drew parallel between this character and his namesake from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The parallels are based on this urge to control the nature or preserving it from the mortality and corrosion and then the climactic disillusionment. Shakespeare's Prospero does it by establishing his control over his island by the use of magic and spirits who serve him. And unlike Prince Prospero, his dominion over the landscape is more successful. The resemblance is identified by Vanderbilt as Ariel representing the spiritual quality of nature that Prospero, combined with his ideation, delegates in building his nature of "Paradisaal beauty". The antagonist, Caliban, is a counterpart of the red death set upon undoing the artistic endeavors of Prospero. And the climactic resemblance is deduced from Prospero's Masque in the fourth act and Prince Prospero's confrontation of the red death. The masque involves Prospero arranging for the goddesses and reapers to perform in celebration of his daughter's betrothal. This, to an extent, reflects Prince Prospero's delirium filled ball. The characters are described by Poe as, "a multitude of dreams. And these the dreams -- writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps." (Poe 3) Vanderbilt wrote about the masque, composed by Prospero and signifying his climax, as, "During the dance of nymphs and reapers which follows Ceres' song of harvest abundance, Prospero grows distracted and petulant. He breaks off the masque. His imagination has failed him, his worldly fears of Caliban's "foul conspiracy" have returned, and as a result of both, he gives in to a despairing vision of cosmic dissolution." (Vanderbilt 383) Shakespeare's hero, in his festive moment comes to the realization that his attempts to perpetuate his symbolic nature was doomed to fail, and ends the ceremony. And when Prince Prospero notices the red death, in stark contrast to his attempted impression, he is faced with a similar sense of disillusionment. Vanderbilt explained this similitude of nature prevailing over the artist's imagination as, "The mummer of Death strides majestically past him and through

the seven apartments in symbolic triumph over each stage of earthly life and over Prospero's art and aspiring imagination. As in *The Tempest*, Ariel has taken leave and Prospero alone must confront his mortality and ultimate defeat.” (384) As such, the finality of the both the characters leave them to a similar state of defeat in their respective struggle. The idea of red death sweeping across the seven chambers representing the successional fall of the artist's contrived nature could also be regarded as a metaphor for dark romantic approach, as however diligent and definite a setting may appear it is always susceptible to fall.

2.3 The Ideal Beauty and Death

Poe's celebration of melancholia through his poems, namely, “The Sleeper”, “Ulalume” or “The Raven” all share a common trait of collating the concept of Beauty and Sorrow. Poe, regarded the concept of sorrow evoking the “highest manifestation of Beauty” in readers and when analogous to a sense of loss of an ideal beauty. This beauty is more often personified in poems by a beautiful woman. And as such, his celebration predicates from sublimation of said beauty and its loss.

This analogy is represented by the psychiatrist and his passionate critic Henry Maudsley in his chapter about Poe by *Psyche and Death*. *Psyche*, being the perceived exemplification of Beauty and Poe's allusion to his inner self and soul, might be a reference to the Greek Mythology. And Maudsley, a firm believer in the dated Degeneration theory, identified death as the supreme example of sorrow, following Poe's own words. And in his discernment of Poe, *Psyche* became the idealization of beauty. Now, while Poe might have analogized his sense of loss and sorrow with death, it could be debated whether the meaning (death) was literal or his style of correlating loss with mortality. And, *Psyche*, as indicated in “Ulalume”, could have meant his self and soul. In “Ulalume”, the concepts of Maudsley are especially apropos as the

death is celebrated by the narrator accepting the loss and lamenting the lost beauty. Here, all probable indications signify the sequent of death. And Psyche, despite being a reflection of his soul, attains a role of the narrator's conscious and fits Maudsley's description of beauty.

However, despite the direct application of death in the "The Raven", the narrator is shown to strive constantly to inquire about Lenore, attributing death the property of detachment and loss, rather than the absoluteness of mortality as he said, "if, within the distant Aidenn, It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—".(Poe 93) Now, this could all be Poe's construction of narrator as a more credible character in desperation, devised with the ingenious placement of the motif of Raven. Catherine A. Runcie explained the characteristics of the raven as, "He cannot announce Lenore's death. She is already dead. And he does not announce the scholar/lover's death. Having the bird as harbinger of the scholar/lover's death at the end of the poem might account for its increasing menacing quality, but would not account for all the incidents of the little plot, including the bird's announcement that Lenore has no after life, nor the near hysteria, nor the death-in-life of the poet at the end".(Runcie 10) The critic contends the raven's prophetic traits as less than concrete and it being a poetic device. It follows that it is possible for Poe to indicate a conceptualized death as explained. Even if the raven's prophesy, as he discards the prospect (of Lenore's afterlife), were concrete, the persistent narrator's queries establish a particular belief of Lenore's existence that indicate detachment, but not absolute loss. Therefore, albeit the implications of the afterlife and the prophetic and portentous candor were attributed to the raven, it could be argued that death was more absolute and irreversible in "Ulalume". Because despite the presence of characters (Astarte) symbolic of death, the narrator in "Ulalume" is accepting of the death, while the narrator in "The Raven" lacks acceptance of the perennial nature of death.

A significant aspect about the dark romantic illustrations in Poe's poems is the backdrop. While associations of his ideal beauty maybe pure and constructed with poetic

sublimation, the backdrops are characteristically bleak and ominous. For instance, in “Ulalume” the backdrops are described as “skies they were ashen and sober; The leaves they were crisped and sere” (Poe 2) and “sulphurous currents down Yaanek” (16). Sulphurous, ashen and crisped are signifiers of a bleak undertone, which is further resolved with the month of October. Yet, when speaking of a conceptual beauty, Psyche, he wrote, “Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her, And tempted her out of her gloom— And conquered her scruples and gloom.”(72) Similarly, in “The Raven” Poe builds the backdrop in a vivid gothic image. The undertone of the poem appears as bleak if not foreboding, as the narrator describes the season, “Bleak December” and the time, “Midnight dreary.” Other images would be the narrator after opening the door, “Darkness there and nothing more.”(Poe 24), his own state, “silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;” (13) and the state of the Raven being “grim ungainly ghaftly gaunt and ominous”. And while the rest of the poem may be tonally similar in being dark and melancholy, Poe, representing the ideal beauty, Lenore, termed her as “Rare, Sainted and Radiant.” (94)

Another aspect of Poe’s poems is identified by Dr Maudsley is related to the nature of his ideal beauty. According to him, “A notable feature is the absence of anything sensual from Poe's poetry ; the beautiful is as chaste as a statue ; it is not Venus, " not even a lissome Vivien," but Psyche — always Psyche from the regions which are Holy Land.” (Maudsley 364) Here Maudsley identified Psyche as the ideal beauty and claimed Poe’s poetry to be absent of any sensual motif. This could be explored by looking into “Ulalume” for the ideal beauty’s contrasting idea of a dubitable beauty, Astarte that the Psyche mistrusts. Now Poe’s ideation of Astarte is not sensual, rather a similar to the ideal beauty in sublimation, yet different from its pure nature.

2.4 Determinist Perspective in Poe

The idea of determinism is that of the inevitability of fate over the free will of characters. It dictates that characters' will are inconsequential and have no bearing on the fate. Determinism is a very common phenomenon in Dark Romanticism as often the characters exhibit the desperation to maintain control, only to be victims of the fate (machinations of the author). This is evident in both "The Raven" and "The Masque of the red death" as both the central characters struggle against a symbolic, dreaded fate. For "The Raven", the narrator embodies a sense of consciousness that is grueling for want of answers, the answers that are evocative of despair, and yet he persists. The distress of the narrator could be perceived as the deterministic fate or the impending doom of gothic conventions that grips the narrator. The latter option presents us with a narrator in dialogue with a professing character, trying to extract an answer for his solace. While we already know the final answer to his query, "Nevermore", it is the lack of his control shown in the poem that exemplifies this determinism. For instance, in the ninth stanza he wrote, "For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—" illustrating this first instance of dread of the narrator about his fate. As the dialogue progresses, so does the steady loss of narrator's control of his fate. Peter Garret identified this in "Gothic scene of concentrated attention also typically displays a protagonist losing his grip; the tale of terror is centrally concerned with both control and the loss of control, and it is through this fundamental generic preoccupation that Poe's tales probe the power relations of reading and writing narrative," (Garret 59)

The narrator has been almost universally perceived by critics, as essentially bleak and dark. As one critic defined, "The narrator's state of mind and his negativism are apparent in the images and refrains of the first seven stanza." (Unrue 117) So, it could be argued that the narrator never had the will to remedy his situation, ergo instead of determinist dynamic, it was the hero who was doomed to fail. But it would be the contrary of his demeanor and composure

displayed in the poem, especially at the end, as he is gripped with despair. As such, it has to be assumed for the sake of discourse that the narrator was of the will to face fate. Now, the question arises about what could axiomatically justify Determinism in Poe's work? The answer would be, conclusively, nothing could. Because despite the prospect of freewill, the determinist dynamic could be there even without the negative traits of the narrator. But the immersive presence of gothic conventions would render any action of fate or grand narrative subject to being a poetic device. For instance, a critic argued about the representation of passion as Lenore, and identified the confirmation of her completely voided essence drowned the narrator in despair as, "But whether pure love or new love, love is now impossible. Passion has no future, only a past. The bird becomes a prophet of the scholar/lover's future and tells him he will never love again - Lenore/Passion has no afterlife. This information unhinges the scholar/lover" (Runice 11) The idea of the narrator's loss could paint an image of him being a victim of a deterministic fate, or of his loss being a sequent of dark romantic idea.

But in "Ulalume", there is a scope for display of the freewill. Runice wrote about Astarte as, "Venus or Astarte becomes their guide - and is as much a trickster as the raven. She is goddess of love as the Roman Venus or goddess of fertility as the Phoenician Astarte" (13) Poe might have set this backdrop to allegorize greed, to which the narrator, although enchanted by the luminous star/goddess, turns away, and thereby illustrate freewill in a Gothic poem.

Chapter 3

Hawthorne's Illustration of Gothic

3.1 Imperfection in “The Birthmark”

The concept of power is prominently used in gothic literature, but in “The Birth-mark”, Hawthorne allegorized it vividly. The story illustrates the idea of human imperfection as an inevitable and ineradicable component of life, and that human, by essence, is flawed. And when exerted on with power and intent to erase the flaw, it destroys the essence itself. The main character, Aylmer is obsessed with human perfection. The obsession does not entirely stem from the physical aspect of the mark, rather it is founded on a twisted impression that it makes his newlywed wife, Georgiana, susceptible to aspects of “sin, sorrow, decay, and death” (Hawthorne 2) The commonality between the aspects are that they are dark and starkly contradict the idea of perfection. Joel Pfeister, elucidated the idea of human imperfection as essential from Aylmer’s obsession as, “Georgiana’s cosmetic surgery transmutes her into a feminized “angel” in the house expurgated not of sin, sorrow, decay, and death, but of life” (Pfeister 46) This notion of death is foreshadowed by the “crimson” color of the mark, which symbolized the effect of mortality and blood, and the premonitory dreams of Aylmer, where the hand shaped mark shifts on the approach of surgical knife. The obsession that fuels Aylmer’s intent coupled with his self-estimation as a scientist who could perfect the flawed, signifies both power and its illusion as Aylmer succeeds in removing the mark at the expense of Georgiana’s life, but fails to achieve human perfection because of her death.

Aylmer’s obsession with perfection could be argued to be parodying the ideal nature of transcendentalists. As the story manifests the obsession with surgically perfecting a woman, it also evinces the idea of male dominance. The dominance is effective to the point where even

Georgiana is intent on getting rid of the mark at any cost and terming it a “horrible stigma” (Hawthorne 10). Allison Easton wrote about this symbolic submission to Aylmer’s obsession over perfection, that she “would rather be dead than continue to disgust her husband with her birthmark.” (Easton 86) The occasions of protesting against this ludicrous notion of dominance and “perfecting” the “earthly imperfections” of a woman were explored in the story as Georgiana shows reluctance, despair and suppressed anger, yet none being definitive protests. This is identified by Easton as, “female dissent becomes muted, fruitless reproach, or metamorphoses into a self-sacrifice that sounds like a desperate quotation from a manual on wifely submission.” (Easton 87) The desperate or facile nature of the protests could have been deliberate to suggest that this was a parody and Hawthorne’s symbolic remonstrance of Transcendental ideals.

The symbolism of the mark itself could also be reflected in terms of power. The birthmark, other than symbolizing mortality, blood and imperfection, could also suggest a deeper image. According to Zanger, the birthmark could metaphorically suggest menstruation and blood. She drew her argument from prevalent ideas about menstruation that Hawthorne subscribe to, notably *Natural History* by Pliny, in relation to the story. She, however, defined the nature of this symbolism as unintentional. She wrote, “the particularizing of Georgiana's "imperfection" by the image a "crimson stain" is linked to Hawthorne's response to the menstrual aspect woman's biological life. I am, however, not asserting that this connection is demonstrably a product of his conscious literary intention.” (Zanger 369) Defining this spontaneous natural process as the flaw that Aylmer intended to perfect, she further explained the symbolism as, “The crimson hand expresses the knot of resistant reality, the absurd mingling of crude and brittle clay with divine breath, of flesh with spirit, that was the creation.” (Zanger 370) The mark in the story, as defined by Zanger, represents the essential trait of

womanhood and likened it to the aspect of menstruation. And when Aylmer strived to perfect this trait, the life, the crux ceased to exist.

It could also be argued that the concept of power was assigned from culture which, if considering Hawthorne's contemporary America, could be plausible. Pfeister argued that Hawthorne applied the cultural doctrines to construct the tale's setting, progression and thoughts of character. Pfeister identified the doctrine as one to have its subjects of the culture pathologize bodies and flawed womanhood. Deeming Georgiana's conforming to Aylmer's views on her mark representing this doctrine, he wrote, "Hawthorne exhibits the power of culture not only to compel its subjects to read and reread themselves along certain lines, but to produce obsession and pathologize bodies. Georgiana is thus culturally and allegorically innerselfed as she compulsively embraces Aylmer's – and, in a more encompassing sense, her culture's – pathological allegory of flawed womanhood." (Pfeister 45)

3 .2 Allegory and Symbolism in *The Marble Faun*

In his novel, *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne takes up the issue of addressing an ethical standpoint by taking the readers through Donatello's consciousness and guilt. The tonality aside, the nature of characters like Miriam is starkly different from the characterized naturalist and inherent goodness of Transcendentalist writers. Two characters could be described to explain the contrast, such as, Donatello and Miriam.

Donatello was penned as a round and central character, who was initially defined to be lacking in conventional acumen. As Miriam described him after her discussion about him with Hilda, "for no Faun in Arcadia was ever a greater simpleton than Donatello. He has hardly a man's share of wit, small as that may be." (Hawthorne 22) Hence, at the beginning his character seems one that is unaware of complexities. But after a murder by his hand, his conscious is

shown to develop as deep and mature. His contemplation of guilt and eventual thoughts of penance shows the ideas of evil, loss of innocence and fallibility of human nature.

While Miriam Schaefer is evidently portrayed as a jubilant and playful artist, initially, her mental disposition also transforms gradually after the murder. While her model (the victim) and possible artistic inspiration is shown as impertinent, his death by Donatello's hand brings out a peculiar nature in her character. This nature also reflects a darker aspect of human nature. As her addressing him sounds edging on accusatory, when she says, "You have killed him, Donatello ! He is quite dead !" (140) But when Donatello asks her if he should jump off the cliff provided the murder was not her desired outcome, she quickly retracts and displays composure. The dynamic at the scene quickly evolves as she illustrates acceptance of the crime and acknowledges their bond by participation in a crime by her statement to Donatello, "Oh, friend, are you conscious, as I am, of this companionship that knits our heart- strings together ?"(142) This is especially demonstrative of a coping mechanism that puts human nature in contrast to inherent good.

The symbol the novel is named after is the statue of a Faun of Praxiteles in the Capitol Gallery of Rome. This motif could have been placed by Hawthorne to present an allegorical provenance for Donatello representing his innocence, the loss and return to innocence by admission of guilt. Emily Miller Budick wrote about the sculpture as, "In the statue of the child, the dangerous transformation of art or riddle into moral law is contained in the allegory that the statue's implied drama seems to enact: the child embracing innocence, assaulted by evil." (Budick 241)

The backdrop of the novel is set in Rome, which is described by Budick as absent of fanatical, imposing doctrines or circumstances (namely the scenarios of "The Minister's Black Veil" "Young Goodman Brown" et all) despite a "tyrannical government." The novel's plot

against it is described as “four rather congenial, well-meaning young people, three of whom are artists, all of whom get trapped not by the conspiracies and dictates of others but by their own failure simply to listen to and sympathize with and help one another – not materially but emotionally and psychologically.”(Budick 234) The significance of Rome also speaks to the allegorical nature of the fall of Donatello and ultimate redemption through sacrifice. The Christian notion of absolving of sin intrinsically identified with the city could be a contrast to this redemption, because of Donatello’s imprisonment. Goldman, noting Rome as the “notional home of redemptive self-sacrifice” wrote, “Donatello's return to innocence enacts not merely the Fall but the Redemption, a redemption disregarded in the citadel of its institutionalisation.”(Goldman 402) This contrast could be Hawthorne’s idea of criticism of a police state by fictionally portraying it to be in contradiction to one of its fundamental principles.

Chapter 4

The Gothic in Emily Dickinson

4.1 The Identity and Anatomy

Emily Dickinson, a quintessential figure in gothic poetry, brings a unique light to the discussion of the dark romantic. Her poems of the Fascicle 16, “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain”, “Tis so appalling--it exhilarates--” and “How noteless Men and Pleids, stand” would be discussed for the idea of identity reflected by the macabre constructs of her poems. The topic of the subject (self) in her poems have been perceived largely as dissociative of self-hood. Because Gothicism itself constitutes the element of dissolution of identities (Wardrop 143), this discussion would explore the aspects in her poems pertaining to the self. Dickinson is considered to be the pioneer of this particular approach. Daneen Wardrop perceived this as the disjunctive identity, a concept axiomatic of modernist and post-modernist literature, and elucidated Dickinson’s approach from the tenets of Gothicism in her essay, “Emily Dickinson and the Gothic in Fascicle”. The nature of consciousness in her poems that is supposed to take the shape of a complete identity is fragmented or blurred. This ambiguity could be attributed as Dickinson’s poetic prowess to navigate independently without the executive self or “I”, and she does so with the application of a visceral insight into the dark romantic.

The esoteric terms incorporated by Dickinson, such as mind, brain, heart, nerves et al assign a vivid character to her poems’ gothic approach. Michael Kearns, in his critique about the presence of anatomy in her poems from a psychological perspective, deemed this as deliberate. According to him, the separation of the executive self or subjective identity and incorporation of the aspects of “heart” and “brain” was Dickinson’s preference for exploring the consciousness beyond the contemporary perception of psychology. He wrote, “She applied her anatomical focus to the dramatizing of questions central to mental philosophy, especially

whether the mind had a material component, how the faculties of mind were related to each other and to the external world, and where the “I” or self was located with respect to the intellect, the will, and the emotions.”(Kearns 13) The gothic character in the poems thus, could be argued to symbolize a material ideation based on human anatomy. This dramatization follows in the aspects illustrated in “I felt a Funeral in my Brain” as the nature of the executive self, “I”, is proposed by Kearns as the superordinate of all conscious entities, despite their functions being disjointed and defined as “discrete bodies”. Kearns wrote about these aspects as, “mourners treading, a drumlike “Service” beating, the numbing of the “mind,” the creaking of “Boots of Lead” across the “Soul,” finally the breaking of the “Plank in Reason.” Brain, Mind, and Soul are all implicitly subservient to the unitary “I.” (21) Here, the idea of the individual, executive self is identified as the grounding all actions are based upon, albeit the “heart, mind and soul” are disjointed or separate. Drawing a resemblance to the “I Felt a Cleaving in My Mind”, Kearns theorized the aforesaid disjointed agents as contrasting Dickinson’s contemporary notion of continuity in the human mind that thoughts flowed in currents and mind being a single entity. But in the poem the mind is portrayed in a state of distress as “As if my brain had split;”(Dickinson 2) which is identified by Kearns as dissociation of the agents within the self. He wrote, “the mind, brain, and thoughts are not here portrayed as independent agents; this extreme sensation of the brain itself being split (“I felt a Cleaving in my Mind – / As if my Brain had split”) takes place within a unitary “I.””(21)

4.2 Fascicle 16

The Fascicle 16 are a set of eleven poems that are referred from the Manuscript version of the poems of the R.W. Franklin edition, and while Wardrop analyzes gothic and ontological aspects of all of them, the essential aspects are mostly from 16.5 -16.7. It is revealed in her essay that Dickinson's Gothicism enveloped much more than the text itself, and included analysis of symbolism, placement and contrast with other Fascicles, which also serves an account of her preference of manuscripts over printed version. Acclaiming Dickinson as the pioneer in experimenting the aspect of disjunctive subjectivity, Wardrop delves first into the idea of identity and how it appertains to modernist and postmodernist ideology as, "When the status of the subject becomes confounded, to the point of becoming fractured or even indistinguishable, needless to say, the identity of the "I" is in jeopardy. This jeopardized "I" thoroughly informs modernist and postmodernist works of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries." (Wardrop 143) The Modernist critic Julia Kristeva, in understanding the significance of subject, deemed that modernist works depicts reality is fragmented and, in that depiction, often shatters itself. Kristeva wrote about this as, "splitting subject in conflict who risks being shattered." (Kristeva qtd. In Wardrop 143).

The first poem that Wardrop analyzes is the Fascicle 16.6, the centerpiece of the collection, "Tis so appalling--it exhilarates--" This poem has been termed by Wardrop as "Metagothic", "a condition in which a work defines Gothicism even as it conveys Gothic effects." (144) As the title itself exhibits an oxymoronic context of appalling with exhilarating, an effect that Wardrop relates with the Freudian definition of gothic from his article "Das Unheimliche". The definition characterizes the notion of uncanny with conjoining of two contrary ideas. The title, Unheimliche, meaning uncanny in German, also means both home and homely. It follows that, the essence of gothic rests on characterizing the opposite, as what is homey and what is decidedly un-homey. (Freud qtd in Wardrop 144) This characteristic is

displayed later in the last stanza in a similar fashion of melding of Gay with Ghastly, Freight and liberty, and terror with free. Wardrop expressly wrote about her discontent about the printed version, for primarily to edit the original text and failing to establish Dickinson's designs with format, which according to her fails to properly illustrate the Gothic dread. This is particularly valid when considered the gothic connotation of the verse, "To know the worst, leaves no dread more—", which was edited out in favor of, "Sepulchre, fears frost, no more—"(Dickinson 4). Wardrop assigns gothic theme to both, but more so for the former. Another aspect of the poem is reflected from the line, "Suspense kept sawing so—", which is symbolic of the back-and-forth dynamic employed to build up the suspense.

Two particular aspects of Gothicism are in the fourth and last stanzas. In the fourth stanza Dickinson wrote, "Just let go the Breath— And not the pillow at your Cheek" (16). The part "your cheek" is vivified in the manuscript in a different line, illustrates a shift in addressing to the second person, from addressing of "we" in the third stanza and almost personally connects the reader to the gothic insight. The symbolism of the pillow might also add to the intimacy, and going by the conventions of "Unheimliche", appeal to the gothic even more effusively. Wardrop wrote about this couple of words as, "I want to emphasize, though, the two-word line, "your Cheek," which even more emphatically afflicts the reader with Gothic chills." and she relates about the second person addressing as not being a normative favorable position in Dickinson's Poem as further wrote about gothic constructs, "The two-word line registers powerfully this unsettling change in point of view, using a kind of horrific syntax. In fact, near the middle of the poem that occupies the center of the fascicle, Dickinson suddenly puts the onus of the fear in "your" hands – literally, in your bed, if we take the pillow seriously. The poet could not get much closer to the reader. (Wardrop 146). And in the last stanza, the line,

"Others, Can wrestle—

Yours, is done—

And so of Wo, bleak dreaded—

Come, (Dickinson 19),

presents an imperative to the readers or symbolizes a coming. Because it has been addressed in the second person, and the preceding lines indicate a different fate from others which has been determined, it conveys a foreboding presence of gothic artistry. The word “Come” was placed in a line independently, like the couple before, which would attest to its significance. Wardrop explained it as, “a plenary word that plays on erotic expectation as well as suspenseful dénouement. It announces that the worst has happened. The worst has come.” (Wardrop 145) The distinction between the printed edition and the manuscript also plays out in Wardrop’s analysis of the preceding poem of Fascicle 16.5, “I felt a Funeral in my Brain” as she goes through all crossed out words and thereby giving a deeper understanding of the poet. Being among the more popular ones, Wardrop drew a resemblance of this poem with Poe’s style as it incorporates “beating sounds of words, a grisly suspense building in the syntax and parataxis (“and then, and then”), numbness, altered consciousness, after-death experience, the victimized female subject, and severe uncertainty on the part of the speaker.” (147) All of the resembling aspects could be considered as essential to Gothicism, even more so the aural and altered consciousness. As discussed above, the word soul again comes into focus as the manuscript features it as being a substitute to an edited word, “Brain”. This could have been done as part of scrutiny to avoid repetition. Or, as Wardrop reasons, could be a sequent of Dickinson’s equation of soul and brain, founded on spirituality reflecting her perception. She wrote, “this strange equation accounts for the stoppage of knowing at the poem’s unresolved finish.” (148) The varying endings all have a common thread, be it the plunge or the crash, the result of the action was same and led to “getting through” or “finishing”. It could be the losing of self, or

the identity as the plunge could suggest, but if substituted with crashing, it attributes the idea of a shattering loss, suggesting a suddenness. And the prospect of a, “tenuous, transitory, undefinitive, ruptured, and sometimes difficult to distinguish from another” “I” remains, which is speculated by Wardrop, was Dickinson’s method of exploring her identity by means of Gothic conventions. Lastly, she credited Kristeva’s idea of “shattered subject” as instrumental in interpreting the gothic. Wardrop explicated on the subject of the poem, as successfully conveying a sense of disintegration and reversal of reality to the self, illustrated most graphically and effectively. The subject, “I”, could be perceived as both “dead and alive, both knowing and not, both controller and victim of the story’s telling.” (160) The identity is in an immersive state of being prone to disintegration, as the Gothic dynamic traverses between the speaker’s dissolved “I” and the application of other identities.

The last poem in this discussion is, “How noteless Men, and” which is the succeeding one of center and is bookended with Fascicle “I felt a Funeral in my Brain”. Wardrop, terms this poem as to be asking to, “defray our sense of hearing in order to privilege the visual” (149). This would definitely be a foil to the Fascicle 16.5, because of straying from aural aspect. The first line enunciates the idea of “noteless men” followed by the “sudden sky” that could be poised to present a visual. And this is described as, “The privileging of the visual, though, is suggested only to be snatched away”. Because the fifth line notes, “One is rapt, Forever from the sky” (Dickinson 5) The subject of the poem are the collective “noteless men”, which is also a significant contrast to the first person narrative of Fascicle 16, because in the third person the identity of “I”, has a greater scope of disintegration. The subject “noteless men” are explained in the second stanza as the “members of invisible”. Wardrop notes, that because of the undertone of visibility, the eye “the eye offers so significant a sense for the reader here. We strain to see what cannot be seen, what becomes “rapt” from the eye.” (149). Referring to the 1929 edited publication of the poem where it read wrapt (namely wrapped). Wardrop

speculated the possibility of “rapt” being instrumented as homophone for “wrapt” that, unlike the edited version, exudes a duality of what is open and what is closed. Wardrop further explained, “The pith of the rapt/wrapt nexus demonstrates the means by which faith can turn to Gothic despair, light to murkiness, revelation to secret: one is rapt with transcendence; one is wrapt with secret.” (149) This rapt/wrapt idea when collated with the prior idea of Wardrop’s privileging of the visual, exhibits symbolic fall that is uncertain in nature, but forever. The rapt implies a sense of exaltation, the wrapt symbolizes being shrouded. Such duality of opposites characterizes the “Unheimliche” that strives to evoke a semblance of Gothic in the readers by application of Wardrop’s theorized nexus. This might assign a capricious characteristic to the identity that could be both boding or optimistic, by more importantly, it is to be disjointed and indeterminate. And the reader is seemingly left with the urge to hear from the “members of the invisible” only to be frustrated in the last line, “Sweep by our disappointed Heads, Without a syllable—”

Juxtaposing between the three Fascicle 16 poems in the center, Wardrop, noted the essential tenets of Gothicism reflected in them. She first wrote about death in Dickinson’s two poems on either side of the center as signifying a metaphor for void and discordant expectations as, “Both sight and hearing are confounded, both religious and Gothic expectations. Both the experience of death and that of the after-life finish with an annihilation of knowing. The annihilation of knowing constitutes the anti-resolution of both poems directly enclosing the center poem of Fascicle 16.”(150) All three of the poems at the center of the Fascicle represent a vivid sense of Gothicism and display the tenuous nature of the subject. This is even more appropriate for the parallels of the first two, i.e. “I felt a Funeral in my Brain” and “Tis so appalling--it exhilarates--”, because the of the way Gothicism is communicated by the, with the first being quintessential Gothic and second as Wardrop defined, “Metagothic”. According to her the parallel, “provide a sort of grounding in bodily sensation and a touchstone of fear

(after all, Dickinson likes agony because she knows it's true) so that she can undertake experimentations in subjectivity on either side of that center." (150) She also identified a Gothic contrast between poems of other Fascicles of the manuscript, Fascicle 15 and 17. The center poem of Fascicle 15, "If I may have it, when its" precedes the center of 16, reflecting a more extreme tone of the gothic as it communicates the Poet's longing to own a corpse and "stroke it". (150) The center poem of Fascicle 17 is "'If Anybody's friend be dead" is argues by Wardrop to connote necrophilia, another essential aspect of Gothicism. Thus, creating a fascinating combination and the resulting contrast of these poems and their respective Fascicles, these works are among the exemplifying works of the dark romantic writing.

4.3 Dickinson in her Letters

It is evident from the letters of Emily Dickinson that her writing acumen was profound in both poetry and correspondence. We can get an idea of gothic propensity from her of sarcastic remark to her brother William Austin Dickinson, “How do you get along without me now, and does ' it seem any more like a funeral ' than it did before your visit to your humble servant in this place?” (Todd 68) This particular banter, written in jest, provide an insight, brief as it may, into Dickinson’s world. Dickinson and her brother were close and while growing up she saw themselves together, as normative of siblings. We can get an insight about her perception from her letter to the poet and novelist Dr and Mrs. Holland, “The minister to-day, not our own minister, preached about death and judgment, and what would become of those, meaning Austin and me, who behaved improperly — and somehow the sermon scared me, and father and Vinnie looked very solemn as if the whole was true, and I would not for worlds have them know that it troubled me, but I longed to come to you, and tell you all about it, and learn how to be better.”(161) Even here, there is a mention of death, which could be signifying of the contextual biblical aspect of death or its application could be as of a euphemism. Now death, if used, euphemistically would certainly be significant in perceiving her stance and how it might reflect in her writings. And her relation dynamic could also be considered as significant, considering her fret about a sermon and the posturing of her father and Lavinia Dickinson. Now, this could be interpreted as her apathy about religion because of questioning the sermon. But still hinting at a dread, would indicate a probable source of fear, which could be spiritual or existential.

Another one of Dickinson's letter to Mrs. Holland read, “I 'm so glad you are not a blossom, for those in my garden fade, and then a ' reaper whose name is Death ' has come to get a few to help him make a bouquet for himself, so I 'm glad you are not a rose —and I 'm glad you are not a bee, for where they go when summer 's done,”(Todd 178) Again, a most

excellent example of euphemism of death could be found in the poet's excerpt. Establishing a paradoxical contrast of Unheimliche, or uncanny of death and flowers, she displays a unique character of Gothic as candidly as possible.

Chapter 5 Discussion

The dark romanticism in 19th century America was not a literary movement; it was rather an aspect. It was a phenomenon reflected in some distinct authors and poets in the height of transcendentalist movement. The Dark Romanticists, being writers of gothic proclivities, have a niche of their own with distinct perspectives of viewing the poetic, constructing their stories and being of a different mode of philosophy. Firstly, the perspective of transcendentalist views on viewing itself. The perspective could be deemed an a priori approach that considers viewing as "owning". The justification was inherent, that looking conferred the prospect of internalizing the visual and possibly undermine the speaker's insight for drawing a conclusion solely based on optical sense. In her discussion of the Fascicle 16, Wardrop set this perspective in contrast with Emily Dickinson's perspective of the visual in "Before I got my eye put out". In the poem, Dickinson appeared to construct a transcendentalist perspective as the speaker attributes the possessive, "mine" to the nature that she sees, but to uniquely deconstruct the idea as, "For mine – to look at when I liked, The news would strike me dead –". (Dickinson 16). Here, Dickinson eschewed the perspective with euphemistic death, which could be inferred as her idea of that perspective was too overwhelming for the speaker and restricting of poetic possibilities of the unknown. Wardrop described this deconstruction of visual perspective as, "the transcendentalist Emerson ascribed ownership to looking; because he could see the view of his neighbor's property, he owned it. Dickinson seems to consider the Emersonian way only to reject it at the end of this poem.". Wardrop discerned that such aspect of looking, the visual

nature of it, is averse of the speaker's individuality and poetic possibilities. Thus, she wrote of the transcendentalist viewing as "rich as it may be, proves to be too much for the speaker, for she finds demise in such excess. Emerson accrues vision to himself; Dickinson limits it so as to claim the wealth of strangeness inherent in the action of limitation." (Wardrop 152)

Hawthorne also was odds with Emerson's Transcendentalist ideals. Emerson called the novel *The Marble Faun*, a mush. The two contemporaries rose to their fame at the same period and were of opposing outlooks. Hawthorne's situation was unique in the sense that his wife, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, idealized transcendentalist ideals and at a time was an avid admirer of Emerson as Larry J. Reynolds's wrote, "Sophia Peabody, before she married Hawthorne, subscribed to Emerson's Transcendental idealism and found him "the greatest man that ever lived." (Reynolds 16). During his stay at The Old Manse, in Concord, a town where Emerson lived, the two literary figures communicated. This interaction is said to have had an effect in Hawthorne's several works composed at the Manse which critically illustrate transcendentalist ideals and were published as a collection called *Moses from an Old Manse*. The works share a palpable criticism of the idealistic perspective of Transcendental idea of the ideal. This could be reflected from the stories "The Birth-Mark" and "Rapaccini's Daughter". Both of the stories essentially reflect the obsession of Transcendentalist "ideal". Especially in the former, the consequences of such obsession over ideal are explored in the gravest manner. This notion of Hawthorne's critique of the Transcendental ideal is reasoned by the fact that his residence in Concord put him within interactive range of not only Emerson, but Thoreau and Fuller. (11) The 19th century notions of chastity and celibacy was considered pivotal to their ideal by Emerson and his followers, as Thoreau in *Walden*, "Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed from it." (Thoreau qtd in Reynolds 25). And this was the diverging point between Hawthorne and the Transcendentalists as his stories critique this concept of ideal human nature

and the obsession over it. Reynolds identified the repressed dynamic of sexuality in the stories with the striving for this ideal as, “‘The Birth-Mark,’ ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter,’ ‘The Artist of the Beautiful,’ and *The Scarlet Letter* respond, rather, to the sexual repression crucial to Emerson’s conception of ideal human relations.” (Reynolds 26) And while the constructs of these stories could be interpreted as signifying male dominance over female, the notion is ameliorated when considered as a criticism of Transcendental ideals. Reynolds also noted this as, “Hawthorne’s portrayal of sexual repression in his works, then, does not signify misogynist loathing, but rather, his critique of the perverse purity of Emerson and his followers.” (Reynolds 26)

According William Dean Howells, Emerson labeled Poe as the “jingle man” (Howell qtd in Payne 65), possibly remarking of his lack of optimism and supposed literary depth while marginalizing his acumen to forming rhyme scheme. And despite the two individuals barely commenting on each other’s works, Poe returned the favor by labeling him, “a mystic for mysticism's sake” (Smith qtd in Payne 65). However, being a passionate critic of transcendentalism, Poe did write against the ideals of the movement. Payne notes that, “Poe attacked transcendentalism directly and Emerson indirectly, but he apparently did not put into print any serious strictures either upon Emerson's personality or upon his literary and philosophic production.” (Payne 65) The story “The Masque of the Red Death” portrays a nature that is ravaged by plague and the hero tries to replicate the sense nature in his Masque Ball. As his reconstruction was meant to be superior to the decadent and mortal nature, Poe presents a contrast to the Transcendentalist concept of nature. This could be argued as his creativity being applied to critique the idealized notion of Transcendentalists. Emphasizing the influence and creativity of Poe’s literature, Lima wrote about Poe’s fictions, “As a site of reflection on the darkest side of creativity, Poe's fiction has become center of attraction for

many ethical and aesthetical concerns connected to what has been called "Gothic Creativity,"(Lima 25)

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The impact of the Dark Romantic on succeeding literary eras are profound. And it is strikingly reminiscent of the dark romantics of 19th century America, as reflected in acclaimed writers like Scott Fitzgerald. The influence on Fitzgerald is described by Derek Lee as,

“Poe provides the most direct influence among the American Romantics. Fitzgerald’s very first published story, “The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage”—a detective tale involving a double homicide—is an obvious imitation of Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” in both plot and title. Furthermore, the dream-like “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” has been interpreted as an allegorical retelling of “The Fall of the House of Usher” (Meyer qtd. in Lee 129).

Works of Poe had substantial even across the ocean, so much as to inspire the likes Baudelaire. A critic wrote about the effect and inspiration of Poe “The Raven” on “Le Cygne” by the French poet as, “Poe had produced perfected versions of the works Baudelaire had but imagined, almost before Baudelaire had even thought of them. Poe here appears as a kind of fantasy aesthetic parent or progenitor, a sort of literary elder brother able to guide Baudelaire in his particular creative path.” (Farrant 157)

Despite the influence the American Dark Romantics had on art, they were not granted the literary focus and acknowledgement in its time of composition. As the purview of this thesis is to look into aspects of Dark Romanticism and not speculate reasons as to why Transcendentalism was the center of focus in American literature, it could be concluded that Dark Romantics in the 19th century communicated their brilliance through the gothic

conventions in their literature notwithstanding the lack of attention it had. Poe's stories, like "The Masque of the Red Death", were widely popular as it stood axiomatically contrasting the Transcendental ideals, especially about nature. Similarly, Hawthorne's work critiqued the concept of ideals and Transcendentalists' obsession with the perfect, although he interacted with many transcendentalists and at a time lived adjacent to prominent figures of the movement like Emerson and Thoreau. Hawthorne wrote about Thoreau, for instance, in his journal as, "Ugly as sin" (Hawthorne 166). The critic Reynolds defined Hawthorne's perception about Transcendental beliefs of the perfect, namely chastity, as, "Emerson's belief that chastity and celibacy were needed to establish the highest forms of human relations was shared by many in his circle, but the Hawthornes strongly disagreed" (Reynolds 25) And while unpublished during her lifetime, Emily Dickinson also rejects the transcendental aspects through her Gothic conventions in poems like "Before I got my eye put out".

According to the musician Lou Reed, Edgar Allan Poe "writer more particularly attuned to our new century's heartbeat than he ever was to his." (qtd in Lima 22) With his exemplary works like "The Raven", "Ulalume", "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" Poe would always be considered as the symbol of Dark Romanticism. And writings of Hawthorne, while a bit more puritanical than Poe's, would still be considered as one of the most significant resources of Dark Romantic ideas. As for Dickinson, it has already been discussed that her influence on Modernist and Post-Modernist writing, namely her aspects of identity, are defining of an era.

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