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COMPARISON OF SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN
ENGLISH GOTHIC LITERATURE AND STORIES BY E.A.
POE

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

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Anotace

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na analýzu nadpřirozených jevů, jejich roli a význam v Anglické a Americké gotické literatuře i kultuře. Tyto nadpřirozené jevy jsou poté rozebrány ze dvou hlavních pohledů; alegorického a psychologického, s účelem určení vhodné interpretace. Analýza se zaměří především na využití prvků v díle *The Castle of Otranto* od autora Horace Walpole a ve vybraných povídkách Edgara Allana Poe, v nichž je nadpřirozeno klíčovým prvkem. Cílem práce je identifikovat shody či odlišnosti nejen ve způsobu užití nadpřirozena, ale i v konečném efektu, které tyto prvky mají.

Klíčová slova: gotická literatura, nadpřirozené jevy, vznešenost, Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Edgar Allan Poe, alegorická analýza, psychologická analýza

Annotation

The thesis focuses on the analysis of supernatural element, their role and significance in English and American gothic literature and culture. These supernatural elements are then analysed from two perspectives; allegorical and psychological, with the intent of choosing the right interpretation. The analysis mainly focuses on the use of the elements in *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole and selected stories by Edgar Allan Poe, in which the supernatural is a key element. The aim of the work is to identify similarities not only in the way of utilization, but also in the overall final effect these elements have.

Key words: gothic literature, supernatural elements, sublime, Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto, Edgar Allan Poe, allegorical analysis, psychological analysis

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Introduction

People always seemed to have a taste for fear, and even a fascination with the grotesque and macabre. It was and still is considered a form of entertainment, whether it is telling ghost stories around the fire or enjoying the horror genre of media. The theme has persisted, making its way into the world of literature and further into trends. From the early twentieth century to the present, gothic fiction has maintained its popularity. At the end of the day, what the public enjoys the most is the feeling of being scared and the adrenaline that comes with it.

The gothic genre has many motives and tropes through which it achieves its effect of making them uncomfortable, establishing the feelings of uneasiness. Physical violence, psychological fright and abuse, the general topic of death, mysterious places such as abandoned castles and graveyards at night, or strange creatures can all be used to accomplish this.

The use of the supernatural is common to the majority of these themes. The supernaturalism that appears throughout the genre is frequently used as a tool to carry out the necessary motives. To explain further, any psychological abuse can be caused by supernatural forces, such as ghosts hunting the hero or other forces making his life miserable; ancient, forgotten places always seem to be haunted by the past, not to mention the direct connection with death. The connection between supernatural elements and the gothic genre must be established first. This can be done through an examination of the "point" of the gothic genre and what it seeks to accomplish.

The supernatural by itself ,however, had a place in literature and overall culture even before the gothic genre, although its application may or may not have differed. Often being associated with religious themes, it took some time for it to find its way into the culture of fiction, where it is now used for people's entertainment. As it is a part of the culture, its use in British and American literature differs. Understanding these distinctions is important for

further analysis. Just as the culture changes in many aspects, so does the genre and the use of the supernaturalism.

By taking into consideration the differences between the British and American gothic literature, it is possible to move on to the very interpretation of these elements. There are two approaches to analysis: the first is to consider the supernatural as an allegory for another, deeper meaning, often hidden from the plain sight. In many cases, they serve as means for the author to express themselves or their opinions while using the supernatural as a disguise.

The other option is to analyse through the use of psychopathology. Whether the paranormal is a tool to frighten the protagonist and draw attention to his terror, or, on the contrary, it serves as something of a manifestation of the protagonists or other characters hidden, inner feelings.

Both of these points of views should be considered in order for the work to explore elements in greater depth. Understanding the interpretations allows the work to focus on the main, relevant motives of the gothic literature.

Two significant gothic authors from their respective countries will be chosen for the analysis.

That is the literature of Horace Walpole, who is often considered the inventor of the gothic literature itself, and Edgar Allan Poe, whose stories deal with the topic of supernatural.

The goal of the thesis is to thoroughly analyse the previously mentioned elements and compare the use of supernatural as it changes not only through culture, but also through literature.

1. Supernatural in gothic literature

1.1 Gothic genre and its connection to supernatural

To first establish the supernatural in gothic literature, it is important to define what the term gothic stands for in the first place.

As Punter and Byron state, the term “gothic” itself started to develop its meaning as a result of cultural changes around the eighteenth century. While the term originally referred to the

barbarian Germanic tribe of "goths," it has since been broadened to include anything related to the Dark Ages and medieval in general. As a result, the name came to be associated with other connotations. By this logic, if the Gothic stands for medieval, then it also stands for things that are perceived as barbaric and in opposition to the "classical"; well-organized versus chaotic, simple and pure versus ornate. While the classic had clear limits and rules, gothic was exaggerated and immoral, with no boundaries (7-8). From this, it is possible to conclude that the gothic serves as the contradiction to what is considered normal and conventional in society. It manages to break the rules of what was considered the normalcy, especially at the time of the rise of gothic literature.

Smith points out the fact, that the gothic was developed as a denial of reason and shared the "anti-Enlightenment ideas". The romantics, particularly in Britain, recognized that the inner world of emotions and imaginations plays a significant role in the human experience. The feelings connected to terror, transgressions, and fright are the central ideas of Sublime. The concept of Sublime, which was invented by Edmund Burke, is closely linked to grand emotions, which are brought on by chaos, gloominess, and incomprehension and which give rise to the fears and anxieties that the gothic genre seeks to evoke (3,11). To properly understand this idea, it is important to focus on its origin.

"Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort of terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." as Burke explains in his work (58). The strongest emotions that a human mind is capable of are the very core of the sublime. However, to evoke them, it is necessary to delve into what exactly is capable of reviving them. In order to evoke those emotions in the reader, early gothic has specific characteristics.

Hogle describes the importance of the setting in a gothic genre. The environment plays an important role. The location, whether it be castles and ruins or abandoned buildings, laboratories, or graveyards, are already intrinsically haunted by past secrets that ultimately torment the characters either physically or psychologically. Ghosts, monsters, spectres, and other beings from the afterlife that have an impact on the story are the most common types of hauntings there. In this way, gothic fiction alternates between the natural laws of reality and the potential for the supernatural, though it may or may not ultimately take a side. As a result, the genre can be divided into "horror gothic" and "terror gothic". "Terror gothic" which confronts the character with violence, physical or psychological, and gross and unusual consequences. The former focuses on anxious suspense about the character's life or sanity due to a potential hidden past. The supernatural is significant in both of these (Hogle, 2-3). His writing helps in comprehending the significance of both the physical and psychological, While the environment manages to set the mood and the character is confronted with a ludicrous threat, the worry and anxiety expressed simultaneously assists in the overall sense of distress.

As Cameron mentions, the gothic genre often infuses old romance into the contemporary realistic novel. As a result, the use of the supernatural in the eighteenth-century gothic novel conveys the immersion of psychical reality into the world of material reality. The material reality and the psychic reality that should have remained hidden now occupy the same space (13). The supernatural elements are therefore introduced to our, every-day reality, which can awaken the deeper human emotions of fright, intimidation or confusion.

What can be concluded is the fact that one of the main themes in gothic literature is terror, which goes hand in hand with the idea of sublime. The supernatural elements are often one of finest ways for gothic literature to reach its goal in evoking the before mentioned feelings in

the readers, However, as both the gothic genre and the supernatural elements are linked to cultural values, its utilization in English and American literature differs.

1.2 Use in British literature

The supernatural has always been present in some form in literature and culture, but its impact and way of being perceived was constantly changing.

Clery notes in his work that people frequently discussed the nature of the supernatural. But it wasn't in the sense of trying to find the rationale behind such occurrences; rather it was in people's interest with the subject. He manages to do so by pointing out to the ideas in Hume's essay on the nature of the irrational and the unknown (21-24).

David Hume analyses in few points the reasoning behind the fascination. First off all, there is no supernatural event nor miracle that has sensible, sufficient number of witnesses. Yet an favourable sensations such as surprise and astonishment brought on by miracles makes people tend to believe the circumstances from which it originates. While the events may not be real by the common sense, the feelings are very much real in the end. Not to mention the strong connection between religion and supernatural miracles, which encourages people to believe in such occurrences even more. But one of the key ideas is that, in spite of the numerous fabricated supernatural occurrences and prophecies, their popularity was frequently rapidly shared, regardless of how unbelievable they were. Hume compares them to news of marriage; news that advance quickly to the whole neighbourhood, especially in villages or provincial towns (Hume, 94-96). At that point, the supernatural ceases to be a source of fear or something that might frighten people and instead becomes more of a "show" for the general public, who enjoy it. One of the prime examples of such event in the British society at the time is the case of the so called Cock Lane ghost, which happened even before the rise of the gothic literature.

Clery explains the quick spread of this East London's urban story, which manages to make its way throughout the whole town. Newspapers took notice of the story and continued to publish regular reports, making it widely known. It eventually turned into something of an attraction, drawing crowds to the house where the ghost was said to reside. The authors and booksellers would quickly notice the trend and capitalize as much as they could. The ghost was to be imprisoned in the economic system and made available to the cultural production. This urban relocation of supernatural changed its core characteristics as a result and serves as an illustration of the process of aestheticizing the supernatural (Clery, 13-17).

Clery continues to explain that even if horror was frequently commercial, people still seemed to, paradoxically, find a joy in it. The tragedy genre has long been one of the most popular literary genres, thus ghost stories are most likely to be consumed by the readers. The desire for horror is often a result of the resistance of the mind to the apathy that is induced by our mundane reality, as was pointed out in Burke's theory (81).

Although the direct use of supernatural was often ridiculed, it was defended by the romantics and gothic authors as it is in contrast of the realism in narrative fiction and the classic ideas and opinions of the time, as is said by Robert D. Hume in his work. What the literature of early gothic did the best is the setting of the atmosphere, including the devices through which the atmosphere reached its desired effect on the readers. More specifically, its purpose to contribute to the reader's so called "imaginative stimulus" through which the reader can feel fear or terror. It was not through explicit gore, crude scenes or risqué language, but through the little things that all together put up a bigger image. The terror mostly depended on the dread and the suspense. The effect of external circumstances is what effected the reader the most. And although its goals and interpretations of the genre has changed since then, there is a novel which influenced the genre greatly (283-285). The literature therefore mainly relies on the external circumstances that evoke the deeper feelings in its reader. It is done not only by

the choice of words, but mainly through the setting of the works. One of the first and most important works in this genre would undoubtedly be *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole, which managed to set rules and define standards for the future of the genre through its prefaces.

The novel caused a new debate between the medieval and the modern genre. This critical debate played an important role in the way the piece was perceived by the public. However, the novel has two prefaces. While the first one focused on presenting the novel as a kind of genuine, medieval romance. On the other hand the second one is trying to define the very new genre. Walpole has claimed to blend the “two kinds of romances”, both the modern and the ancient. To explain the difference between the prefaces; while the first one is trying to convince the reader to perceive the novel as realistic, the other does the complete opposite and is suggesting to be read with the idea of fantastical themes. Some of the critics response to this claim that Walpole was trying to tell the readers to analyse the novel for its psychological and political circumstances, which were hidden under the shadows of the fright and of the unexplainable, supernatural times. Taking into the account the times of the publishment of the novel, the debate on the reassessment of the interpretation was endless. However, what can be concluded is the fact that to understand the political visions, the piece should be read historically. The second preface therefore outlines the key features and motives which will play an important role for the future of the genre (Smith, 18-20). However, the proper analysis of *The Castle of Otranto* and his other pieces is to be continued in a later chapter.

Despite the fact that the piece is frequently the topic of debate regarding its appropriate interpretation and hidden meanings, the prefaces manage to affect the genre’s future. It is regarded as one of the very first masterpieces of the gothic literature. Using supernatural events and fantastical concepts to either evoke the feelings of the sublime in the readers or to reflect the author’s thoughts on political or social situation. This analysis however differs

from one critics to another. What remains constants in all circumstances is society's love and adoration for such objects, even if they became a form of commercial production in the United Kingdom at the time.

1.3. Use in American literature

The American culture lacks in comparison to the British, which is one of its main disadvantages. In contrast, it is a much more recent culture that had less time to forms its own identity and as a result was mostly impacted by the British culture or other European civilizations. Nonetheless, traces of supernatural can still be found, primarily in religious themes such as puritanism.

Haslam et al. explain the beliefs of the Puritan heritage at the time, which often view everything through their perspective of their worldview overall. In their culture, the world was often seen as either black or white, with no grey area in between, with their land ruled by either absolute good or absolute evil. This "absolute evil" was frequently described as "demons" who ruled the landscape. However, there was clearly a racist undercurrent to their beliefs, as "evil" was frequently represented by indigenous people, who were thought to be devils with extraordinary powers. The absolute good, on the other hand, was the way they saw themselves (10-12). Although such views no longer hold up in our nowadays world, it manages to highlight the presence of the supernatural even in Colonial America. However, it is clear that they viewed it very differently than British society, as these supernatural beliefs were taken much more seriously and not for commercial purposes.

One of the most significant differences between cultures is the origin of the land. What is sometimes neglected is the reality that colonial America had a violent history, despite the fact that it was previously seen to be a pristine country and a new beginning. It is a country always plagued by its shady past and the uncertainty of its origins in the sense that other nations would define it. That is a factor that will come into play later on in the analysis. For now

however what is important to define is the very beginning of the Gothic genre in America. In a nutshell, the foundations of the genre can be traced back to its origins, authors such as Brown or Irving who attempted to define the new nation in connection to both its European background and the former inhabitants. From there, the Romantic legacy of Hawthorne and Poe, who frequently focused on both collective and individual psychology began to mould the genre all the way to the modernism (Haslam et al., 6-8).

However, to properly understand the genre in the American culture, its main motives and tendencies should be taken into consideration along with its cultural past.

Martin and Savoy discover an interesting fact in their work, that is the tendency of American culture towards genres that are frequently structured around repetitions. That is the recurrence of something that was once suppressed but keeps coming back and is later realized in the literature. The nature of the uncomfortable things, issues that arise and events that are written down is what past keeps resurfacing, along the dead that keep doing harm even in the present times. Nevertheless, there is a broad generalization as a result of British influences, which have outweighed its conceptual significance and necessitated further elaboration. The dominant culture casts onto that which is disliked and what is unable to conclude within itself, as a result, the allegory in American gothic lies in the somewhat of a shadow, neutral area, in which the discourse of repetition found its place. This allegory is then perfectly suited to the spectral figures that we often typically identify with the gothic genre. In comparison to other cultures, American history is quite empty and lacking in depth, this fact leads to something of a semantic impoverishment of allegory, that drives its gothic narrativization into the mentioned shadows. The American gothic is not present as distinct elements which are in accordance with various locations, but rather as a burden of the horrifying past, which despite variations from place to places, remains constant in the genre in America. With the constant emergence of past, there is a connection to the question of nostalgia (4-8). To explain its

relevance to the gothic literature, the repetition of uncomfortable events or thoughts from the past manage to awaken uncomfortable feelings in readers. It is often something that would rather be forgotten, yet it keeps reappearing from America's violent past.

The image of "America" has an inclination towards nostalgia, even though this tendency is frequently rejected in the genre and linked to its later cultural output. As the genre has evolved, there is a propensity for nostalgia to stir up and edge in the reader in addressing what is generally and typically regarded as the unimaginable. What serves as an example of this tendency is the frequent use of the so called "house of fiction". This idea of the haunted house only leans towards the gothics when it is plagued by the re-emergence of what's been suppressed and that which points towards spectacular figures and creatures. What is often used is the so called "prosopopoeia", often defined as the process of giving an abstract an appearance or personality. As a result of this tendency, the genre frequently involves hallucinations as it is deemed uncanny to make the invisible now visible (Martin and Savoy, 9-11).

What is clear from the analysis is the fact that the use of supernatural in the gothic genre and the very genre itself has very different use and interpretation compared to the British one. The British use of supernatural typically stems from people's fascination of it, which eventually led to it making its way into culture and the commercialism of the time. Although the gothic genre emerged in a somewhat unconventional manner, defying the values of the day and identifying itself as something entirely new, it swiftly found its way into the mainstream of the time. The terror in the genre in British culture depended mainly on the feelings of dread provoked by the surroundings and the suspense, rather than overflowing with gore and direct horror.

The supernatural and gothic genre on the other hand, take on slightly different form in the American culture. The supernatural has its way in religious practices in the past such as was

puritanism. What American lacks is its own past. Other civilizations influences, notably the British one, influenced not only the culture but also the literature. The gothic genre than frequently resurrects the ghost of the past, the things that would rather be forgotten, not only by American, but also by the British, who left their imprint on the land.

2. Interpretation of the supernatural elements

For the sake of a proper analysis, it is important to consider more point of views as to take everything into the consideration. As with any genre, there are many diverse perspectives when it comes to analysis. The interpretation of supernatural elements in gothic literature may be interpreted in two main ways, First of them, is the allegorical meaning of the elements and the possible metaphors that author may try to express by hiding their true intentions behind ghosts or the macabre. The other is to look at the psychological stance, that is the effect the elements may have not only on the reader, but also the characters in the works or perhaps the author's inner despair that is expressed through the supernatural elements.

2.1 Allegorical meaning

As mentioned before, the first would be allegorical interpretation. The very idea itself, that is the allegory, goes quite a while back in time.

As Knowlton notes, the allegory goes far back in time, as far as to the old Greek and Roman literature. It is important to consider the history of allegorical thinking itself before being able to think properly to analyse literature's allegorical meaning. Literature critics are often prone to making incorrect assumptions about the worth of allegory and whether it is appropriate to use it considering the work or the situation, One should consider the specific circumstances under which the work was written, to properly understand historical perspective. As mentioned, even the old works of Greeks and Romans often carried double meaning and metaphors that would resemble allegorical expressions (159-162). However, that double meaning often related to more of an anagogical or spiritual meaning, thus leaving out important literal or historical background. As Clement's theory goes, person often emphasizes

natural development of thinking which results in rational explanation of things. It is a universal principle that leads us to our knowledge of the world, our practical behaviour and our understanding of things divine (166).

While this way of allegorical thinking may come handy when talking about other, let's say more realistic genre, we run into a bit of a problem when talking about the gothic one. The human mind often leads into a rational explanation of the unexplainable. One of the theories that may help explain this idea is the so called "ghost theory" by Wang.

The "ghost theory" explains the supernatural in relation to the physical world. This distinction is crucial in both philosophical and political writings. They are not material or ideal in which that has its roots in materialism, which we may consider as the norm. Ghosts therefore break that which is known, which leads to readers of both romanticism and gothic literature may have had difficulties distinguishing the material world or the human experience (Wang, 204,206).

Considering all of the information so far, it is hard to tell whether allegory interpretation can be the most accurate of interpretations when it comes to gothic literature. In the end however, it all comes down to, once again, the main root of the genre, that is the sublimity. As mentioned before, one of the main goals is often to evoke powerful emotions within the reader, without explaining the mysteries in a detail. The sublime plays a very powerful role and it is important to acknowledge that in order to properly understand the genre.

There is, therefore, a specific problem when it comes to interpretation of gothic stories.

Through critical reading, that is considering the sublime as mere instrument, its noteworthiness goes unnoticed. It reduces the main aspect of the genre, thus the ghosts and the supernatural, and it fails to see how truly innovative the works were at the time. On the

other hand, the gothic writers often try to explore the darkness, evoking the feelings in the reader, which is not seen by the eye alone (Morris, 300).

Before us is therefore the question whether the allegorical interpretation is a fit for the genre or not. With all the facts in mind, we may reconsider one of the few many debates that may help with achieving the answer, as they have one important thing in common.

In his writings, Killeen explain few different views when it comes to the topic. One of the critics, Matt Hills, prefers to think purely about the pleasures the genre brings to the reader, omitting both allegorical and psychoanalytical meaning. Few other critics joined him on this opinion and they even warn the others critics not to think of gothic genre as a instrument to articulate peoples anxieties, but to rather appreciate the atmosphere of the stories. For example D. Herron adds to his theory, that by focusing on the deeper subtext, which focuses on our own outside world commenting the politics, economics or society. is a way of evading the main function of a writer of horror and thus gothic genre. That is, appealing only to intellectuals rather than to readers who simply enjoy the idea of being scared by the texts. While the academic readers can appreciate such reading, it betrays the genre itself (79-84). N. Fry helped in finding the middle ground as he came up with the new idea of “symbolic spread” which substitutes the allegory and is a better fit for the genre. This thought can help in following way; the critics do not make an excessive analysis on the internal subtext of the work, they do not obsess over the authors purpose, which should still be recognized, but should not be the main part of it (Killeen, 87,89).

What we can conclude is the following; it is possible to look at the works of gothic genre through allegorical analysis, but it should not be its main point. While one may acknowledge the double meaning or metaphors that appear behind the use of the supernatural elements, the main purpose of the work, that is to awaken a certain feelings of terror in the reader should

not be omitted. It is important to take into the account the use of sublime, which does not have allegorical interpretation as its goal. Nevertheless, it is one way to observe the genre and the events in the stories and will be used in the future analysis of the works when possible.

2.2. Psychological analysis

Another way to examine these spectacular elements in the gothic genre is through psychological analysis. As will be explained, psychology frequently plays an important role in the genre. However, it is a distinct method of analysis when it comes to literature as whole, which should be understood before delving into the specifics.

Holland and Sherman explain the world in the literature as world we should already be familiar with. The readers often try to connect the literary work with their own distinctive emotions, such as finding pleasure and happiness in the piece while avoiding their own misery. The reader has his own system of adaptations to the world and knowledge of what gives him comfort and what does not. In this sense, the reader reworks the literary text in his own way for it to become an environment which fulfils his desires and becomes a safe space for him. That is one of the reasons why specific genres attracts specific groups of people, who manage to think of the work as a way to carry out their fantasies, which becomes somewhat of a pattern. However, it is not only the readers who put manage to find themselves in the works. It is the writer who helps in creating this personal experience. Every author has the right to create their own experience, especially when it comes to the gothic experience. That can influence reader's own perspective of the work, both in positive and negative (280-282). It is then that this peculiar experience does not become for everyone and the reason for specific groups of people being drawn into the genre more than others.

Novak explains that the readers themselves are participants in the broader fantasy, which is provided by the story. Despite being a part of it, however, the reader is unable to explain the nature of the grotesque, that is, distinguishing between fictitious creatures and reality. It is

possible to claim that this sensation of confusion is the most crucial aspect of the story. The sense of fantasy that draws the reader in is difficult to escape because the reader does not want to escape this fantasy that connects the gothic and the grotesque. The gothic genre is frequently associated with the past, particularly the middle ages, with their ancient castles, unrefined morals, arts, or manners. Those times in history that we now judge to be cruel are frequently eliminated from consciousness of modern civilization, which is attempting to move on from such themes and focus on the present. This view of the past included a sense of chaos and the grotesque, implying evil. Even the landscapes that appear in the genre serve a purpose, through the connection to Burke's discussion of sublimity. And, as mentioned in previous theories, scenes of distress produce a certain sense of fascination and delight. This sense of delight, however, may also come from seeing the characters escape such scenes, as the reader sympathizes with the pain, although from a distance. This situation highlights the level of psychological knowledge that many Gothic authors exploited. The characters frequently go through experiences from which they will never recover (53-62). But the question of why exactly do the readers enjoy seeing characters go through such experiences in the first place remains.

Bantinaki explains this connection to the horror genre in the sense of readers relationship to that which they cannot understand. The very appearance of supernatural events and entities has one of the main aims to awaken the feelings of fear and disgusts as it is something that threatens them and the very reality itself. Many actually argue that fear is a relatively positive emotion, as in we enjoy being frightened, raising the question of whether or not such experiences are enjoyable. According to some studies, we can only enjoy these unpleasant emotions when we have the power to control them. When such negative emotions cross our threshold for enjoying pleasure, we can put an end to them. Readers who appreciate horror stories are in charge of their own experience. Then, it is precisely that control that offers us

the pleasure of these circumstances (383-385). This research can help in the explanation of the very fascination and its origin. Some readers are capable of enjoying such suffering as they are not part of it, they can leisurely watch from afar the terror that the characters go through. That is not however all of the cases.

Cameron points out that according to psychoanalytic theory, the act of enjoyment is also a manner of expressing a person's conflicting satisfaction in their own symptoms or in their own suffering. As gothic literature often deals with particular psychologies that re-appear in the genre, such as psychosis, hysteria or obsessional neurosis (Cameron, 15-20). We can conclude from this that, while some readers may enjoy the supernatural elements from a distance, others can closely relate to such issues.

However, there are things to look out for. There is such a thing as “comical grotesque” as Novak describes, that may be found in the genre. It imitates more psychologically distressing aspects, which, when viewed rationally, become quite absurd. These scenes undoubtedly contain components of terror, even if they are amusing in nature (59).

The psychological analysis of gothic genre is not perfect, it does however help explain many of the supernatural elements of the story. These can serve as a way for the author to express themselves and their own suffering, which can then be shared with specific groups of readers. Those readers may either relate to such topics or to find enjoyment in seeing the suffering from afar. That however changes when one speaks of “comical” absurd, which becomes a form of enjoyment only. These types of analysis vary from work to work and cannot be put in the same category. While some work may try to appeal to readers for the sake of the indulgence in the elements, other can be authors way of expressing his own misery. It is then important to make such distinctions before the very analysis.

To summarize, there is no perfect point of view when it comes to analysing Gothic literature. Both have their benefits and predispositions.

It is reasonable to acknowledge the author's feelings or opinions through his use of metaphors while simultaneously focusing on the book's other aspects. It should not be the primary focus of the study because it would undermine the sublime's stated objective. What should be noted are the emotions of pleasure that arise from the horror and serve with the goal of making the readers uncomfortable. The idea of the sublime is an important aspect of the Gothic genre; by neglecting this information, the researcher deviates from the genre.

The psychological analysis, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with sentiments of terror. It understands the varied emotions of both authors and audiences. As previously stated, the genre mostly attracts a specific type of reader, those who take pleasure in seeing the pain from afar while still relating to it. However, we should be aware of the “absurd” grotesque, which can be identified by its sheer ridiculousness.

The thesis will focus on both of these types of analysis, taking into account their advantages and disadvantages, before moving on with what is considered the most relevant and reasonable study.

3. Analysis of Horace Walpole’s work

3.1. The Castle of Otranto

Walpole can be considered as one of the first who came up with the genre, although as will be discovered later, he does not claim that idea. As the thesis will explain, he managed to set the rules for the history of the genre, purposefully or not. The prefaces that come with the novel should be addressed first and foremost. There were two editions, each having important information that may assist in the analysis.

The piece was introduced in the first preface as a book written in Naples, but discovered in a British library and translated by a fictional translator. This fictitious translator concludes that the main events are thought to take place during the dark ages of Christianity, with the story

based on true events but the names of the characters disguised by fiction. He emphasizes an important point: the beliefs and mysterious elements in the novel do not have to correspond with the author's beliefs. The author is not required to be convinced of supernatural elements, but he must present them to the readers in a credible manner. In the end, however, the work can serve as a form of entertainment, regardless of its ongoing impact on the readers. The preface continues to convey an essential point, which is that the author's primary driving force is terror. This machinery of terror prevents the novel from becoming monotonous. To keep the readers' thoughts engaged with a somewhat intense emotional roller coaster, that terror is constantly contrasted with pity. He emphasizes the significance of this device, pointing out that if the reader ignored the eerie and unfamiliar atmosphere, they would not discover anything interesting in the work. The "translator" is compelled to consider the story to have real-world roots, despite the fact that the people's identities are made up and the tool at hand is a creation (Walpole, 5-7).

This leads to an intriguing conclusion: the author is not real in this story since Walpole hides his identity behind this imaginary translator. This translator writes his theory on the time and region where the story takes place while also inserting his personal opinions, which are, of course, identical to Walpole's. The machinery of terror is highlighted, which confirms its importance in the gothic genre. It not only leads to sublime feelings, but it also intrigues the reader to continue reading. This machinery of terror would then be recognized as a gothic genre standard. Although the author does not have to believe in such supernatural occurrences, he must make them plausible for the readers in order for the work to be entertaining. These are the main takeaways from the first preface, including the machinery and the narrative time and space. Walpole does, however, include a second preface to the second edition clarifies the circumstances further.

In his second preface, Walpole addresses the public, mainly their reaction to the first edition. He apologizes for the fictional translator's persona and admits authorship of the book, while explaining the context in which it was written. He defines his attempt to blend the two types of romance mentioned previously, and emphasizes the importance of nature. Nature, which was frequently replaced by imagination and improbability in the old romance, reclaims its place in the modern romance. Walpole justifies his inclusion of ordinary people in extraordinary positions and observes their reactions, demonstrating that despite such circumstances, they never lose sight of their human nature. He draws an important distinction between the simple life of the servants, which is frequently used as comedic relief, and the tragic life of the princes. He does, however, admit to following Shakespeare's model, whom he regards as a master of nature. The author does not argue to create a new type of romance, but rather to be proud of sticking to an already established pattern. (9-14).

The second preface aids in explaining Walpole's purpose for writing the book as he explains his ideas. The combination of the two types of romances assists in the proper inclusion of nature, which is regarded as an important factor not only in this piece in particular, but also in the concept of the sublime in general. By placing ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, the readers are able to observe their reactions, which are in the end very humane. It allows the reader to identify with the characters while also enjoying their reactions to supernatural events. They even have the option of relating to the simple servants or the tragedy of the nobles, which provides a useful contrast for stronger emotions. An important fact is that Walpole follows in the footsteps of Shakespeare. He does not claim to have created a new type of romance, but rather to be following a pattern that he regards as a masterpiece. This connection to Shakespeare may improve comprehension of the novel. It is also necessary to consider the times in which the novel was published. Walpole manages to defy the general ideas during the age of reason, when the rational had a place in culture.

3.2. The Anti-Enlightenment ideas in The Castle of Otranto

The enlightenment was considered a cultural norm at the time the novel was published.

According to Sandre, the central idea was rationality, as scientific ideas were prioritized. It was then that the mysteries, including religious ones, gave way to rational wonder. Rather than focusing on the mysteries of life, religion, or the supernatural, society placed more faith in scientists like Newton, whose theories explained the natural order of things. According to this logic, everything has a purpose, law, and order in its creation. This was the beginning of the so-called scientific thought revolution. More intellectuals followed suit, including John Locke, who laid the theoretical foundation for notions about politics, religion, and aesthetics. This led to many authors of the time to focus on describing the observable environment rather than illustrating subjective descriptions of the inner workings of the human psyche. Many other philosophers accepted his rationalist ideals, which had an impact on the wider culture of the day. The concept changed to concentrate on teaching discipline while considering both reason and conventional values into account (Sandre, 273-275).

Burke's concept of the sublime defied established social standards and provided a new idea that was frequently questioned before being adopted into society. As he focused more on his inner emotions and, in particular, nature, rational thought fell to the sidelines. What is equally important to note is that he also praised older writing on the subject, such as the previously mentioned Shakespeare. Older literature, on the other hand, opposed what was thought essential during the Age of Enlightenment because it was inconsistent with the rational thinking. As previously stated, Walpole was inspired by Shakespeare, notably his practice of adding nature and creating deeper sensations in the minds of his audience. As a result, *The Castle of Otranto* follows both this pattern and the concept of the sublime, and therefore the novel contains numerous anti-enlightenment notions. However, as will be discussed, the piece bears striking similarities to *Hamlet*. The goal of producing sensations of terror in readers,

both psychological and of breaking physical dimensions, is unique in both the Castle of Otranto and Hamlet.

Hamm discovers an intriguing connection between the two pieces, namely in their intent, which is quite significant. Thus, it makes sense for Walpole to base his views on an older work that achieves its purpose. Uncomfortable emotions and the representation of terror are driving elements in each of these stories, since they successfully project emotions onto the audience. The encounter with the ghost in Hamlet serves as a motivation for Walpole as a template for terror, one that would remind the reader of theatrical practice. These ghost encounter episodes frequently resemble those on the theatrical stage; it suggests a mindful effort to bring the terror of the stage (whether in theatre or in the narrative space of the book) and thus onto the readers (668-674).

It then makes sense to link these two pieces in their ultimate goal and the purpose of using the terror machinery. However, it also serves as an example of Walpole going against the thinking of the time by drawing inspiration from an older piece that fails to adhere to any rules of rational thought. The main example however is Walpole's frequent use of the supernatural in the novel. He focuses on this "principle engine" of terror, and as a result, the supernatural is introduced as a common theme in the piece, alongside religious beliefs, prophecies, and premonition dreams filled with visions. In a way, they are treated as a common occurrence, These supernatural elements are rarely explained, and while some of the novel's characters may remain sceptical, there is no proper rational explanation for what occurs. This could explain his desire to conceal his identity in the first edition of the novel, as it contradicted popular beliefs.

Lake supports this idea by pointing out the setting in which the story takes place. The novel's medieval setting and Otranto's supernatural schemes would become standard element in the

gothic genre. The novel's historicity has actually been regarded by critics as its most significant formal aspect on multiple occasions. The plot devices and sentimental effects are made possible by Walpole's decision to set Otranto in the eerie medieval past, which seems to distance both readers and characters from the demands of realist fiction and the rationalist ideologies of the Enlightenment. The majority of analyses of the book emphasize its portrayal of an old, haunted castle full of underground passageways and trapdoors. These antiquarian techniques which appear in the novel can be understood as an attempt to keep the historical-material part in the culture (489-491).

The fact that the novel went against the enlightenment of the time, as well as the information that can be drawn from it, is critical for the continuation of the study. It establishes the novel's purpose and will be useful in both allegorical and psychological analysis.

3.3. Allegorical analysis of The Castle of Otranto

As established before, allegorical analysis becomes quite tricky when analysing the gothic genre. While it is possible to recognize authors intentions, it is important not to dwell onto the metaphors, However, as the authors goals were stated in the beginning, allegorical analysis does not work quite well. There is still a possibility of such analysis though, when acknowledging the societal situation which goes hand in and with the anti-enlightenment ideas in the novel.

Andriopoulos introduces the idea of the “invisible hand” which controls the story and determines what happens next, supervises the acts in the story's progression. According to Smith, the paranormal occurrences stand for the economic melding of societal and individual interests. In other words, Manfred and the other characters have their own objectives and convictions, but the political economy which is presented as the supernatural, intervenes and manages to change the course of events. He succeeds in applying this concept to the comparison of the book's events. For example the event in the opening image of the enormous

helmet that crushes Conrad to death or the superstitions about the castle itself. Superstitions are a type of popular terror since they are by their very nature very popular beliefs. The author draws a comparison between this general concern and the subsequent rise of prices at that period, particularly the price of grains. Both of these serve as way of invoking general fear, or better said, panic. When discussing politics, the idea of an invisible and silent force influencing the characters might take on an additional meaning. That is, that this invisible hand and other supernatural elements serve as a metaphor not only for the politics, but also the society. This idea in itself may even bring out the fact that humans are actually fearful of independence and they desire to be followed by this leading “invisible hand”. The perfect example of this interference of supernatural is during Manfred’s confrontation of Isabella. Isabella is saved by the spectre of a moving portrait of Manfred’s grandfather. While he is shocked by the sight, she manages to escape him. In this case, it can be said that the invisible, supernatural hand managed to get in the way of his personal plans. That once again leads to the theory of the supernatural being used as a larger metaphor for the society, which ruins subjective intention. (740-751)

While it is a theory with a primary focus on politics, it does not work particularly well in the context of this novel. As previously stated, the main theme is terror, which is tied to the concept of sublime. The sublime is difficult to achieve through metaphor, because anxiety of rising costs cannot be compared to, say, fear of death or the macabre, which evokes stronger emotions. It does however manages to make a good point of fearing the politics at the time and being limited by the society and economic situation. What should be noted however, is something Walpole said himself in his first preface, that is, that the piece of writing might be made use of simply as a kind of entertainment. The emphasis should then shift elsewhere.

While using allegorical analysis in a work of this kind is not entirely wrong, it takes away from the supernatural elements' primary role in keeping the audience entertained. As

previously proved, the public enjoys reading about mystical encounters without delving into their deeper meaning. Because the gothic genre is based on the concept of the sublime, this form of study dismisses the core premise, which is unfortunate.

3.4. Psychological analysis of The Castle of Otranto

As mentioned before, the very introduction of the supernatural into the narrative space breaks our sense of reality, which can compel the readers to awaken the feelings of sublime, as it introduces a new sort of uncomfortable feeling which is unusual for our ordinary life. Walpole casually introduces the supernatural and the mysterious elements into the story multiple times, without offering a rational explanation.

Novak points out an important fact, that the inclusion of supernatural into what would otherwise be seemingly normal circumstances manages to distort our reality. By distorting the reality of the readers, the author has the power to influence their emotions, resulting in the provoking the feelings of sublime (67).

In the first preface, the fictional translator sets the narrative into the ages of dark Christianity, which contributes to multiple mysterious and religious topics throughout the novel. It could be said that the paranormal and the supernatural are part of the normalcy in the novel. That however breaks our sense of ordinariness and that leads to the desired effect on the reader.

Except for the supernatural events in the beginning, which will be discussed later, the characters are often fearful of the unknown and do believe in ghosts.

For example, Isabella is worried about seeing the ghost of dead Conrad while running away through the dark hallways.(Walpole, 28) Or Frederics prophecy in his dreams, telling him to find his daughter, reality of which is not questioned. (75) There is also the encounter of the two servants, Jaquez and Diego with the ghost in the gallery, seeing a giant leg in an armour. They do not doubt its existence and believe it fully, not even stopping to think whether the encounter was real or not, going as far as to say: “(...) and have the castle exorcised, for, for

certain, it is enchanted (...)”. Manfred however, does not believe the servants fully (Walpole, 30-33).

He is one of the characters who question the rationality behind such events, as could have been seen in the beginning with the first supernatural event. Even then thought, his rationality often falls apart.

Reader can observe Manfreds reactions to the events throughout the novel. In chapter one, after the gruesome death of Conrad, he stays standing in the court, speechless and not able to look away from the mangled corpse of his son, even examining the helmet which caused the death. Compared to other characters, such as his wife Hippolita, who has to be taken away to her room upon the sight, he stays inspecting the ominous sight. He is also one of the characters who try to find a rational explanation behind this death, as he is more concerned with to getting of the rumours which would spread quickly. Manfred blames Theodore (whose true identity is still unknown at the time) for the murder of the prince. Yet the rationality is quickly questioned, as he pronounces Theodore a “necromancer” and does not realize the impossibility of him being the murder due to the sheer size of the helmet. (Walpole, 17-19)

Manfred tries to remain rational from the start, but the strange calm with which he tackles the issue, combined with his future acts, make him what may be considered the novel's villain.

Although his behaviour changes throughout the story, readers can get a fair sense of his personality from the start. It's one of the ways they can pay attention to his emotions.

Cameron explains that according to psychoanalytic theory, enjoyment is a way for a subject to communicate the paradoxical happiness that comes from experiencing their symptom, or the satisfaction that comes from going through their own pain. By that logic, Manfred can be successfully read as a perverse figure of pure drive because, according to psychoanalytic theory, the perverse subject is the one whose drive is most obviously displayed, and because

in the novel, Manfred's authority is constantly challenged by the overwhelming feeling of supernatural events (18-20).

His sentiments, however, are not the only ones described throughout the book. Characters are often faced with the feelings of mourning and grief. From the start, both Hippolita and Matilda are faced with remorse. The topic of grief and death are prominent throughout the book. Matilda is described as recovering from the shock after such an event, wiping away her tears and trying to assure her mother, who is filled with anxiety (Walpole, 22). It is only later when Manfred is faced with grief as well after accidentally stabbing his daughter in the church, as he is stopped by other monks from “laying violent hands on himself” (99-100).

These typical feelings can become highly accessible to the readers; not only can they contribute the development of deeper emotions, but they also allow the readers to immerse themselves in this fantasy. As previously said, it is generally people's fascination with such themes that draws them to the genre. They could passively observe this pain from afar, taking delight in these unpleasant feelings.

Walpole however does not only master the description of inner feelings of the characters, but also the nature itself, as he mentioned its importance in the previous prefaces. He manages to follow the Shakespeare's pattern while describing the surroundings, which becomes a prominent factor to the genre.

Walpole excels in this description while describing the forest through which Theodore tries to escape in the third chapter: “Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind. In this mood he roved insensibly to the caves which had formerly served as a retreat to hermits, and were now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits (...) He thought the place more likely to be infested by

robbers (...)” (68-70) This points out not only on the belief of ghosts in the society, but also including more rational fear, that is of the thieves, who serve as a more prominent danger.

The author continues on with the description of the castle itself. “The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions (...) grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror (...)” (Walpole, 26-27)

By describing the eerie atmosphere by such choice of words, Walpole manages to reach his goal of the work; that is, to awaken the deeper feelings in the readers. It helps them to emerge themselves into the story, as if they were experiencing themselves. The author helps with the simultaneous description of character’s inner feelings upon being in such a place. It manages to create an image of mysterious castle, filled with dark labyrinths which lead to caverns. The ominous silence of the place which creates a stirring feelings of anxiety and suspense, as it points out to the place being abandoned and where anything could appear out of nowhere.

Morris explains this feelings as the fear of something unknown. In this case, the terror does not stem from something that already exists in the space, but from the imagination that scares the readers and the characters in the novel more than any appearance of ghost could. This fear is rooted in both human psychology and physiology, as it responds to the false alarm and considers the circumstances as a threat for personal safety, including the physical one (310).

The servants, as described in the preface however, serve as a more of a comedic relief. Bianca is often described as a hysterical woman, believing in the supernatural and being frightened by it. She is also called delirious by Manfred himself (Walpole, 96-97). Or scolded by Matilda for always believing in the mysterious and comparing everything to magic (43). It serves as a contrast in comparison to the more noble characters, such as Manfred, Isabella or Matilda. By

changing in between the macabre and the absurd behaviour of the servants, Walpole manages not only to keep the reader's attention, but also to realize the tragedy of the more serious events.

What can be concluded from the inclusion of supernatural elements in *The Castle of Otranto*, which serves as a representative piece of English gothic literature, is that the goal remains true to Burke's concept of the sublime. It accomplishes this by the use of particular English words to explain nature, in this case based on Shakespeare's already existing pattern. Not only that, but it manages to defy the concepts of the time, particularly the Enlightenment, by focusing on the depressing medieval past rather than rational thinking and scientific discoveries. Given these facts, aspects of the supernatural should not be included in the scheme of allegorical analysis, as they contradict the author's intent. Psychological analysis, on the other hand, assists us in comprehending how the author manages to evoke sublime sensations in the reader. It allows people to immerse themselves in the story, maintain their interest, and, most importantly, feel the sense of dread. Whether it is created by the characters' psyches, the existence of the supernatural, the graphic depictions of the world around them, or all of the above. In the end though, Walpole does not mind his novel being a form of entertainment, as he mentions in the preface. As was talked about, the topic of ghosts and the mysterious beings was already very popular with the British culture at the time, despite the age of Enlightenment. Reader's enjoyment thus becomes the focus.

4. Analysis of E. A. Poe's stories

American gothic managed to find its way later into the culture, compared to the British one, due to its later cultural development as mentioned before. Nevertheless, Edgar Allan Poe and his stories can be used as a representative of the American gothic, as he remains not only unique with his use of the supernatural elements, but also a relevant figure in the genre to this day.

Quinn points out that, by the time the British gothic genre is set, the genre just starts taking its form in America. And although the 19th century prefers to focus on the science and its commercial standards, this type of literature which deals with the unknown and cannot be proved or understood starts developing. Poe's short stories are filled with the supernatural, although not as often as his poetry. The main goal of all of these appearances is of course, terror, just like in the British gothic genre. By comparison to a longer work, such as romance or novel, short stories are more suitable to achieve its impact of horror, as it is based on shock and dread. When used for a longer work, this feelings of fear should increase in intensity for them to become more appealing and as a result, some of them get too shocking to have the true impact as they degenerate due to excessive unpredictability. (114-120) That is, however by no means a critique to longer gothic works. It does point out though that shorter works manage to deliver the shock more efficiently. The goal of the genre remains relatively the same in both English and American literature, the way they reach the said goal however differs from one another. Nature, as is usual in the said genre, plays an important role in achieving the feelings of terror in readers.

Billy and Crow set an interesting example; in contrast to transcendentalists view on the nature, Poe dramatizes the natural world in itself, describing it as estranged and hopeless. His view of nature is one of the main things, which make his work unique. His landscapes inspire a sense of eerie solitude, existence of the spiritual and explainable, while being haunted by the past, no matter if that past is that of the characters, narrators or of the narrative place and time. The nature is often portrayed as the cause of alienation. Based on this, it could be said that the value of the nature in his work is best understood by focusing on its absence. While he does manage to provide their description, the focus is ultimately on the inner workings of human psyche, that is, their reactions to the physical environment (152).

While the ominous description of abandoned old houses, desolate forests and eerie weather stays the same, the focus is not as much of a setting the atmosphere for the readers, but to examine the narrators reactions to such environment. Based on that, it could be concluded that the author focuses way more onto characters psyche than any other thing in the narrative. However, the question of the machinery, which he uses, remains.

Quinn continues on with his explanation, that the author manages to understand that the power of the writer of appeal benefits from believing in the possibility of the components that go into making a sensation. In this case, the sensation of terror which overcomes the reader. Although the readers often dream of something that is impossible, that impossibility is never in the supernatural elements themselves. It is the combination of both; author's ability of making these components believable and their own thinking. It is possible that the truth of the ingredients that make up dreams assures that people believe in them while they are happening, and it is this type of mental belief that the writer of supernatural fiction hopes to instil in his audience. (126)

For the readers to enjoy the story, it is important to pay attention to both the elements in the story, while also considering their own fantasies and thoughts. One of the ways through which Poe expresses these ideas of impossibility is mainly focused on the inner feelings of the characters, more presumable the narrators, whose thoughts can be observed throughout the stories.

Gargano focuses on the narrators of the stories. Poe's narrators are one of the prime parts of his writing, although the question of whether his thoughts are the same as theirs still stays. Nevertheless, it could be said that they have personalities and consciousness of their own. Poe often creates his stories in a way that the narrator does not realize their own issues and mental states. The goal of his style is not to completely immerse his readers in unusual or outlandish

emotions, but to view emotions and individuals consumed by them from a deep and intellectual perspective. Poe wants his readers to keep their analytical and judging skills sharp. The author is aware that his narrators are the victims of his “self-torturing” obsession, which is something the narrator could never suspect, as the conditions of the story are carefully constructed. Poe manipulates the action such that the murder appears to aggravate the narrator's misery and intensify his illusion rather than ease it. (177-179)

Billy and Crow indicate the fact that characters tend to fixate on their lowest depths of mind. The characters tend to have a huge difficulty in distinguishing between the reality and the fantasy, as they give in to their delusions. These delusions prevent them from developing their true authentic self. When these characters are faced with the challenges of real life, they often exhibit psychological instability. As they do not bother to learn about their own psyche, these individuals often go insane or experience symbolic or actual destruction (Billy, Crow, 159). This helps to understand the true goal of the American gothic genre when talking about E.A. Poe. The authors has its way of writing about the human psyche, not only helping the readers to involve themselves into the fantasy of the story, but also for them to be able to analyse and to comprehend the situation.

Shulman talks about the psychological analysis of Poe, which sees Poe's work as an unconscious mirror of the author's difficulties; in his best stories, Poe seems to be genuinely mindful of his creative abilities and unconscious processes. In psychological critique, Poe is usually presented as a rather scruffy victim of desires he was unable to fully comprehend. His writings of the landscapes could be seen as a metaphors for his concept of mind and the universe at large. He has an outstanding insight into irrationality and madness, while also considering mind's irrational barriers. Even when intentionally employing the formal model and mechanism for the invocation of the terror, he does not confine himself to that theory, but instead offers his personal theory, which has an unsettling, yet general relevance (245-247).

The psychological state or the thoughts of the narrators and the characters in the stories can then align with those of the author. Poe often uses the nature as a metaphor for his own mental state or those of the narrator's, through which he manages to delve into the human psyche.

What can be concluded from the research on his writing is quite important for the future analysis. On one hand, Poe uses his description of the nature and the surroundings as an allegory for psychological state, which could then lead towards allegorical psychology. On the other hand, some of the stories could be clearly allegorical or psychological, depending on their use of supernatural. The author manages to succeed in both of these types, thanks to his technique, but also due to the shortness of the stories. It is thus difficult to simply choose one, correct analysis. All of the above must be considered before diving into the work, as they must be properly understood beforehand. However, as said about the gothic in the American culture, past and repetition often plays a role during the writing. Each of the work hints onto the past in their own way, no matter if it is a past of the narrator, the country, or other historical event. The following works will be analysed in all three ways, with the explanation for the choose of the type of analysis.

4.1. The Masque of Red Death

The Masque of Red Death can be considered as a unique story thanks to the author's use of allegory and metaphors.

As Shulman describes, the story helps us understand tendency for deception when dealing with some of the philosophical topics. His creativity of bringing out what is normally hidden in the depths of mind or the forces of the universe is what makes him an extraordinary author. Thanks to his approach, he manages to bring out the repressed feelings, thoughts and the horrors (249).

From the beginning of the story, we are introduced with the character of Prospero, a prince who can be pictured as carefree and irresponsible, as he does not pay attention to the "red

death” which runs amok in his country. Poe grotesquely describes the disease, which is accompanied by dizziness, sharp pains, bleeding and the red stains which cover the victims. Prospero however, does not choose to acknowledge the disease as a serious problem and stays locked in his castle, before inviting his friends, presumably other nobles, to his palace (Poe, 269). From the introduction, the reader is able to familiarize themselves with the character of Prospero as a detached individual. In a sense, he is detached from reality and chooses to lock himself in, along with few more people. This description helps with imagining the narrative space, the portrait of a fictional country, which is on the brink of ruin. However, a reader can also consider the fact that Prospero may as well be of a cowardice personality, as he afraid of the disease which would ultimately lead to his death. Death continues to remain a prominent theme in the story.

As Bell points out, Prospero may as well be driven by a deep fear of dying regardless of the disease and thus decides to self-centredly to isolate himself to a place of safety. Going with that theory, the “red death” could be a metaphor for a death itself. This idea can be supported by Poe’s description of the palace. The author spends a lot of time and describes the seven rooms of the castle in details. Considering such effort, the rooms themselves should be considered when talking about the analysis (101-103). All of the said rooms are separated by their colours, however the one that stands out the most would be the final, seventh room, which is emphasized.

Poe describes the final room as a dark room in the colour of black, with a gigantic clock of ebony in it. The clock has a pendulum, which swings back and forth when announcing the time, producing loud and eerie sound. Whenever the clock rang, all of the orchestra paused momentarily, along with the guests around them (Poe, 270). As Bell continuous to explain, all of the rooms could be a representation of the prince’s life, with the final one representing

death, as the black colour surrounds the room. Not to mention the enormous ebony clock, which can be considered as a clock that counts down the remaining time Prospero has (104).

When the spectral image of a guest with a mask, which resembles a corpse, appears, Prospero feels multiple things, that being fear along with distaste ending in rage. He screams at the supernatural being in rage, accusing it of mockery of the red death and wanting “it” hanged. The spectre manages to slowly drift through the crowd of people towards him. Prospero is enraged not only at the mysterious visitor, but also at himself as he chases the spectre through multiple of the rooms. (Poe, 272) This supports the idea of the spectre being a personification of death, which came regardless of whether Prospero is locked in his castle or not. The prince’s emotions go through a roller coaster, feeling terror along with rage, plausibly because his plan of hiding did not work out. He thinks of chasing the spectre away and killing it himself, which can be considered quite ironic. By running through the multiple rooms, which in this case represent his phases of life, it resembles the thoughts of dying people as they go through their last memories.

The supernatural figure comes for prince Prospero in the final, seventh room. It is described as a tall figure, motionless, hiding in the shadows of the ebony clock. Its corpse-like mask frightening the guests around it. When trying to attack the figure, it is found out that there is nothing beneath the cloak. All of the present in the crowd dies, as the dark clock goes out when the last person is deceased. As the story ends with a quote: “ And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.” (Poe, 273).

The allegory analysis remains the best choice for this story. Poe manages to “personify” the death itself, hidden underneath the name of the disease, as a spectrum covered in dark cloak which manages to find its way everywhere, as there is no escape from the death. Prospero tries to futilely avoid dying, as the Red Death manages to dominate over all of the present

living beings. The clock symbolizing the time the prince has left, staying the ominous last room, which manages to unnerve even the guests around him. However, the author in this case does not dwell into the narrators psyche and inner feelings as much, as compared to the other stories. In the case of this story, it is proven that the main focus was on the use of symbolism and the metaphors. It also points out to the melancholy of the past, in this case, the direct nudge to the “black death” or the plague, from which Poe clearly took some of the inspiration.

4.2. The Black Cat

On the other hand, when talking about The Black Cat, the psychological analysis makes much more sense. As established before, many of Poe’s stories deal with the explanation of inner workings of the characters. In this case, the focus on the narrators psychological state is greater than ever. Nonetheless, the narrator yet again focuses on the past, in this case, the past of his actions and the way he led his life. However, the reader must consider the character in a different light and not to think of think of him as a regular human being, because as will be proved, the character is suffering from mental instability, which is many times described in details.

Research by Hester and Segir suggests that Poe managed to create a character which fits into the scientific definition of psychopathy, although the author himself is not a medical expert. the question arises, whether he played with the idea before manifesting it into the narrator. By their theory, psychopaths, in comparison to other mental illnesses, are often aware of what they are doing and remain rational, yet there are many irrational events in the story. However, Poe manages to portray the overall characteristics of a social deviant, as the narrator often feels manipulative in their own description of the events. Considering that, the narrator can hardly be fully trusted. He often tries to make himself the victim, thus the narration is full of misdirection of the actions. By creating this narrator, perhaps Poe wanted to show the inner

workings of an individual who has no empathy nor any conscience, and although the narrator can differentiate between what is morally right or wrong, he manages to describe the events in his own way. Throughout the narrative, the narrator skilfully conveys and captures the reader's interest with gruesome details of torture and murder (176-189). This theory helps to realize the fact that the narrator is no ordinary human being and becomes unrelatable for the readers, as it is not the main point. In this instance, the readers are to observe the character carefully.

As said before, Poe likes to create a narrator that is often not aware of their own insanity and they are the victims of the authors obsession of making them suffer and go through awful experiences. With that idea in mind, one could also reconsider the story as the authors unconscious minor of his own difficulties. However, the narrator must be understood first, including the way in which he fits into the definition of clinical psychopathy and insanity.

From the very beginning, the narrator starts his story with the following: “For the most wild yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not — and very surely do I not dream.” With his later on description of him being a docile and tender child, who had a special kind of fondness for the animals (Poe, 223). Taking into consideration the theory before, the narrator tries to manipulate the reader into believing of his mental stability and to actually consider him as a kind and gentle soul before “something” forced him to act upon the violent events later in the story.

When it comes to the black cat, Pluto, the narrators wife did not appreciate its presence, as she believes in the superstitions that come with the existence of black cats, more specifically, them being a witch in disguise. The narrator shakes it off as a small detail which he includes in his story (Poe, 223-224). However, the reader can tell that that what seems to be a small

detail, manages to play a role for the future. With the existence of the superstition, the narrator perhaps tries to shift the blame on either the superstition or his wife's beliefs, which he sees as ridiculous. The narrator is unable to hold himself accountable for his actions throughout the story, blaming it on the alcohol or on other otherworldly circumstances.

Poe manages to gruesomely describe the violent actions, whether it's the first incident of the narrator cutting the cat's eye from the socket by a penknife or later on hanging it from the tree. During these events, the narrator manages to have some form of self-reflection, as is described; "(...) hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart (...)—hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin (...)" (Poe, 224-225). The narrator is not an emotionless machine, he manages to feel remorse for his actions throughout, but yet, he does not try to stop these violent tendencies nor to take accountability for his actions. He does explain as being possessed by the spirit of "perverseness".

The explanation of the future supernatural events then become rather clear. The narrator does not experience any hallucinations, but it could be said that he experiences delusions he makes himself to relieve the guilt he feels for his actions.

Whether it is the plastering on the last standing wall in the shadow of a hanged cat after the fire of his house or the appearance of new cat, which bares marks Pluto had after his injuries, the narrator points out to the fact that other people are aware of such things. In both cases, he describes either a group of people which crowded around the strange or his wife who notices the strange marks on the new, black cat, who agree with him (Poe, 225-227). However, as the narrator is not to be trusted, it could be his excuse of trying to prove to the audience that he is an innocent man. Nevertheless, it could be theorized that the narrator manages to achieve at least some sort of self-awareness.

As Poe continues to tell the story through the eyes of the narrator, the murder of both his wife and the new cat is caused by the “evil thoughts” which fall upon him. The tale ends with the narrator hiding the body of his wife into the wall, and the body being found by a group of police officers when they hear meowing from the inside of the wall, discovering the cat on the corpse (228-230).

It can be said that the narrator was aware of what he was doing and managed to have some sort of self-enlightenment. Although he describes the burial of the living cat with the corpse of his wife as an accident, it could have been an unconscious action. As if he was realizing he has become a dangerous individual, which has to be stopped and to be taken accountable for his actions.

With the narrators instability in mind, it is hard to say whether the supernatural events, which happen throughout the book, are real or not. If the narrator fits into the medical diagnosis of a social deviant, there is no doubt he could be lying about the events as to make himself not only look better for the readers, but also to make himself feel better about his actions.

Regardless, Poe’s description of the narrator’s mind suffice in keeping the reader’s attention and perhaps manages to create a feeling of terror from the gruesome description and from the very idea of socially unstable individual itself.

4.3. The Fall of the House of Usher

In this case, the use of allegorical psychology analysis fits the story the best. As the Poe manages to describes the nature in his own, unique way, along with the way of analysing the characters mental state. The story takes more inspiration from the English gothic literature with the appearance of the old, haunted, family house and the eerie atmosphere of nature devoid of life and the characters dwelling on their past; more specifically, the trauma.

Trauma manages to find its way into literature and cultural theories as an exclusive phenomena. Nadal manages to connect the trauma to the gothic genre in many ways; they are

both focused on violence, terror with the emphasis on the inner workings of the human mind. The description of the ruins and the environment, which was once full of life indicates a past that cannot be brought back nor comprehended. These traumatic events are often connected to another place and time. In this sense, it has the ability to linger in the back of the mind as something of a ghost of what was once present. What is important to note is that the plot is not specific for any period of time nor place (Nadal, 179-185). Despite the narrative space not being specified, Poe manages to use his creative skills in the description of the environment, which can also be understood as the allegory,

As the narrator find his way towards the house, he takes notice of the nature around him. The day is described as a usual autumn day, dark and dull with the clouds hanging low in the sky. The observation is of an old house with the bleak walls, in a desolate state, with the decayed trees. The narrator himself describes it as: “ (...) an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation (...) ”. The house itself, or more precisely the family mansion, is surrounded by plain, grey walls and oppressive odour of flowers. The narrator spends his time with Roderick Usher, trying to keep him company throughout his disease, yet he himself succumbs to the unwelcoming atmosphere of the mansion and bears a memory of the many solemn hours spent there (Poe, 231, 236). From the start of the story, the narrator is overwhelmed with the feelings of melancholy, including inside and outside of the house. The nature and the condition of the house can be understood to be a metaphor for the physical and mental well-being of Roderick Usher, who suffers from a disease himself.

Poe describes the disease is of acute bodily illness, the mental disorder as his senses are heightened. He is not the only suffering though, as his sister lady Madeline deteriorates because of an unknown disease, causing her apathy and as is names “gradual wasting away”. As the story progresses, Madeline dies and Roderick, along with the narrator, bury her into the temporary entombment in the house (236,240). Madeline’s illness could be understood as

a sign of a familial trauma. To explain, they are last of the living of the Usher legacy, both of them suffering from an unnamed disease, which has no cure. It prompts the reader to think of the possibility, whether the family itself is not cursed at its root.

Roderick continues to wither away, while the narrator tries to help him through his grief. However the narrator himself is affected by the bleak atmosphere, including the “gloomy furniture”. His mental state is receding along with that of Rodericks, as he is overcome with unexplainable feelings of dread (Poe, 240-241). The author excels in the description of both of the characters mental states, both of them rotting along with the old house. However, the feelings of the dread heighten and reach its peak during the night of Madeline’s rise from the death.

Poe illustrates the night as the ominous storm with fog surrounds the mansion. Despite the narrators reassurance and try for rational explanation, Roderick is growing more and more anxious, as his voice changes and he stares towards the empty hallway, as if expecting something. Eventually, the doors burst open with Madeline, in her bloody dress, approaching Roderick, who also dies upon the impact (243-245). Roderick’s decline towards insanity is clear, as he is faces with something which he cannot comprehend. The narrator, despite his tries, is unable to calm him down, no matter the rational explanation. The story ends yet once again with death, as is noticeable in Poe’s stories.

Nadal points out the fact that in this story, Usher may try to break away from the pattern of repetition and to overcome the melancholia, which comes from the ruins of the past. He is, however, not successful. It does however helps to explain Madeline’s later rise from the tomb, as a reappearance of the traumatic past, which would rather be forgotten. It can be considered a personification of the dramatic intensity of the trauma, although they do not explain its core (189).

Poe successfully combines both the allegory and the psychology in this story. The house itself brings out a gloomy mood not only onto the readers, but also onto the narrator himself. The withering of Roderick is clear throughout the story, as he tries to get through his illness fruitlessly, while going delirious after his sister's death. His decaying is pretty much represented by the house and the nature around him. As the autumn comes, the atmosphere becomes much more eerie. This idea follows the standards, which were set with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*. Madeline, in this case, can serve as another personification, this time of the familial trauma, which has its roots way back into the past.

Poe's stories are clearly filled with both psychological and allegorical elements, at times combining both of them. To be more specific, his use of nature manages to be a metaphor for the psychological state of both the author and the narrator. On the other hand, the allegory helps with the author's exploration of his inner universe and his philosophical thoughts. Yet, the focus on the inner psyche of human mind persists in all three of them. The author manages to combine the past into the stories, both historical and personal, although fictional. However, there remains a question of the sublime. While he manages to evoke those sublime feelings in the readers, it is not the main goal as compared to the English gothic literature. It could be said that the main goal is to simply observe the human mind, either his or the characters.

5. Conclusion

British and American gothic literature have their similarities and differences. To start with the similarities, the goal remains identical. To use the machinery of terror and to provoke thoughts and emotions in the readers. The way of achieving this purpose differs in details, but the combination of the eerie atmosphere and the observation of the human mind stays. Nevertheless, once it comes to the cultural background and the type of analysis, these ideas depart.

British gothic genre has its past, thanks to its rich culture. By going against the beliefs of the time and following Burke's theory of the sublime, it manages to stand out in the area of enlightenment. The very idea of supernatural was quite popular in the society, going as far as to include these elements into commercialism at the time. Hume supports this idea and points out, that people were often entertained by the miraculous. Walpole realizes such fact and uses the supernatural as not only a way to captivate people and to keep their attention, but also to put the characters through distressing situations to watch their reactions. The story's setting becomes clearer; by writing the first preface, the author uses the fictional translator's "persona" to give his thoughts about the time and place of the narration. As Walpole continues to follow Shakespeare's pattern of nature, while taking into account the theory of the sublime, the allegory analysis does not work, as it fails to see his goals. On the other hand, by presenting the normalcy of the supernatural elements into the story, the author manages to distress the readers. This normalcy is realized by the setting of the time and place in the story. The fact that the supernatural is present and can appear at any moment awakens stronger feelings of terror in the reader. Along with observing the characters' reaction, it may help readers to familiarize themselves with their personalities and their thoughts. In the end, it can be said that the supernatural elements mainly serve as a form of entertainment.

On the other hand, America lacks in cultural history. Thus it is difficult to analyse any kinds of allegories for the politics or social situation. Poe has his own, unique ideas not only about nature, but also about the narrators and his philosophy. Poe's stories blend in psychological and allegorical elements, often combining nature as a metaphor for the author's psychological state and allegory for exploration of the inner universe and philosophical thoughts. The focus remains on the human mind, combining historical and personal elements in fictional stories regarding the past or the repetition. The main goal is to observe the human mind, whether it is their mental illness, trauma, or reactions to death itself. Thanks to his creativity, he manages

to reach the goal of exploring the human mind by any means available. In the case of Poe, the type of analysis mainly depends on the story itself.

The thesis proves the difference between the supernatural elements in both types of literature. While the English gothic genre focuses on following the rules of the sublime, and at the same time entertaining the readers by putting the characters into distressing situations, the American gothic genre explores the human psyche in much more detail. In the first case, the supernatural works as a form of delight, in the second case, the supernatural work is either as an allegory for deeper philosophical meaning, psychological delusion or a personification of deeper trauma.

Nevertheless, both of them manage to use the pattern of terror and horror as their way of achieving the main goal. The gothic genre would not be itself without the supernatural elements, which have many types of appearances and understanding. In the end, however, people enjoy observing such situations, whether it is by deeper analysis of the human mind or by the simple appearance of a ghost in a dark and gloomy hallway of an ancient castle. The genre attracts specific groups of people, who manage to enjoy the supernatural to its full extent.

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