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**Interpretation of the Symbol Black Cat in
Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story.**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, relatives and friends

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to Mr Madjid. Doufene who helped me to fulfill this task of research.

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List of Abbreviations

- (BC): Black Cat
- (FB): Freudian Broad
- (FN): Freudian Narrow

Abstract

In American literature, Edgar Allan Poe's short story The Black Cat (1843) is a worthy symbolic story, in which symbolism invades all its components. The objective of this work is to explore the symbol black cat used in the story, casting light on the level of title and characters, and also to decode this symbol and identify the various interpretations they stand for, by applying Freud's Theory. This thesis intends to answer the following question: how is the symbol of black cat used in Edgar Allan Poe's work ? And to answer this question we hypothesis that : the interpretation of the symbol black cat may enhance comprehension of the story .The method which is followed in this study is analytic ,investigating and interpreting the symbol black cat in Poe's short story . we have also used the method of psychoanalysis literary criticism to attempt understanding the link between the narrator and the black cat.This work contains three chapters. The first chapter deals with the notion of symbolism and its major theories such as Sigmund Freud, De Saussure and Whitehead theories of symbolism. The second Chapter contains the literary analysis of the corpus which we are going to spot light on, interpretation the symbol of black cat as a title and character. The third chapter deals with the methodology and findings of the story which talk about psychoanalysis and literature than we applied it in the story according to Sigmund Freud theory. All in all, this study aims at showing Edgar Allan Poe's motive behind the use of symbols in his work "The Black Cat " (1843).

Key Words: Symbolism, Symbol, Meaning, Methodology, style, Stylistics.

(1843) هي قصة قصيرة للكاتب الأمريكي إدغار آلان بو، غنية بالرموز بكل أنواعه. الهدف من هذا العمل هو استكشاف رمز القط الأسود في القصة، وتسلط الضوء على العنوان و الشخصيات، كما تهدف على فك الرموز و التعرف على مختلف التفسيرات، من تطبيق نظرية فرويد . يهدف هذا العمل للإجابة على السؤال التالي كيف أستعمل الرمز القط الأسود على هذا السؤال نفترض أن تفسير الرمز القط الأسود ربما يعزز القارئ من استوعاب القصة بنفسه . ويتناول مفهوم الرمزية والنظريات الأساسية فرويد، ديوسوسير وإيتيهيد نظرياتهم للرمزية . يحتوي التحليل دراستها، تفسير الشخصية. ويتناول منهجية النظرية سيجموند فرويد . جميع وتهدف هذه إظهار عمله " النظرية (1843) " .

الكلمات المفتاحية : رمزية، رمز، معنى، منهجية، الأسلوب و الأسلوبية.

Résumé

Dans la littérature américaine, une nouvelle d'Edgar Allan Poe "Le Chat Noir" (1843) est une histoire symbolique digne, dans lequel le symbolisme envahit toutes ses composantes. L'objectif de ce travail est d'explorer le symbole chat noir utilisé dans l'histoire, mettant en lumière le niveau de titre et les personnages, et aussi de décoder ce symbole et identifier les différentes interprétations qu'ils représentent, en appliquant la théorie de Freud. Cette thèse se propose de répondre à la question suivante: comment est le symbole de chat noir utilisé dans les travaux d'Edgar Allan Poe? Et pour répondre à cette question, nous supposons donc que: l'interprétation du symbole chat noir peut améliorer la compréhension de l'histoire. La méthode qui est suivie dans cette étude est analytique, l'enquête et l'interprétation du symbole de chat noir dans la nouvelle de Poe. Nous avons également utilisé la méthode de la critique littéraire psychanalyse pour tenter de comprendre le lien entre le narrateur et le chat noir. Ce travail comprend trois chapitres. Le premier chapitre traite de la notion de symbolisme et de ses principales théories comme Sigmund Freud, Saussure et théories Whitehead de symbolisme. Le deuxième chapitre contient l'analyse littéraire du corpus que nous allons repérer la lumière sur l'interprétation du symbole de chat noir comme un titre et de caractère. Le troisième chapitre traite de la méthodologie et les résultats de l'histoire qui parle de la psychanalyse et de la littérature que nous avons appliquée dans l'histoire selon la théorie de Sigmund Freud. Dans l'ensemble, cette étude vise à montrer le motif d'Edgar Allan Poe derrière l'utilisation de symboles dans son ouvrage "Le Chat Noir" (1843).

Mots Clés: Symbolisme, Symbole, Sens, Méthodologie, Style, Stylistiques.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. General Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

1.2 Objectives of the study

1.3 Justification

1.4 The problematic

1.5 Methodology

1.6 Dissertation Organization

General Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Literature can be defined as the mirror of society's views and beliefs. It reflects social, political, and cultural value of any society. It reflects people's views, convictions, and dreams in a very creative and imaginary way to show certain phenomena or to find out a solution to a specific dilemma, and this is what makes differences between literary works of one nation and another, or one period and another.

American literature is a treasure land of many authors to discover, a lot of topics to deal with, and a successive periods to shed light on. It has been passing through different literary movements such as Realism, Naturalism, Rationalism, and Romanticism; the latter is considered as the richest period of authors who contributed in the evolution of American literature as a whole with their brilliant and attractive writings (Santee 2010).

Romanticism started in Germany then France and England, arriving in the United States in about 1820. It emphasizes nature as a guiding and elevated force, recognizes the central significance of individual experience and uses simple diction focused on rural and idyllic country life.

Romanticism is the most important movement in the first half of the nineteenth century that was both philosophical and theological, and dealt with the individual imagination as a critical authority which permitted freedom from classical notions. Like American Transcendentalism, American Romanticism emphasized intuition, imagination, and feeling.

The romantic writers saw themselves as revolting against the age of reason (1700-1770); they celebrated imagination and intuition versus reason and calculation, and spontaneity versus control (Kaiser 2004). The romantic authors such as Edgar Allan Poe try to adopt in his writings the major features of romanticism such as the super-use of imagination, symbolism and the focus on nature; he attempt to make readers interact with his works; For instance, *The Black cat* (1843) seems to be the greatest symbolic short story in American literature; it is Dealing with guilt, loyalty and deterioration of the human body and. *The black cat* is a short story in which the reader is subjected to the confession of a convicted murderer. It was written by Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849) was an American symbolist and one of the prominent and significant literary figures in the romantic period whose romances are

considered among the American great symbolic works which play a big role in the evolution of the romantic period:

He wrote horror stories with elements from a gothic literary style as well as subjects about condemned souls and madness.

He is also said to be the inventor of the detective fiction. His literary career contained numerous short stories, poetry as well as editorial work on periodicals and literary criticism(Bylund.2000:2).

Poe's "The Black Cat" (1843), the corpus of our study, is a worthy symbolic Short story in which symbolism invades all its components. A story of a man who had a particular love for animals and had a lot of pets one of them is a black cat named Pluto. The man's attitude became progressively bad and drinking alcohol made it worse. One night, drunk, he took out one of the cat's eyes with a pen and hangs the cat from a tree the day after. Then a fire took place and the man's house and his possessions were lost. Then he gets another cat to replace the first cat yet the latter reminded him with his bad deed and made him feel guilty so he decides to kill the cat but his wife stops his arm. In a rage, he strikes his wife in the head with an axe and kills her. Through this story, Edgar Allan Poe uses symbols to express social and spiritual status at that time of his work. One of the most skillful ways in which Poe develops his type of romanticism in his story "The Black Cat" (1843).

In literature, symbolism basically carries the meaning of the literary device that writers use to convey their messages indirectly by using symbols, whether for the sake of decorating the work in order to give it an artistic beauty and aesthetic taste or for any other purposes such as criticizing society behind those symbols to avoid troubles and problems that may fall upon (Amraoui& Salah 2009).

The analysis of any literary work requires the examination of the writer's vocabulary, his style of writing and his language. Poe's "The Black cat" (1843) is full of figures of speech, especially symbolism. The goal of this study is to make EFL learners aware of the meaning of the symbolism, and make them mindful of the way recognizing and interpretations of symbols in any literary work. Thus, our study attempts to deal with the investigation of black cat as a symbol in Edgar Allan Poe's work.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

Through the present research, we aim at investigating to what extent the symbol of black cat in Poe's work misunderstood by reader. Thus, our main aim is to contribute to our understanding of how interpretation the symbols and to what extent could help EFL learners enhance comprehension of the story.

1.3. Problem

A reader of "The Black Cat" will observe the notice use of symbols in this story. The author appears to have motives behind the use of this device. Hence, one may ask the following question:

How can the symbol of black cat be interpreted in Edgar Allan Poe's work?

To answer this question, we hypothesise that:

Effective Interpretation of the symbol «BlackCat" may enhance comprehension of the story

Justification

The choice of Edgar Allan Poe's short story The Black Cat did not come at random but because of various reasons. First of all, it is related to our interest in this story, which is a real picture of the gothic fiction in the 19th century where Poe describes and analyses the dark side of human existence. He is thus regarded as the representative figure of the literary tradition of nineteenth century in American literature. Secondly, the story is considered the most popular of Poe's works and his favorite one.

1.4. Methodology

The method which is followed in this work is analytic, investigating and interpreting the symbol Black Cat in Poe's short story. We have also used the method of psychoanalysis literary criticism to attempt understanding the link between the narrator and the black cat.

The data of this study are collected in the following steps; first, reading and Understanding the whole content of the story "Black Cat" by Edgar Poe. Second, making notes from the story that are related to the objective of the study. Thirdly, selecting and

picking up the data referring to the problem investigating the symbol of black cat in Poe's work.

1.5. Dissertation Structure

This work contains three chapters. The first chapter deals with the notion of symbolism and its major theories such as; Sigmund Freud, De Saussure and Whitehead theories of symbolism. The second Chapter contains the literary analysis of the corpus which we are going to spot light on, interpretation the symbol of black cat as a title and a character .The third Chapter deals with the methodology of story which talk about psychoanalysis and literature and we applied it in the story according to Sigmund Freud theory .

Chapter One: The Notion of Symbolism and its Major Theories

Chapter one: The Notion of Symbolism and its Major Theories

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Definition of Symbolism

1.3 Types of Symbols

1.3.1 Conventional Symbols

1.3.2 Personal Symbols

1.4 Theories of Symbolism

1.4.1 Ferdinand De Saussure's Vision on Symbolism

1.4.2 Alfred North Whitehead's Vision on Symbolism

1.4.3 Sigmund Freud's Vision on Symbolism

1.4.4 Frye s' Theory of Symbolism

1.4.5 Langer's Theory of Symbolism

1.5 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the notion of symbolism as a literary device and tries to introduce some theories of symbolism which are attributed to Whitehead, Sigmund Freud's and Saussure.

Symbolism is a literary device regarded as the most aesthetic device that the American writers focused on in their writings; it gives them freedom to add double levels of meanings to their work: a literal one that is self-evident and the symbolic one whose meaning is far more profound than the literal one. The symbolism, therefore, gives universality to the characters and the themes of a piece of literature. Symbolism in literature evokes interest in readers as they find an opportunity to get an insight of the writer's mind on how he views the world and how they think of common objects and actions, having broader implications (Ferber 1992)

Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration; it is inherent in the very texture of human life, language itself is a symbolism (ibid.). It is not necessary to have symbols that are easily recognizable or ones that are commonly used. They can be subtle symbolic representations used to hint at something without making it an obvious and overwhelming statement (ibid.).

1.2 Definition of Symbolism

A symbol is a literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects/ concepts/ traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone. A symbol is a person, object or event that suggests more than its literal meaning.

In other words, it is something that has two levels of meaning, on the literal level: it is what it is (the actual necklace in "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant), on the non-literal level or figurative level: it would represent a more "hidden". Meaning (the wife's vanity, the sacrifices the couple made, deceit, the life they could have been). Determining the meaning of a symbol (or if something is a symbol at all) is often a matter of close reading and interpretation--the reader must pick up on the contextual clues supplied by the writer.

A symbol something that is simultaneously itself and a sign of something else. Winter, darkness and cold are real things, but in literature they are also likely to be used as symbols of death. A paper lantern and a light bulb are real things, but in a streetcar named desire, they are

also symbols of Blanche's attempt to escape from reality and reality itself. Yorick's skull is a symbol of human mortality, and Melville's white whale is certainly a symbol, but exactly what it symbolizes has yet to be agreed upon. our corpus is full of symbols for example black cat is symbolic of the narrator's evil heart, alcohol is symbolic of the narrator's drinking problem (alcoholism) which is the real reason for the loss of his grip on reality, Cell The narrator is in a prison when the story first begins, but his mind had become entangled in a mass of confusion and unreality long before he was discovered for his murderous crimes against animals and humanity, House and Home is supposed to be a place of safety and security, but it becomes a dark and tragic place of madness and murder. The narrator kills his favorite pet (the black cat), and then he kills his own wife. Thus, even the relationships that should have been the central focus of his healthy and happy home become scapegoats to his deteriorating mental state.

From the word symbol came the concept of symbolism which can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning much deeper and more significant. Sometimes, however, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. For instance, "smile" is a symbol of friendship. Similarly, the action of someone smiling at you may stand as a symbol of the feel of affection which that this person has for you.

Symbols do shift their meanings depending on the context they are used in. "A chain", for example, may stand for "union" as well as "imprisonment". Thus, symbolic meanings of an object or an action are understood by when, where and how they are used. It also depends on who reads them.

Freud (2003) said that the symbolism is the difference between the two, which is the broader term, what activity may properly be as "symbolic". But this picture of disorder should not lead us to agree too readily that there can be no general theory of symbolism. Instead, by considering the definitions of symbolism from two different perspectives in turn, the first an overview both of the scope of the subject matter and of the extent of the disorder, the second allowing a convergence on the real centre of controversy.

1.3 Types of Symbols

Symbolism can be much more complex. One theory classifies symbols in two categories:

1.3.1 Conventional Symbols (Cultural or Universal)

The conventional symbols have been invested with meaning by a group (religious symbols, such as a cross or Star of David; national symbols, such as a flag or an eagle; or group of symbols, such as a skull and crossbones for pirates or the scales of justice for lawyers). For example, the ankh, which in Egypt was a cross with an oval on top of it, was sacred to the mother goddess Isis. In Greece and Rome a similar symbol in which the oval had become a circle was used as a symbol for Aphrodite and Venus. Conventional symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture. Some writers use conventional symbols to reinforce meanings. Kate Chopin, for example, emphasizes the spring setting in "The Story of an Hour" as a way of suggesting the renewed sense of life that Mrs. Mallard feels when she thinks herself free from her husband.

1.3.2 Personal Symbols (Contextual or Private)

The contextual symbol can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings. For example the black cat is a character symbolizes the state of the narrator's soul-which is black, mutilated, and decaying. The black cat is symbolic because it is the cat's meowing that draws attention to the wall, and the perverse pleasure the black soul of the narrator takes in believing he has gotten away from it.

Such symbols go beyond conventional symbols; they gain their symbolic meaning within the context of a specific story. For example, the white whale in Melville's *Moby-Dick* takes on multiple symbolic meanings in the work, but these meanings do not automatically carry over into other stories about whales. The meanings suggested by Melville's whale are specific to that text; therefore, it becomes a contextual symbol, These symbols often are not generally understood or known, and they can only be decoded from their usage in a specific text (Stefanie & Jarmila 36).

1.4 Theories of Symbolism

In a step forward, some linguists attempt to examine and study the nature of symbolism. They work out and introduce a number of theories; such as North Whitehead, Ferdinand de Saussure, Sigmund Freud, and Herman Northrop Frye.

1.4.1 Ferdinand de Saussure's Vision on Symbolism

Ferdinand De Saussure is a Swiss linguist who emerged a study of “semiotics” in the nineteenth century, which is the study of signs, symbols and their meaning, Saussure (1990) defines symbol as a kind of sign; a sign is the generic terms and a symbol is the special case. As Todorov (1982) says, ‘if one gives the word “ sign “ a generic meaning through which it encompasses that of symbol (the symbol than becomes a special case of the sign) , one may say that studies of the symbol belong to the general theory of signs.

Hwakes (1977) pointes out the culmination of the his theoretical development of a general theory of signs in Jakobson ‘s synthesis radically different views on the concept of symbol held by these two pierce , the American founder of semiotics ,the tripartite division of signs produces the icon , the index , and the symbol , the last being the case where the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary ;thus the major systematic manifestation of symbols is in language . Saussure, on the contrary, held that is the sign is arbitrary, and the symbol is non- arbitrary.

1.4.2 Frye’s Theory

Frye's theory of symbols is oriented toward an analysis of criticism. Phases are contexts within which literature can be interpreted; they are primarily meant to describe critical procedures rather than literary types; in short, they represent methods for analyzing symbolic meaning.

Symbol is the first of three basic categories Frye uses to differentiate the five phases. Here we encounter the breadth of reference and unconventional usage so often found in Frye’s work, for in the Second Essay symbol is used to mean any unit of literary structure which can be isolated for critical attention (65). This broad definition permits Frye to associate the appropriate kind of symbolism with each phase, and thereby define the phase at the highest level of generality. The symbol used as a sign results in the descriptive phase; as motif, in the literal phase; as image, in the formal phase; as archetype, in the mythical phase; and as monad, in the anagogic phase.

Before looking at these abstractions more closely, we need to observe the two additional categories underlying Frye’s definition of the phases: narrative (or mythos) and meaning (or dianoia).

These terms also have a wide range of reference, much wider even than in Frye's theory of modes. One can only indicate the general associations they have in Frye's usage. Narrative is associated with rhythm movement, recurrence, event, and ritual. Meaning is associated with pattern, structure, stasis, precept, and dream. The meaning of narrative and the meaning of meaning, then, are never constant, always changing according to the context of Frye's discussion. The central role which this pair of terms plays in the second essay, as well as in the entire *Anatomy*, cannot be over-emphasized. Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* asserts that we as readers when we are reading, we find our attention moving in two directions at once; one direction is outward, in which we go outside our reading, from the writers to the things they mean, the other direction is inward, in which we try to appreciate the meaning from the word itself; in both cases we deal with symbols (Frye 1957).

1.4.3 Alfred North Whitehead's Vision on Symbolism

According to Whitehead, there are two main works of the symbolism, the man's thought is performance symbolically when it meets in his knowledge in life a set of components, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its knowledge (Whitehead 1927).

Symbolism is very fallible in the sense that it may induce actions, feelings, emotions and beliefs about things which are only notions without exemplification in the world which the symbolism leads us to presuppose (Whitehead 1927:6).

According to the Whitehead there is a change from the symbol to the meaning that will be called "symbolic reference". Which means that is a difference between the symbolism and its meaning. but symbolism is very weak, i.e. it is bare to mistakes; within symbolism, we may produce wrong interpretation of the symbol that we have, we are not sure that it is correct (Whitehead 1927). For instance the white color usually symbolizes peace. Thus, the white color is the symbol, and peace is the symbolic reference.

1.4.4 Sigmund Freud's Vision on Symbolism

Freud offers two essential theories; the Freudian Narrow and the Freudian Broad Theories of Symbolism:

Freudian Narrow Position

In the (FN) position, the use of the term "symbol" carries similar meanings that can be understood or interpreted by people with the same cultural background; it is universal and sometimes it is an inherited code from the previous generation (Petocz2003). For example, the black colour represents sadness and the white colour represents happiness. We inherited these symbols from our previous generation." The first, which may be referred to as the 'Freudian Narrow' position, restricts the use of the term "symbol" to a special technical sense, in which symbols are the elements of unconscious, universal, phylogenetically inherited code" (Petocz2003: 24).

We find Freud's later (1914 a1916/17) treatment of the symbol as unconscious, phylogenetically inherited universal code. Here the word is reserved for those 'universal' symbols which appear in dreams (and also in myths and folklore), and have three characteristics which distinguish them from all other forms of indirect representation: firstly, constancy of meaning, i.e., the relation between symbol and symbolized provides a fixed meaning in the unconscious; secondly, these symbols are "mute" or rather the dreamer or subject becomes mute in the face being unable to produce any association to them as he or she can to other repressed material; and thirdly, the meaning of these symbols are not learned, but inherited. As will later be seen, this peculiar restricted view is at odds with Freud's treatment of symbols elsewhere, and there are, I shall argue, compelling reasons for agreeing with those who reject it from disorder towards the focus of inquiry.

Freudian Broad Position

In the (FB) position, the term symbol is limited to appropriate use used in the literary work (Petocz 2003). It is a particular use that can differ from context to another. For instance, the white color is used to interpret various meanings; these meanings differ from one work to another. The white color may symbolize peace in one work, and may symbolize beauty in another." The second, may be referred to as 'Freudian Broad' (FB) position, is a much less limited view, in which the term "symbol" usually refers to any unconsciously produced defensive stand-in, while however retaining certain specifiable connections with conscious, non-defensive production" (Petocz 2003:24).

When a symbol becomes recognized with the deeper realism to which it refers, it becomes idolatrous as the "symbol is taken for reality". Here the symbol itself is substituted

for the deeper meaning it intends to convey. The unique nature of the symbol is that it gives access to deeper layers of reality which are otherwise inaccessible.

Without symbolism, something essential is missing from language and art. Writers insert symbols into their writing to allude to a feeling, mood or attitude without directly stating the perspective or mood intended. Symbolism is supplemental to the story. An author may repeatedly use the same object to convey deeper meaning or may use variations of the same object to create an overarching mood or feeling. Symbolism is often used to support a literary theme in a subtle manner.

A symbol represents, or stands in place of, something else. Even letters and words themselves are symbols, because our brain turns those markings into thoughts and ideas (Nair 2010).

1.4.5 Langer's Theory of Symbolism

Langer(1954) made a division between symbol and sign; she asserts that symbol and sign are not the same, the use of symbols in addition to the signs that animals also use, frees humans not only to respond their situation but also to think about it, and also symbols, allow us to produce descriptions and ideas not directly related to the actual world, so that we can plan, imagine, and converse abstractions to do, in real meaning, the things that make us human (Eschholz et al 2000). The difference between a sign and a symbol is that a sign causes us to think or act in the face of the thing signified, while a symbol causes us to think about the thing symbolized (ibid.). Therefore, we can say that a symbol differs from a sign in that the symbol does not declare the subsistence of the object it refers to, but brings this thing to mind.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen different theories of symbolism that present various concepts of symbolism because symbolism is regarded as the most famous literary device that is used to convey certain messages indirectly. It is described as an object, character or event, and stands for ideas and emotions.

**Chapter Two: General Critical Review of
the Story The Black Cat**

Chapter Two: General Critical Review of the Story (The Black Cat)

2.1 Introduction

2.2 A General Analysis of The Black Cat

2.2.1 Plot Summary

2.2.2 Characters

2.2.3 Setting

2.2.4 Themes

2.3 Interpretation the Symbol Black Cat as:

2.3.1 Character

2.3.2 Title

2.4 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

Romanticism is a movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it was an artistic and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of 18th century. Edgar Allan Poe exerted a major influence on American literature with his own works but also with his literary criticism. Poe is considered as the greatest American author whose works made the American Literature gradually develop; his short stories are still considered as the best that America has produced. He is best known for his horror fiction and published a good deal of literary criticism as well. "The Black Cat" is one of Poe's most popular short stories. This chapter presents an exhaustive of Poe's masterpiece, the black Cat.

2.2 A General Literary Analysis of "The Black Cat"

2.2.1 Plot Summary

In Edgar Allen Poe's The Black Cat, the main character is a man leading a happy life with his wife and many household pets. His favorite pets is a black cat, Pluto. The main character, however, becomes overwhelmed with alcohol and in turn, becomes more irritable. He also feels suspicious that the cat is avoiding him for some reason. The main character begins to hate his former friend. One night, after coming home intoxicated with alcohol, Pluto scratches the man's hand and in turn has his right eye cut out. The cat fears the man now, hiding from him at every turn. The man gets enraged, and out of anger and sorrow at his lost friend, hangs the cat by the neck from a tree branch. Almost as suddenly, a new cat appears; a black one with only a splash of white on his chest can tell him apart from Pluto. Eventually the man grows to loathe this cat as well and attempts to murder him with an axe. His wife stops him and is rewarded with an axe in her head. Attempting to hide the corpse, the main character buries his dead wife in the cellar wall. He raps on the wall in front of some policemen cockily showing he has nothing to hide but then the cat is heard screeching from inside. He had accidentally walled the cat up in the tomb. The police reveal what the man has done and his punishment is to be hung.

2.2.2 The Setting

Poe provides few details about his settings. Unlike many of his stories with complex decorations, this story focuses more on the action of the main character. There are several settings:

The Jail Cell: This is a small room where the narrator is felt to look at his actions and his life. He still refuses to take conscientiousness for his actions.

The story is written in the narrator's jail cell, highlighting the theme of "Freedom and imprisonment." The narrator writes from a space of confinement, and detailing the events that led him to prison is one of the few freedoms he has left. This tension between freedom and confinement is repetitive throughout the story, and is mostly powerful when we look at some other aspects of the setting.

- **Te Narrator's Home:** The first house becomes a prison room for the wife and the pets. The person who reads discovers that the family was rich and even had servants. When the house is shattered by fire, after years of mistreatment, the pets finally escape their terrible "home," and die suffering by the conflagration.
- **The bedroom wall that is left standing after the fire with its raised image of the cat** foreshadows the second cat's entrance in the man's life. It also represents the psychological clutch that Pluto has on the narrator.
- **The yard of the burned house:** This is the place where Pluto is hung. This foreshadows the death of the narrator as he will be hung the next day after his story is completed.
- **The new house:** The second house is aged and sad where the family has lost their riches in the fire.
- **The bar where the second cat is found:** The bar is a grimy, soggy place where the narrator seems (the cat sitting atop a vast barrel of wine.)
- **The cellar:** The cellar is another important aspect of the setting. The cellar is under the rest of the house where reflects the consciousness of the man and other characters is reflected, the cellar echoes his subconscious. The unconscious is supposed to be that seething pool of desires and fears that lurk beneath the surface of our conscious thoughts. In the cellar, all the man's deepest fears and desire terminate in the murder of his wife.

2.2.3 The Characters of the story

In this story, we have four major characters that are: the narrator, Pluto, the narrator's wife, the second cat and policemen.

The Narrator: The narrator has some major issues. This unnamed character is an abusive bully and a murderer. He made home a living hell for his wife, pets, and himself. He wrote to us from his prison cell, on the eve of his scheduled death by hanging. In addition to

the details of his heinous crimes, he reveals his psychological transformation from “nice guy” to villain. He tells us that around the time he murdered his wife, all "good" was driven from his personality and – got this – he did not seem to be confessing out of a sense of guilt. Over the course of the story, the narrator provides several reasons for his various behaviors. But mostly he seems to be blaming the cat (or cats) for all his problems. According to the narrator, it's the cat's fault that the domestic scene of the story ultimately turned so foul. This seems to be his real point in telling us the story.

The Narrator's Wife: The brief outline the narrator suggests to us of his wife states that she is kind, giving, loyal, and even heroic at the end. The narrator says she has "in a high degree, that humanity of feeling which had once been [his] distinguishing characteristic." She is a highly sympathetic character, in her own right. The fact that the narrator abuses her, and her beloved pets, makes her even more sympathetic, and makes us think that the man is a complete bad guy, but understand her past history, her interests, her look, the place she met the man, and her age is not informed in the story. If we want to picture her, we have to use our imaginations. Do you have a mental picture of her? If so, what does she look like? Why? If you don't picture her, is she a shadow, a blank, a dark spot?

Pluto: Pluto is fine specimen of a cat. All black, large, fuzzy, and sagacious to an astonishing degree. Over the years Pluto moves from a pampered pet to an abused beast. He is blinded and ultimately murdered by his owner. The narrator makes us believe that he is actually a witch in disguise, transforming from which to Pluto, to the second black cat. To be fair, we are focusing on the cat the narrator calls **Pluto**. Some critics argue that Pluto is a cat, and only a cat. Others think he's a symbol or allegory for other things. Others think he's both. We will explore the third option. Poe had pets of his own, and was suspected to have been an animal lover. At a most basic level, the story seems designed to invite sympathy for animals, and raise awareness of animal abuse. Since you probably do not need a lecture on being nice to cats, we will focus on a few allegorical and symbolic possibilities.

The Second Cat: The second black cat looks almost exactly like Pluto. He's big, black, and missing an eye. The only difference is the white spot. The spot starts off innocently enough, but then grows into an image of the gallows, if the narrator can be believed. With all these similarities, and with the narrator's insistence that the cat is more than just a cat, we might think the second black cat is some kind of supernatural version of Pluto.

The policemen: these policemen are generic characters, without peruse characteristics, other than the fact that they are policemen.

2.2.4 Themes

In this story, the theme of Violence is considered as the most principal theme that prevails in the whole story.

In "The Black Cat" the unnamed narrator offers us a parade of violent acts. Eye gouging, hanging, axing – these are the gruesome highlights. Until the end of the story, when somebody is killed, the detailed accounts of violence are focused on Pluto, the black cat who moves from pampered pet to persecuted beast. The violence the unnamed narrator practice against his wife and the other pets is rather vague. Yet, we get a pretty clear picture of what is happening. And by the end of the story the narrator has completely destroyed his family, and perhaps, himself in the process. In this horror classic, violence is an insidious beast that creeps, spreads, and grows uncontrollably, destroying all the bodies and minds it touches.

One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;—hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart (Poe, A.1843).

In Poe's story The Black Cat, there are other themes which are as follows:

2.2.4.1 The theme of Alcohol

In some stories drinking has both positive and negative effects on the drinkers. Not so in "The Black Cat." The unnamed narrator of this grim tale claims he began abusing his wife and pets when his drinking got out of control, wrecking his personality. Some readers think this is a "temperance" narrative, a popular genre in Poe's day. "Temperance" in this context means "sobriety." The Temperance Movement focused on educating the public on the perceived dangers of drinking, and pushing legislature prohibiting the manufacture, use, and sale of alcohol. In temperance narrative alcohol is the major issue, and is to blame for all the bad things that happen in the story. Here, alcohol fades out of the story just when things get bad, suggesting that alcohol is only one of many factors in the narrator's moral breakdown.

*But my disease grew upon me-for what disease is like
alcohol!-and at length even Pluto, who was now becoming
old, and consequently somewhat peevish-even Pluto began to
experience the effects of my ill temper...(POE, A.1843)*

2.2.4.2 The theme of Freedom vs. Confinement

"The Black Cat", a claustrophobic tale of marital life gone wrong, offers a distinct movement from freedom to confinement. We meet the narrator already in his prison cell, writing, to free himself from his bonds – the literal bonds of the cell, and the bondage confining his mind and heart. How he became so trapped is the subject of his writing and the reason why he has taken the pen to the page. We learn how he traps his wife and pets in a cycle of violence and abuse. As things go from bad to worse, the physical spaces the characters inhabit shrink. Though the man's story begins in a house of wealth and comfort, it ends in brick tomb in the cellar of a rundown building.

*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. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden
my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world,
plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere
household events. In their consequences, these events have
terrified-have tortured- have destroyed me. (Poe, A. 1843)*

2.2.4.3 The theme of love and hatred

Many of the crimes of Poe's protagonists are particularly detestable because they involve the death of someone whom they loved. The narrator's affection for Pluto and his wife turns into rage as the characters sink into alcoholism.

Pluto-this was the cat's name-was my favorite pet and playmate. I alone fed him, and he attended me wherever I went about the house. It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets (Poe,A.1843).

2.2.4.4 The theme of psychological

A psychological transformation is a characteristic of most Poe's tales. In nearly every paragraph some form of psychological transformation or change occurs. After he gets married, the narrator's personality goes toward a dark side, cruelly abusing his pets and finishing by murdering his wife

My pets, of course, were made to feel the change in my disposition. I not only neglected, but ill-used them. For Pluto, however, I still retained sufficient regard to restrain me from maltreating him, as I made no scruple of maltreating the rabbits, the monkey, or even the dog, when, by accident, or through affection, they came in my way(Poe 1843).

2.2.4.5 The theme of loyalty

A pet is often seen as a loyal and realistic colleague in life. The hallucinations of the narrator related to his black cat, which throws him into the most extreme fervent and murderous rages. The idea of loyalty is turned upside-down; his favorite pet becomes his biggest enemy.

Pluto-this was the cat's name-was my favorite pet and playmate. I alone fed him, and he attended me wherever I went about the house. It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets (Poe 1843).

2.2.4.6 The theme of death

Death is the central focus of the entire story. The theme is apparent in the murder of the first cat “Pluto” and then in the wife’s murder.

*I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe In her brain.
She fell dead upon the spot without a groan. This hideous
murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire
deliberation, to the task of concealing the body (Poe 1843).*

2.3 Interpretation of the Symbol “The Black Cat”

2.3.1 The title

Symbolism is always an integral part of any Poe stories. There is more than one major symbol in the story; the most obvious of symbolic reference in this story is the title itself, “The Black Cat” since onyx cats have long connoted bad luck and misfortune.

The title prepares the reader to be on the lookout for the black cat – it suggests that the cat is important to the story. This might sound obvious, but what if the story was called "A Woman Murdered," or "An Unhappy Home," or "Why I Stopped Drinking"? The first would focus attention on the narrator's nameless wife, the second on the idea of "home," and the third on the issue of the narrator's drinking. All these are important aspects of the story and all are connected to the cat. But, the title of this short story “the black cat “would still take center stage of this tale.

The title only references one black cat. Does this mean that there is only one cat in the story? or is it possible that Pluto did not really die? In this last scenario Pluto somehow survives the hanging and escapes the plaster cast/wall art (in which we last saw him). Then, either on purpose or by coincidence, the cat meets the man at the place where he's drinking.

2.3.2 The character of the story

The story is large open for various interpretations. That might be why "The Black Cat" still accepted, over a 160 years after its publication. The title is simple, and easy, but we can still use it to open up this scary story

2.3.2.1 The cat (Pluto)

The first cat’s name is Pluto. This seems to be a too uncommon name to hold no meaning or symbolism at all. Poe rarely named characters in his stories, which might have been to make the tales universal. However, when he did give them names this was of great

importance. “Like many other writers, Poe was keenly aware of significant underlying implications in names, so he sometimes used place names that extend beyond face value”.

In Greek Mythology Pluto is a euphemism for Hades who was the god of the dead and the underworld. The links to hell and the dominion of the dead are something that is pointed to numerous times in the story.

When also Pluto becomes a victim of the violence, he is deprived of one of his eyes by his drunken owner. Eyes were a commonly used symbol in Poe’s literature.

By blinding Pluto the narrator seems not only to want to punish him; he also aims to blind his closest and dearest pet, whom to he does not want to reveal his deterioration and change in disposition. At the same time one might interpret the mutilation of Pluto as a solution for the narrator to get rid of a mirror in the cat’s eye. In his once beloved and close friend he sees the disappointment and confusion for the change and violence that the cat experiences. The deed had not such an effect as he had wished for and by blinding Pluto he sets in motion the cause and effect that leads him to his own death, his self-destruction. Karma is the law of cause and effect; something that the narrator is reluctant to admit as being the reason for his circumstances: “I am above the weakness of seeking to establish a sequence of cause and effect, between the disaster and the atrocity”. Yet there seems to be a fear of getting in return what he had given to others, and as it happens Pluto’s demise evidently becomes the narrator’s fate.

Pluto’s one-eyed appearance refers to another one-eyed person. In Norse mythology Odin, also called the terrible one, was once a god of the dead, the ones who died in battle reached Valhalla over which Odin was the leader. He was a very wise god. He could see all that took place on earth and in heaven, with the help of his two ravens. Odin wanted to gain the wisdom of the depths as well and sacrificed one of his eyes to the well of wisdom which was guarded by the giant Mimer. Through his sacrifice he became the god of foresight. However, Odin’s quest for wisdom did not end there. He still wanted to gain the wisdom of the occult, which only was possessed by those who were dead. To gain that knowledge, Odin hanged himself in Yggdrasill, an ash tree which surrounded the whole world, speared his side and hanged for nine days before he was resurrected with the knowledge in his possession.

The similarities between Pluto and Odin are the loss of one eye, the hanging and Resurrection. Even though the twice might only be a fantasy, he is the exact image of Pluto and can therefore be interpreted as have been brought back from the dead. The scaffold is recurrent through the story. Pluto’s double has a white mark on his chest which grows with

time into the shape of a gallows and in addition, the only thing which remains of the narrator's house after the fire is an imprint of a gallows. These recurrent images of the gallows add a red thread to the story. It becomes Pluto's fate as well as the narrator's. This linked to Odin's sacrifice for the knowledge of the dead offers yet a dimension of the underworld. Pluto is killed to gain the knowledge of the dead and come back to force the narrator to experience the torments of hell. The narrator cannot escape from his deeds as there are constant reminders which appear to torture him with guilt. Like Odin, Pluto might have gained inner sight and the ability to read the narrator's mind by the forced sacrifice of his eye, at least in the mind of the narrator. The cat already owns the knowledge of his owner's disposition. The transformation is apparent to all who meets him. It is only the narrator who believes his own concealment of his alteration. One might even bring it so far as to interpret the narrator, at times, to be blind towards his own self.

When the personality of Pluto's owner is altered, he tries to avoid the narrator in fear of violence. Their changed relationship infuriates the narrator who punishes Pluto by cutting out an eye. The narrator is tossed back and forward in his steady decline of his mind. He seems to have surrendered to the supernatural powers that possesses him and drives him into madness. As he hangs Pluto in the tree, his eyes cry for the action he is committing and his heart ache for the knowledge that there was no reason that instigated the deed. Here his soul seems to penetrate his hardening surface and his eyes cannot lie. He knows he is committing a sin and he seeks punishment for his thoughts and actions; for the damnation and alienation from repentance.

2.3.2.2 The Other Cat

Second black cat is some kind of supernatural version of Pluto. How, we might ask, could the second black cat be missing an eye, if he isn't Pluto undead? There is a possibility that Pluto never died. But, the narrator tells us that Pluto was not only hanged, but hanging all day and night, and then somehow embedded in the plaster wall thereafter. It's pretty doubtful Pluto survived. So what about the missing eye? Well, if you think about it, in Poe's time there were probably plenty of stray cats with missing eyes. The second cat could have been abused by a previous owner. Or he could have lost it in a fight with another cat, or some other kind of accident. We do not deny the possibility of the supernatural – we will discuss this next – but to focus too heavily it distracts us from the narrator's abuse of the creature. Interestingly, the man's own account the cat seems to work against a supernatural possibility. This is the man's description of the cat voice coming from inside the tomb:[It was] at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one

long, loud, and continuous scream, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell...If the cat was such a cunning monster, why would he 1) wait so long before crying out, and 2) cry like a baby when he did cry? If you were a poor animal, on the verge of release from being buried alive, wouldn't you be both horrified and triumphant? This terrible moment is effective in making us think of the cat as an innocent victim.

2.3.2.3 Pluto as a Child

The cat might also be an allegory for a child. We have notice that the man and his wife do not have any children. This story is concerned with the idea of home and family, and children, like animals, are at the mercy of the adults in charge of them. Poe himself did not have children, and children seem mostly absent from his work. In paragraph 31, the narrator even likens the second black cat's cry to "the sobbing of a child".

But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs of the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb!—by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman—a howl—a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation (Poe 1843).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to analyze Poe's short story and interpret the symbol of Black Cat in his work, as title and character. It should be stated that in this story every detail is indicated on purpose. Edgar Allan Poe makes use of such symbols in the story as Black Cat to transmit his message.

Chapter Three: Methodology, Analysis and Findings

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3.1 Introduction

3.2 Psychoanalysis and Literature

3.3 Application of Psychoanalysis in Poe's the Black Cat

3.3.1 Condensation

3.3.2 Repression

3.3.3 Paranoia

3.4 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Psychoanalysis literary criticism is the methodology I have used to analyze Edgar Allan Poe's story the black cat .Nothing that psychoanalysis is the suitable way in understanding the story. I used Freud's theory to find out the similarity of what he claims and what the story is about. The analysis of literary works on the light of psychoanalytic criticism seeks to understand the psychological status of the characters within the story.

3.2 Psychoanalysis and Literature

Freud's work had a profound influence on a number of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, and art.

In developing his theory of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud has often related it to art in general and to literature in particular. In his "creative Writers and Day-dreaming" Freud further expanded the connection between literature and psychoanalysis. He compared fantasy, play, dreams, and the work of art in order to understand creativity (Tien 1990).

In "creative Writers and Day _ dreaming" Freud first presented his theory on the structure of the literary work and made a psychoanalytic inquiry into the nature of literature, it is obvious that the literary work contains symbols which must be understood , like our corpus the story of black cat includes many symbols such as sell , alcohol , home , black cat. According to Freud, psychoanalysis is able to reveal the meaning of these symbols. Also in his theory, he says that the literary work can reveal something about its author, by focusing on his literary work as a product of his psyche (ibid: 1990).

Tien, 1990, also, says that, among major writers of the American Renaissance, Edgar Allan Poe is the most appealing to psychoanalysts as well as literary critics of the psychoanalytic persuasion. Poe's melodramatic life story, which was partly made up by himself and partly created by his critics, has been one of the main reasons why he so appeals to the psychoanalysts.

The psychoanalysis theory and the literary text mutually inform each other and "displace" each other. And there is no longer a clear cut opposition or a well defined Borderline between literature and psychoanalysis: psychoanalysis could be intraliterary as much as literature is intrapsychanalytic . They may interiplicate each other.

3.3 Application of Psychoanalysis on Poe's the Black Cat

Freud's psychoanalysis is often linked to Poe, This is nothing new. However, to support my thesis about mythology beliefs as means of depicting a paranoid and delusional mind, Freud's theories will be included to give a clearer perspective and understanding of the psychology of the narrator.

3.3.1 Condensation

The Freudian term condensation applies to the representation of the cat. The narrator finds in Pluto a friend, equal and he also receives the loyalty that he lacked from the brethren of his own race.

Pluto -this was the cat's name-was my favorite pet and Playmate.

I alone fed him, and he attended me wherever I went about the house. It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets(Poe, A.1843).

When his mind gets inebriated by consuming alcohol, Pluto becomes the object of loathing as if he was a mirror in which the narrator feels aware of his own degeneration. His outbursts of rage seem to alter him towards the opposite of his disposition. His feelings towards Pluto shift from friend to enemy as he puts the blame on the animal for being the instigator of his own deeds.

One night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. The Fury of a demon instantly possessed me (Poe, A 1843).

The cat becomes the corn stone of the story as he represents several meanings in his own being and this relates to the term condensation which Sigmund Freud used in his interpretation of dreams. In the story of black cat, the narrator's alcohol addiction, for reasons that are unknown, changes his personality traits into an bigheaded and aggressive man with wild mood swings.

*I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more
Regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself
to use intemperate language to my wife. At length,
I even offered her personal violence(Poe, A.1843).*

His depression might originate from his childhood which was hinted to have been a lonely one. However, his faith being placed in the care of his animals, the state of solitude grew more roots than the narrator wants to reveal. His dissatisfaction might be explained by comparing it to Freud's theory of depression. Freud related grief to depression, comparing the reaction on the loss of a loved one to the reaction a depressed person may have on an internalized person or object. He explained it with saying that the attachment the depressed person might have had to someone who causes disappointment and destroys the relationship, is maintained by incorporating the person into the ego and places the relationship on an internal level. Furthermore, Freud suggested that a depressed person experiences torment, accusation and disappointment towards his own character which causes the person to regress towards an ambivalent stage, where sadism is initialized and self-punishment is performed on the inner person that creates gratification as well as a sense of revenge on the external object. (Bylund 2000)

The narrator replaces humans by animals for their loyalty, thus he puts the weight of his moral beliefs on the shoulders of the cat. We might interpret his former attachments to certain people, to have been internalized and created an inner self criticism, which degraded his disposition as weak and flawed and this has caused harm to the narrator by taking refuge in alcohol . He projects these rejected dispositions onto Pluto, his wife and their animals which he punishes. The narrator also projects his own suspicious ideas of evil deeds as well as the bad desire to do wrong, onto the cat, as he blames the animal for seducing him to commit murder.

*Many projects entered my mind at one period I thought of
cutting the corpse into minute fragments, and destroying them
by fire. At another, I resolved to dig a grave for it in the
floor of the cellar(Poe ,A. 1843)*

His shifting of blame from himself to the cat can be interpreted with Freud's concept of projection which is a process in which a person finds himself with evil inner

feelings, he denies to recognize and accuse others of being responsible for his inconvenient disposition.

3.3.2 Repression

In our corpus we have observed the narrator is tormented by wishes that confront the morality of his character as human and civilized. Yet his unconscious longings are released by his drug abuse. Freud describes the unconscious as an accumulation and mass of instinctual needs that create impulses and wishes which aim towards being discharged.

*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. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would
Unburden my soul(Poe, A.1843).*

These wishes may reveal themselves through dreams, neurotic behavior. For Freud the unconscious function is defined by two processes, the initial one is” primary process seeks release above all, and thus helps to account for those phenomena that come out involuntarily or unconsciously”; the secondary process works as a contrast to the first and this is the rational thinking. Its aim is to stabilize the discharges that the primary attempts to slip through, yet this is not always successful and the unconscious might reveal itself into the conscious. Freud calls this “the return of the repressed” (Bylund 2012:07).

The narrator struggles with his inner wishes to do wrong and break the moral limitations of society. He wants to reach beyond the point of forgiveness and salvation as an attempt of self-punishment. The both of good and evil cause his personality to divide as he moves from desolation to fixation. The result between the clash of destructive desires and the imprinted moral ideals subjects the narrator to deference of ambivalent evil and torments of intense guilt.

According to Freud, the feeling of guilt is the punishment from the superego and to understand this .we must look at the definition of personality. Freud analyzed the personality as consisting of three aspects: the id, the ego and the superego. The id consists of the drives, the bodily and biological basis of all psychological, most id drives like sex are repressed; however , the id does not equal the unconscious ; the ego deals with the emends of reality

which originally develops out of the id , but it is influenced by people in reality; the superego combines ideals, commands and prohibitions, which we inherit from our parents, and which create our personalities. Guilt may be both excessively strong as well as unconscious which may drive people to commit crimes for the reason of being punished, in our corpus we have noticed that the narrator commits crime and then develops a feeling of guilt more than one time.

When reason returned with the morning—when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch—I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty; but it was, at best, a feeble and equivocal feeling and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess, and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed(Poe ,A.1843)

The cruelty of the superego is both aggressive and destructive. The more a person tries to control his aggressive impulses, the more it intensifies his aggression directed towards his ego.

3.3.3 Paranoia

The story seems that the narrator becomes more and more violent; his anger gets harder to contain, especially his dealing with the cat when the narrator told us:

I took from my waistcoat-pocket a penknife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! (Poe, A.1843)

One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree (Poe,A.1843)

These traits are general for a suspicious person. Disbelief and lack of self-esteem are also distinct features of the narrator's abnormal behavior . Paranoia works as a defense against earlier hurtful experiences and according to the Freud's assumption the focus of a

paranoid person lays upon the external world and its faults instead of focusing on his own feelings. This focus later evolves into self-absorption.

The narrator's admission adds confusion due to the shift of blame as well as for the irrationality of his behavior. One might question his sanity as his paranoia leads to disastrous consequences. This makes the credibility of the narrator questionable as well as for the supernatural elements in his story. When the narrator replaces Pluto with the "new" cat, he seems to want to return the order as it was before his horrible deeds. However, the attempt to hold back his guilt and violence backfires as his paranoia forces him to remove the constant reminder of his hateful mind. Kenneth Silverman states: "What has been hidden within the self will not stay concealed either". He continues on to say that the character's attempt in *The Black cat*, as well as other Poe's characters, to cover the inner feelings for both himself and for others are useless as the lack of self-knowledge causes suffering and conflict. Poe was interested and had an understanding for medical science which during his era was beginning to move away from superstition. This interest for psychopathology led to stories which dealt with mental illness. Benjamin Fisher states that nearly all of Poe's protagonists evince paranoiac and some also power mania.

The suffering of human experience throughout time has in literature been described by both vivid and most terrifying expressions. People's fears and hopes have strong connections with religious beliefs. Carl Gustav Jung, a famous psychotherapist active during Freud's lifetime, linked religion with myths. Jung believed that myth originated from the human mind and was projected to the outside world in the shape of gods. Myth's function was connected with the unconscious. However, it did not only exist inside of one person's mind, myth served as a collective unconscious which was passed on from generation to generation. As Jung explained this: "The material brought forward – folkloristic, mythological, or historical- serves in the first place to demonstrate the uniformity of psychic events in space and time" (Segal 70).

In addition, Jung noted that myth had a social function by supplying advice for how to behave, as what we have seen with the behavior of the narrator towards Pluto. Jung debated that when an instinct was turned into action, archetypes were the intellectual and emotional meaning of that action.

3.4 Conclusion

Although Poe did not claim to be religious or superstitious he took advantage of the figurative expressions and vivid pictures of myths and old beliefs to create a terrible landscape of the psyche which convey that he is one of the most prominent American writers. He deals with the genre of gothic literature and describes the dark side of human existence. He is thus regarded as the inventor of horror stories and fantasy novels; he is also the father of detective fiction.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

In this work we have attempted to examine and explain the gothic fiction in the story The Black Cat by Edgar Allan Poe; who specialized in this genre. we have also demonstrated that Edgar Allan Poe's life experiences played a major role in shaping his writings. Judging from his biography, one can note that literary art mirrors the artist's life. Therefore, life experience influences the writings of many artists as evidenced through Allan Poe.

The Black Cat is one of Poe's masterpieces in which there is much madness and mind troubles; that is why it reflects the psychology of Edgar Allan Poe (Skipp 1992).

In our work we have attempted to give an overall review of symbolism theory. A symbol is usually defined as an object, character or an action that suggests meanings, notions or emotions beyond what is expected at first time from its meaning or function (Huch & Brown 1995).

The aim we have set for this work is to make EFL learners aware of the meanings of symbolism, and then paving the way for the interpretations of the symbols in any literary text, in the with stories by Edgar Allan Poe who has owned a simple writing but effective style, easy to be understood but not easy to be interpreted (Skipp 1992).

The symbol, Black Cat, is the most important feature in Poe's short story. It reveals a special meaning in the work. This device implies several interpretations by the reader.

In addition, the present study has focused not only on the symbolism, but also provided a general survey of the story such as plot summary, themes characters and applying the psychoanalysis to investigate the personality of Allan Poe with the symbol of Black Cat.

The theory which is selected to be the method of investigating the symbol of The Black cat is Freud's theory. This study has demonstrated that real interpretations of black cat might be started and recognized.

The interpretation of the symbol in the short story makes a new sense of the story and enhances comprehension. Poe suffered in his real life from psychological troubles, he took alcohol as treatment to calm down his pain. thus, he wrote black cat to found some answers, he wanted to know what really happened to him, was it all the alcohol substance he took, or

was it the cat's spirit and the second cat was actually a ghost. All in all The Black Cat interprets an important part of Poe's life.

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