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BETWEEN DARKNESS AND DESPAIR: THE GOTHIC AS MELANCHOLIA IN MODERNIST LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Gothic literature is one of the most influential literary movements that have deep roots in the 18th century, and today it is widespread and fundamental. Having major Gothic works throughout centuries and prolific writers, Gothic literature bears important critical theories. It discusses essential topics ranging from society, politics, humanity, morals, psychology, postcolonial, and more to disclose realities and modern problems of the human. This thesis aims to explain the persistent influence of Gothic literature as melancholia and study of overview, with a close reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Raven* (1845), and *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843), Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* (1981), and T. S Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). In doing so, psychoanalysis and literary criticism will be core elements to explain how Gothic literature, as a sense of melancholia, still prevails in modernist literature and today's academia and continue to influence contemporary literature and society. Additionally, this thesis will examine how the exploration of Gothic as melancholia provides means to understand the complex human psyche and the darker aspects of the human experience.

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INTRODUCTION

"The skull-headed lady, the vampire gentleman, the whole troop of monks and monsters who once froze and terrified now gibber in some dark cupboard of the servants' hall. In our day we flatter ourselves the effect is produced by subtler means. It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder, and not at the decaying bodies of barons or the subterranean activities of ghouls" ("Gothic Romance" 306-307).

Gothic literature has evolved beyond its traditional trappings of supernatural entities and visible horrors and delved into the realm of unseen horrors within and psychological. This shift changed with time as humanity explores new fears in modernism, the monsters now haunt us are hidden aspects of our own psyche. With its investigation of dark and unsettling topics, the Gothic genre has long enthralled literature readers. From its beginnings in the late 18th century to its present development, the Gothic has provided a complex tapestry of emotions, symbolism, and psychological depth. One of the Gothic's most enduring characteristics is its link with melancholia, a pervasive sense of misery and contemplation that pervades its storylines. the more subtle means by which impact is now produced means that the modernist Gothic uses more sophisticated and psychological techniques to evoke fear and discomfort. It explores themes of uncertainty, fragmentation, and the dissolution of established systems, reflecting the shifting paradigms of the modern world. It uses symbolism, ambiguity and unique narrative techniques to delve into the dark recesses of the human mind and address the fears and anxieties that lurk within. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the Gothic as melancholia in the works of Edgar Allan Poe, T.S. Eliot, and Samuel Beckett with psychoanalytic close reading. In doing so, I explain Julia Kristeva's notion of melancholia, Sigmund Freud's the uncanny and their importance and influence on Gothic with a deep analysis and the help of similar research.

CHAPTER I

THE GOTHIC AS MELANCHOLIA

> When it locates madness in literature,
> psychoanalysis is in danger of revealing nothing more
> than its own madness: the madness of its interpreter.
> Shoshana Felman, *Writing and Madness*

The Gothic as Open Form

Gothic literature is an influential literary form with deep roots in the 18th century, and today it is widespread and fundamental. Including major works throughout centuries and prolific writers, Gothic literature bears on important critical theories. In part this is because Gothic literature deals with controversial issues relating to society, politics, humanity, morality, psychology, postcoloniality, and can be an entry point into the reality of modern human experience. This thesis focuses particularly on the intersection of Gothic literature as melancholia. It offers an overview of the intersection followed by a close reading of selected works of Edgar Allan Poe, Samuel Beckett, and T. S Eliot. In doing so, psychoanalysis and literary criticism will be core perspectives to explain how Gothic literature, as a genre that embeds in itself the effect of melancholia, wields its influence not only in modernism but also on the current academic work. This thesis will understand the Gothic as a strain of melancholia, and, in turn, will seek out melancholia as marked strain in the definition of "Gothic literature." This is one of the reasons why Gothic literature has been on the rise and wields influence on

today. The conjunction between melancholia and Gothic literature will provide a means to raise the question of the complexity of the human psyche and of the darker aspects of human experience.

Before discussing the connection between Gothic literature and melancholia, I will take a look at the meaning of "Gothic." The overview will help me show that Gothic, as a term, remains highly ambiguous and the unsettled meaning of the Gothic result in an open literary form.

The word originates in the first decades of the 18th century and derives from the Germanic term Goths. Early in the Renaissance, the name "Gothic" lost its original meaning and came to signify a medieval and barbaric style of architecture. With the rise in Gothic style, Gothic has taken on new connotations in literary works with a critical edge, including barbarous, medieval, and supernatural. As a result, Gothic came to be associated with barbarism and was frequently used to denote ineptitude, malice, and brutality (Longueil 453). Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is, without a doubt, an exemplary illustration of the term Gothic. It was the first time Gothic had been used in prose when he defined his narrative "A Gothic Story" on the title page. It is safe to infer that from the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* and onwards, in the 19th century, Gothic was used to simply refer to the return to medieval settings. With the creation of Gothic as a critical concept in prose fiction, Gothic literature came to be associated with a particular genre of literature after a while, with the changing times and adaptation to new themes and popularity. As a result, it can be said that the connotation changed from the literal denotation of a people (Goths) to architectural reference, from primitive to medieval qualifier, and finally it became a broad term employed in literary and aesthetic criticism in the 19th century (Longueil 458-460). Once it entered the literary realm, Gothic became a literary term synonymous with the grotesque, ghastly, and supernatural. These meanings still persist when the Gothic is mentioned today.

Gothic literature was long dismissed by literary authorities as 'low literature'. Early Gothic writers such as Clara Reeve, in her *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (1785), argued that Gothic relied only on sensation and improbable plot devices to degrade the mind and corrupt morals. Gothic novelist Anne Radcliffe, in *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826), further argued that the Gothic genre was being debased by inferior imitators who relied too heavily on cheap thrills and gratuitous violence. In his article *The Gothic Revival* (1929), J. B. Priestley argued that Gothic novels were merely a product of a historical and cultural period that was disappearing with the passage of time. He described Gothic literature as "emotional pornography" with no lasting value as a form of art. However, critical works such as *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil, and Ruin* by Richard Davenport-Hines (1998) and *The Gothic: A Study in Genre* by Fred Botting (1996) challenged this view in the twentieth century.

It might be claimed that since its inception in the late 18th century, Gothic literature has evolved into a place of grotesque "otherness." But fortunately, during the past 40 years, interest in Gothic literature has rekindled and has become one of the most popular academic fields of study. The 1980 publication of David Punter's *The Literature of Terror* in particular, changed the course of Gothic Studies and sparked new literary theory research. In the past 40 years, Gothic literature has sparked increasing, becoming of the most popular academic fields of study. Feminist scholarship contributed with the influential study by Ellen Moers, The *Female Gothic: The Monster's Mother* (1976), which examines the representation of women in Gothic literature. While G. R: Thompson's *The Gothic Imagination* explores the Gothic as a cultural phenomenon. In this context, the connection between melancholia and Gothic literature is also a subject of academic inquiry and many scholars have explored the relationship between melancholia and literature, for example: *Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture* by L. Andrew Cooper (2010), *Melancholy and Literary Biography,*

1640-1816 by Jane Darcy (2013) and *The Melancholy Art* by Michael Ann Holly (2013) and many more. Their works have provided valuable insights into the emotional and psychological themes of Gothic texts.

Gothic literature has a broad definition that is complex and interdisciplinary. A classic work on the subject remains Montague Summer's *Gothic Quest* (1938). Summer claims that although the term "Gothic" was originally used to describe architecture, it eventually came to stand for anything mediaeval and could be used to describe virtually any era up until the 17th century (203). Over time, the phrase developed to mean anything out-of-date or outmoded. Devendra P. Varma, however, disputed the notion that medievalism was the fundamental component of Gothic literature in 1957. He believed that the word "Gothic" had lost its original meaning and was now connected to the horrifying, supernatural, and grotesque in literature. Taking into account the fact that in much standard Gothic fiction there are not actually any supernatural events, O'Malley proposes the following provisional description of the Gothic for the purpose at hand: "the Gothic is the thematic or discursive presentation of the eruption of a traumatic past into the present as a distorted image suggesting the supernatural, which acts as the localization simultaneously of repulsion and of desire" (O'Malley 76). Associated with "the eruption of a traumatic past" the Gothic takes on a potential psychological relevance but also comes across as an ambiguous concept.

In this ambiguity, as well as in its association with a mix of repulsion and fear, the Gothic may recall the vicissitudes of the uncanny, first developed by Sigmund Freud in his key text *Das Unheimliche* (1919). Regarding this subject, Karlstad University of Sweden hosted an international interdisciplinary conference called *'Gothic and Uncanny Explorations'* in 2014 that resulted in a special issue of the journal Edda. Nordisk tidsskrift for litteraturforskning. In their introduction to the special issue, Maria Holmgren Troy and Sofia Wijkmark offer valuable

guidance to establish a fundamental connection between the Gothic and psychology.[1] As mentioned earlier on, the Gothic is difficult to define, and academics still haven't reached a consensus. The same goes with the uncanny. Both are exceptionally elusive concepts, difficult to characterise, and have experienced significant alterations over time. As a result, the meaning of the uncanny changed into a combination of "psychological and aesthetical estrangement, political and social alienation" (Masschelein 147). In light of this, uncanny manifestations have a variety of meanings because they might be considered psychological in nature and relate to a person's innermost thoughts and emotions (Troy and Wijkmark 108). The "uncanny" refers to things that make us unsettled, including unsettling observations or eerie adversities. Similarly, the Gothic evokes unsettling states, often associated with morbid sensations and feeling of grotesque and chilling. This affinity paves the way for a psychoanalytic approach to the concept, although, as it will become clear later, I will focus on melancholia.

Connections between the Gothic and the uncanny are recognized in Gothic studies. For instance, David Punter and Glennis Byron's *The Gothic* (2004), Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy's *The Routledge Companion to the Gothic* (2007), and *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2013) all discuss the uncanny and describe the idea's significance to Gothic theory. Nonetheless, even though the link to the uncanny is acknowledged as a key component of the Gothic, as shown by the recent scholarship, there are currently few publications specifically devoted to in-depth discussions of the connection. The term "uncanny" did not appear until the 20th century, and the Enlightenment and modernity are thought to be associated with the perspective of reality that the secularised uncanny denotes. (Troy and Wijkmark 110). Mladen Dolar, in an essay that draws on Lacan, talks of "a specific dimension of the uncanny that emerges with modernity" and he continues to argue that in pre-modern civilizations, this

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[1] Holmgren Troy, M., Wijkmark, S., Introduction: Gothic and Uncanny Explorations. Edda. Nordisk tidsskrift for litteraturforskning, 117.2 (2017): 108-114, https://doi.org/10.18261

dimension" was "largely covered (and veiled) by the area of the sacred and untouchable" (14). Dolar suggests a notion of paramount importance: he connects the placeless uncanny with the growth of Gothic fiction and claims that Gothic imaginaries dominated by ghosts and vampires are far from being "leftovers" from the past but in fact they are the outcome of modernity itself (Troy and Wijkmark 111). And he adds, "Popular culture, always extremely sensitive to the historical shifts, took successful hold of [the uncanny] …," and that brought about Gothic fictions (Dolar 14). Dolar, therefore, establishes an intimate link between the uncanny and the Gothic.

Emphasising Freud's essay, Terry Castle asserts that "the invention of the uncanny" served as a framework for historical change at a specific time. She goes on to claim that the radical rationalism of the 18th century, in combination with "psychic and cultural transformations," created the uncanniness of modernity (8-9). The uncanny is a significant literary device that can be used to arouse doubts about the veracity of the characters and events in a work of literature by evoking a sense of ambiguity and confusion. Additionally, it allows the text to show how the symbolic order of the society forms the characters and society's suppressed desires and anxieties. In Castle's words, the Enlightenment caused a gradual reinterpretation of ghosts and apparitions as *hallucinations* or mental projections, leading to an "internalisation of the spectral" (17). She points out that, while conventional beliefs in ghosts are dismissed as superstition, the human psyche is uncannily spectralized in the form of recurrent haunting pictures of deceased or absent loved ones (120-139). To the contrary, Diane Long Hoeveler refers to the time between 1780 and 1820 as the "gothic imaginary" in order to frame her exploration of the connection between the Gothic and the Uncanny (Hoeveler 2).

Both Terry Castle and Diana Long Hoeveler have explored the relationship between the Gothic genre and the concept of the uncanny. However, their approaches to the subject diverge. Castle's study focuses on the historical and cultural background of the uncanny. She argues that

the rigorous rationalism of the eighteenth century and major changes gave rise to the uncanny in modernity. Castle sees the uncanny as a crucial literary device, illustrating how cultural norms and symbolic frameworks create the hidden desires and anxieties of individuals and society. She claims that the Enlightenment increasingly redefined ghosts and apparitions as hallucinations or products of the mind. Hoeveler, on the other hand, focuses on the Gothic imaginary, which she describes as the period from 1780 to 1820. She sees the Gothic as a representation of the anxieties and fears common to this period of history and argues that the Gothic and the uncanny are inextricably linked. According to Hoeveler, the Gothic imaginary represents a cultural moment in which traditional Enlightenment values of reason and progress were challenged, resulting in a pervasive sense of dread and doubt expressed in the literature of the period. While both Castle and Hoeveler explore the relationship between the Gothic and the uncanny, their perspectives differ because of their different perspectives. Castle emphasises the historical and cultural context of the uncanny, while Hoeveler focuses her analysis on the Gothic as a cultural period imbued with fear and doubt.

The scholarly connection established between the uncanny and the Gothic helps indicate that the latter has always found a way to adapt itself to modern cultural anxieties and fears, as it mirrors the darkest corners of humanity. Accordingly, Jerrold E. Hogle defines the Gothic as a hybrid genre, portraying "essentially betwixt-and-between nature" (17) and with the Gothic becoming a popular form of media and art, many scholars also started to use its "hybrid nature" and explore various relationships between psychology and human condition. Since the early 20th century, film, TV series, music and video games also started to be interested in and used Gothic elements. Like the original Gothic, they are also concerned with death, decay, monstrosity and the supernatural, and they, too, seek to negotiate modernity. For instance, there was a Gothic horror movie craze in the early 1930s and also many popular Gothic horror novel adaptations were screened, and still, it is a trend that goes on. Some popular

Gothic horror adaptations: Bram Stoker's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) and *Dracula (1931)*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein (1932)*, Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca (1940)*, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath (1947)*, Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby (1968)*, and many others.

Emerging out of the shadows of eighteenth-century rationality, Gothic literature disrupts the idealism of nineteenth-century Romanticism by focusing on the hidden and unspeakable social elements of the era. The Gothic thus marks a disturbing and unsettling reappearance of the past, a narrative intervention that "Shadows the progress of modernity with counternarratives displaying the underside of enlightenment and humanist values" (Kollin 675). However, it is not entirely correct to say that Gothic, in any way, hinders or restrains modernity, and in fact, Gothic found a way to make its way to modernism and still persists. On the other hand, the Gothic is indeed as a shadow of Romanticism, for the Gothic explores the limitations of men with gloomy narrative and imagination. They are remarkably close to each other but exploring the other side of the same coin. In that sense, the Gothic is closer to a sub-genre of Romanticism called Dark Romanticism. They are often conflated with each other, as they reflect irrational, demonic, and grotesque fascination. In *Love and Death in the American Novel (1960),* Leslie Fiedler outlined the lineage of the American Gothic novel, and he especially highlighted this irrational and grotesque fascination with "terror entertainment" (473), through Edgar Allan Poe, from the works of Charles Brockden Brown (Rzepka 695). Since Gothic literature praises darkness, violence, and madness, it is no surprise that the Gothic novel also glorifies unappealing behaviour, the vicious, the selfish, and those who satisfy their lust. (Helyer 745).

Gothic imaginary has always been full of dark and endless nights, deserted places, ghostly paintings, underground dungeons, eerie voices, however, the elements that made Gothic works resonate with the readers were not the haunting surroundings but the supernatural

events, even in the first Gothic novels. Horror novels started to appear, dealing with the uncertainty of life beyond death and what it might be. What defines a meaningful existence is a central concern of the Gothic. Gothic literature has highlighted various suspenseful or tense-building techniques, emphasizing the relationship between form or style and emotion to discover the depth of the human mind and psychology. The Gothic has a long history of being fascinated by how the mind works. Some Gothic stories explore the limits of the mind's capacity to distinguish between reality and imagination or belief. The origin of terror and supernaturalism shifted from the outside world to the inside self as the Gothic style evolved. The concept that the unconscious mind may operate independently of a person's volition was first introduced to psychology in the 19th century, which allowed for the possibility that the monster within could be twice as terrible as the one outside the door. One could imagine haunted castles, ghosts in cemeteries, damsels being pursued by vampires, or any number of other terrible scenarios when thinking of the Gothic, but a closer look might reveal themes and concepts that underlie these terrifying tales. Gothic narratives frequently centre on oppressed individuals or the struggle of being different. Because of the fact that Gothic explores the state of mind, anxiety, and fear of the unknown, it is very topical and speaks to the psychological and emotional state of the reader and it is thought to provide a catharsis.

Psychoanalysis and Literature

Gothic literary works have always dealt with the depths of the human psyche, in addition to traditional Gothic settings. More than Gothic themes and imagery, what sparked more interest in the Gothic form was the possibility of a psychoanalytic approach. From this vantage point, melancholia emerges as a significant element of the Gothic. Psychoanalytic theory considers the relationship between personality dynamics and the human psyche. It is one of the fundamental and popular literary theories in the academic field of literary criticism. This approach of interpretative analysis in particularly rewarding when attempting to

understand the hidden meaning of a literary text, character, and writer's personality and also the experience that pushed the writer to create the literary work. Thus, the goal of psychoanalysis is to reveal the role of unconscious motives in developing certain behaviours (Hossain 2).

Psychoanalysis of literature started with the development of modern psychology research in the early 20th century. Pioneers of this method were Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, and Otto Rank. First, Freud developed this method to use his therapy experiments for neurosis and gradually, its use of area expanded and was generally practised in literature and other arts. Literature has sought to employ psychoanalysis for creative reasons, as much as literary criticism has used psychoanalytic theory to understand literature; thus, it is generally analysed from a psychological perspective as a reflection of the author's state of mind and personality traits in fictitious form. According to Monte (1977), "Psychoanalytic theories assume the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate an individual's overt actions" (8). It is with this connection that researchers begin to perceive that there is a mutual fascination between the fields of psychology and literature, and psychoanalysis itself is a major mediator between these two disciplines (Hossain 2). Psychoanalysis strongly emphasises motives, focusing on subliminal or veiled motivations that aid in the understanding of the literature on two levels: the level of the writing itself and the level of character actors in the text. Psychoanalysis focuses on the issue, and an attempt is made to clarify how meaning and identity relate to mental and societal processes. Contemporary understandings of reading, meaning, and the relationship between literature and culture highly value psychoanalysis.

There are two main interpretations of psychoanalysis in current literary theory: Freudian and Lacanian. Psychoanalysis, both Freudian and Lacanian, examines how literature reflects and shapes individual and social identity and meaning. Critics may use psychoanalytic approaches to study specific texts or to examine larger cultural patterns and themes. While

developing his theory of psychoanalysis, Freud has often connected it to art in general and literature in particular and especially in his 'Creative writers and daydreaming', he expended the connection between literature and psychoanalysis. Freud sought a secret and deeper meaning behind the words of work of art, in order to understand the artist's imagination and he believed that, like a daydream, the literary works contain fantasy that are unsatisfied with reality and thus a way of fulfilment. More often than not, writers are heavily influenced and affected by the circumstances around their lives. The hard time they experience, the struggles they are succumbed into usually finds a way to explode in their writings and reflects their state of mind.

Psychoanalysis is crucial to understanding a literary work, hidden meanings behind it, author's desire, and mindset, and thus, it is safe to say that psychology and literature is connected to each other, and this connection exist for a long time, proved by many psychologists and writers. It is possible to psychoanalyze a specific character from a literary work, however it is usually believed that all characters from a literary work are reflections of the author's personality. Psychoanalysis used to interpret literary texts and it is argued that literary works, like dreams, articulate the author's hidden unconscious yearnings, angsts, and neuroses. The writings of Sigmund Freud altered the understanding of human behaviour, as he paved the way for the analysis of complex literary characters with motivations that go beyond either the historical framework or more immediate and obvious levels by offering new insights into the self, which is arguably the first unreliable actor.

According to psychoanalytic criticism, characters' actions in a literary work can be linked to the author's internal psychological concerns, such as sexual conflicts, fixations, and past events. However, these psychological meanings are usually conveyed indirectly through various literary techniques such as symbolism, condensation, and displacement. These approaches allow the author to disguise his or her repressed desires, worries and emotions in

symbolic form. While the author is central to this approach, psychoanalytic criticism does not prioritise the author's intentions or conscious thought in line with the ideals of New Criticism. Instead, the emphasis is on uncovering the unconscious impulses and meanings of the literary work. However, what the author did not intend (i.e., what was suppressed) is pursued: the filtering conscious mind has twisted the unconscious material. As Aras explains, "In the psychological analysis, the author's perceptions, conscious or unconscious mind, the differences between the personality of the author and the author in the text are also taken into consideration" (Aras 253). In other words, it can be said that writers usually tell their own lives, turning their maladies into their art (Wellek 81). This forms the very heart of psychological thrillers and, I would argue of Gothic literary works. In other words, writers often use their experiences and problems to create creative masterpieces, especially in psychological thrillers and gothic fiction. These works are characterised by a combination of the obvious and the hidden, the mysterious and the compelling, and they engage the reader by addressing psychological issues. Gothic literature explores the human psyche, exploring the dark and often unpleasant parts of the mind. Furthermore, since the author's experiences and challenges carry paramount significance, it is no surprise that their conscious and unconscious mind reflects in what they write. Following this, according to Carl Jung, "an artist's life cannot be otherwise than full of conflicts, for two forces are at war within him – on the one hand the common human longing for happiness, satisfaction and security in life, and on the other a ruthless passion for creation which may go so far as to override every personal desire" (229-230).

In the reading process, literary works ask us to comprehend not only their formal features, such as plot, characters and linguistic elements, but also the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of those formal features (Aras 254). This complex of formal and psychological features makes up different perspectives for the reader and because there are many ways to read and interpret the meaning of a work, it is evident that personality and

individual differences play an active role in literature just as they do in psychology. Reading involves thinking like the characters do, paying attention to word choices, observing group of or individual events, drawing conclusions, evaluating specific emotions, deep fears, miseries, and anxieties, and uncovering the unsaid, unconscious desires, hidden meanings or motives or wishes (Aras 254). With such intensive and careful reading, it is possible to direct attention to the repressed desires reserved in the unconscious mind. As Lacan puts it: "the unconscious is structured like a language" and this, for some scholars, means that "both semiotics and psychoanalysis have the potential to dislodge and reorient traditional ways of understanding human experience" (Aras 255).

The Black Sun of Melancholia

> "In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger – something better, pushing right back."
>
> Albert Camus

> For those who are racked by melancholia, writing about it would have meaning only if writing sprang out of that very melancholia.
>
> Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

It was believed that one must suffer and understand pain to master the peak human experience. Numerous definitions of the term "melancholia" have been given throughout the history of psychopathology, ranging from Hippocrates' time, when it was primarily thought of in terms of its affective component, to the eighteenth century, when authors and opinions were divided and both aspects (affective disorders and abnormal beliefs) were valued. The two main ones were aberrant beliefs and emotional disorders (fear and sadness). The affective component resurfaces as the main aspect of melancholia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. Finally, melancholia primarily begins to be used as a euphemism for strange beliefs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Telles-Correia and Marques 1). In the light of this, it is safe to say that even though melancholia was primarily associated with disorders such as sadness and fear, over time the term took on new meanings, just like the Gothic, as previously explained. Melancholy is still associated with mood disorder, but when used in conjunction with art, especially literature, its stress fall on a state of dejection, with the added note of a pensive mood. It suggests sadness and dismalness, but different studies have used different criteria in studying melancholia.

The meaning of melancholia has remained relatively ambiguous; it is generally perceived as a painful condition that creates space for greater understanding, discernment, and creativity. The fundamental distinction between modern-day sadness and melancholia is a condition known as "nobilitation" (Middeke and Wald 1). The personification of melancholy appears in allegorical or symbolic locations, and it makes a psychological state of mind connect with the outside world. Our current period has been labelled as one that is particularly prone to melancholy; this description applies to literature, the arts, as well as literary and cultural thought. For instance, Andrew Gibson describes the modern aesthetic sphere as "a melancholy space", Juliana Schiesari identifies a widespread "melancholy of the disciplines" (Middeke and Wald 2) and finds a "rhetoric of loss" in modern cultural theory. In short, it can be said that, with regard to the relationship between melancholia and modernity, melancholia in literature mainly emanates from as a sense of loss and this loss can be a response to a feeling of absence or lack, a deep-rooted, unfathomable craving or a yearning for something more, different or other that more often than not signify a story of a previous loss, bordering on nostalgia (Middeke and Wald 3).

From this perspective, one of the most influential studies of melancholia is Julia Kristeva' s *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989), which explores this phenomenon

in the context of art, literature, and society from a psychoanalytic perspective. She highlights how the love of a vanished persona or connection lies at the very heart of depression's dark core, defining the depressive as someone who considers self-esteem as a necessary pursuit and an almost unattainable goal. In *Black Sun*, Kristeva adopts the stance that depression is more of a discourse with a language to be taught than an illness that needs to be treated exclusively (Roudiez 1). This part of the chapter will build on Kristeva to try and outline the dynamic function of melancholia in the creation of art and literature. One of the key topics in this research will be the dynamic encounter between writing and melancholy, with the explicit relation between the two (Su 163-165).

Kristeva's *Black Sun* is not only a rethinking of the Freudian formulation of mourning and melancholia but also a reconceptualization of the disease as a linguistic malady whose primary symptom is chronic asymbolia or loss of speech and meaning. Thus melancholia, like the semiotic and the abject in her former works, is her main conceptual "term" in *Black Sun*. Kristeva's work on melancholia can be looked upon as an integral part of her project to bring the unspeakable into desire and language. In melancholia, there is a disinvestment in language's symbolic power, a split between language and affect (Su 164). According to Kristeva, melancholia is characterised by an indescribable sensation of loss that is challenging to put into words. But there are ways to express and sublimate this sensation in literature and art. She emphasises that, literature and art are based on a melancholy basis because they both deal with a sense of loss that is ultimately overcome via creative expression. By working through their feelings of loss and reclaiming a sense of wholeness, the subject is able to use the act of creation as a type of symbolic sublimation. The phrase "lost maternal object" shows that Kristeva believes that early childhood experiences of loss and separation serve as the foundation for melancholia. The individual can symbolically retrieve the lost object through creative expression, which helps them discover meaning and purpose in their lives.

Overall, Kristeva's viewpoint emphasises the significance of literature and art as a means of expressing and processing difficult feelings, such as melancholy. Additionally, it emphasises how important early experiences with loss and separation can be in forming our emotional selves. In her writings on melancholy, Kristeva contends that literature and art provide a way to depict and transcend the sense of loss that underlies melancholy. She contends that using one's creativity as a form of therapy can help a person deal with their grief and restore their sense of self. According to Kristeva, literature is a particularly potent tool for illuminating the complexity of melancholy. She suggests that reading and composing literary works can give readers and writers a sense of catharsis and provide a space in which the unsayable can be spoken and she demonstrates how literature can provide a means of confronting and working through painful emotions. She highlighted the crucial role that creative expression can play in the process of emotional healing and underscored the power of language to articulate the complexities of the human experience.

Kristeva's focus on the function of art and literature in processing painful emotions and experiences is similar to Freud's theories about the therapeutic potential of creative expression. According to Freud, art and literature can be used to sublimate and transform unconscious desires and emotions into socially acceptable forms. In his idea of the 'sublimation' of drives, he argued that the human propensity for creative expression is a means of channelling primitive, often destructive emotions into more productive and socially helpful outlets. As a result, both Kristeva and Freud recognise the power of creative expression as a form of emotional healing and catharsis, and both emphasise the importance of early experiences and emotions in shaping the individual psyche. While Kristeva's approach focuses on the symbolic and linguistic components of sadness, Freud's theory focuses on the role of the unconscious and primal impulses in influencing human behaviour and emotions.

In summary, Kristeva's perspective on melancholy emphasises the value of literature and art in processing and expressing painful feelings and the ability of creative expression to aid emotional recovery. Her view of the importance of literature in explaining the complexities of melancholy is consistent with Freud's emphasis on the unconscious and the use of free association to explore the depths of the psyche. Both Kristeva and Freud see the power of language to communicate the intricacies of human experience and the potential of artistic expression to create a space in which difficult emotions can be confronted and processed.

Melancholia and Mourning

Freud's significant distinction between grieving and melancholia has been used by academics looking to understand experiences of social or collective loss at least since the late 1960s. The distinction is now widely recognised. According to Freud, "mourning" refers to a psychological reaction to loss that has a clear beginning, middle, and end because the mourner is able to process their grief in a way that is largely unambiguous, letting go of old bonds in order to build new ones. The concept of melancholia involves a grieving process that is hindered by negative feelings towards the thing that has been lost. This makes it difficult to fully let go and move on, and instead results in a conflicted relationship with the lost object. Melancholia can lead to feelings of emptiness, an inability to form new connections, and self-blame and in severe cases, this can even result in melancholic's suicide (Mourning and Melancholia 243-53). Freud describes the loss of interest in the outside world, as defined by Renaissance humanists like Ficino and Burton; the loss of a cherished object or even the capacity for love; a loss of self-esteem or self-respect leading to self-reproach or the conviction of being irreparably guilty. Eminent literary characters like Hamlet show how these discourses of melancholy loss frequently intersect and result in art. Hamlet loses his father as well as his faith in justice and honesty, his capacity to love his mother and Ophelia, his self-esteem in the face of his inability to exact revenge, and so much of his "mirth," his lust for life, that he flirts

with suicide - but at the same time, he is, of course, credited with profound philosophical insight. One of many examples that shows this is the fact that Shakespeare drew on early modern medical discourses of intellectual melancholia, love melancholia, as well as melancholic madness, and that Freud in turn referenced to *Hamlet* in his ground-breaking work on grief and melancholia. Shakespeare's use of early modern medical discourses on scholarly melancholia, love melancholia, and melancholic madness, and Freud's reference to *Hamlet* in his seminal work on *Mourning and Melancholia* serve as two of many examples that show how medical and artistic discourses on melancholia have been influenced by one another both simultaneously and over time (Middeke and Wald 4).

In summary, it can be said that Martin Middeke and Christina Wald discuss the two key examples of the melancholic sense of loss and how they have had a significant impact on the development of melancholy in their important work *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern* (2011). The anticipation of one's own death and the ensuing perception of a change in time or a sense of losing time are the first signs. The loss of an item and the effects it has on the subject are the second manifestation. Since Freud's research on melancholy, the second idea—the loss of an object—has taken front stage. Freud's treatment of melancholy provided a fruitful and original approach to cultural theory as well as psychology. The essay contends, in summation, that the two fundamental forms of the melancholic sense of loss have had an impact on melancholy throughout its history and have been handled in various ways by philosophy, literature, psychology, and cultural theory. These two occurrences are claimed to have existed throughout the phenomenology and history of melancholia, but they peaked at different historical periods. Vanitas, or the transience of existence, for instance, has been a recurring human desire. Since Romanticism, the initial concept of time and temporality has gained particular significance for philosophy and literature.

Melancholia as a Shade of Angst

In the melancholic mind, the temporal limits of human life, the temporality of human existence, and the very consciousness of it determine a precarious experience of the present moment. In relation to this, Martin Heidegger is essential to understand the connection between melancholia and the futility of existence, temporality of time and meaninglessness of life. Even though Heidegger did not write extensively about melancholia, he discusses the concept of "Angst" as anxiety or dread, which shares some similarities with melancholia and many scholars found interesting connections between his ideas on Angst and the experience of melancholia, especially in his book *Being and Time* (1927). Heidegger thought Angst as a fundamental condition of human existence. It arises from our awareness of our own mortality and uncertainty of the future, and he believed that Angst could be a productive force, pushing us to confront the existential questions of our existence and leading us towards authentic living. However, it can also lead to a sense of alienation and despair if we are unable to find a meaning or purpose in our lives. In these two senses, melancholia and Angst resemble to each other as melancholia can also be a productive force, inspiring artistic and creative endeavours, but it can also lead to a sense of despair and detachment from the world. His ideas on the human condition have been influential in literature and literary theory and many authors explored themes of existential angst, mortality and the search for meaning in their works such as Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis (1915)*, Albert Camus' *The Stranger (1942)*, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar (1963)*, J. D Salinger's *The Cather in the Rye (1951)*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury (1929)*, Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Pale View of Hills (1982)* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) are some examples of modernist and contemporary novels that explore the themes of existentialism, melancholia and the Gothic and each one offers a unique and complex perspective on the human condition.

Heidegger believed that Sein/Being, which is referred to be the standards or conditions that define any particular entity, is intertwined with human existence, or Dasein. The existence of Dasein makes it vital and pertinent to consider the question of what Being means. Heidegger contends that interpretation characterises Dasein's relationship to Being and that this relationship can be examined by looking at Dasein's temporality. He takes note of events like Angst and mortality that lead to Dasein's "thrownness" and "falling" as well as the existential structure of "care." Heidegger talks of Dasein's "downward plunge" into the meaninglessness and void of daily life. Heidegger's philosophy essentially emphasises the significance of comprehending the connection between time, human existence, and the nature of Being in his work of *Care as the Being of Dasein* (223-274). Dasein (i.e., our Being-there) can only self-actualize in the face of its temporality and because of its finiteness since it is something that is "thrown" and "fallen." Thus, the past, present, and future make up the three ecstasies of temporality. Human beings live towards their future, which ineluctably has death at its far end. According to Heidegger, being alive therefore always entails moving towards death. The idea of memento mori or vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas, which are frequently iconographically captured in a scrutinising gaze on the human skull; the pose in which *Hamlet* is most often depicted, has always fascinated art and literature. However, everyday consciousness, common sense, or an optimistic belief in human progress may contradict or suppress this idea as a rather pessimistic view of the human condition (Middeke and Wald 5).

Literature has melancholically recalled death, which consistently casts a shadow on the fleeting moment of human passion; one may point to the melancholy consciousness of temporality in Romanticism and the attempt to heal or at least to soothe the wound of time via imagination; or one may recall the impression of a painful standstill of time, an incongruence between the observation of a world in the midst of ruthless flux and incommensurable acceleration and a subjective feeling of stagnation and deceleration – felt as ennui, boredom

and agonizing, empty repetition, as famously theorized by Kierkegaard – as it is prevalent, for instance, in late nineteenth-century aestheticism. The melancholic mind no longer feels subjective (i.e., inner duration) and 'objective' manifestations of time consciousness (i.e., clock time) as forming a meaningful continuum, but as disrupted and dysfunctional (Middeke, Wald 5-6).

The nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries' works of art and literature serve as the primary witnesses to this process of estrangement and disenchantment, whose psychological impact is, on the one hand, characterised by the deepest melancholy. As numerous reflections of this issue in literature and art, whether of realist/naturalist or of highly auto-reflexive, experimental provenance, have amply demonstrated to the present, a melancholic sensitivity produces the highest aesthetic innovation and output. Literature offers a variety of artistic interpretations of such a melancholic displacement, including Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain (1924)*, Virginia Woolf's devastatingly shocking portrayal of time's irreversibility in *To the Lighthouse (1927)*, Marcel Proust's concept of memory in *Remembrance of Things Past (1913-1927*, and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot's (1952)* merciless clarification of empty repetition. All of these instances share a focus on temporality and human transience as well as an understanding of how time can never be recovered and inherently melancholic with gothic imaginary.

The Gothic as a Shade of Melancholia

Gothic literature is an investigation of the darkest sides of the human condition. I am arguing that it evokes a sense of discomfort and terror that is in keeping with melancholia, placing a strong emphasis on death, decay, and the otherworldly. This link can be traced back to the Romantic period when the melancholy hero was viewed as a symbol of resistance to the alienation and mechanisation of the contemporary world. These investigations into the human

condition were continued by existentialist writers, who frequently portrayed their characters as alienated and tormented by the past. The gothic imaginary provides an environment for the expression of the unconscious, the repressed, and the taboo due to its emphasis on the grotesque and the irrational. In this way, the relationship between melancholy and gothic literature can be viewed as a reflection of the human condition, where the longing for transcendence and redemption coexists with the fear of death and the quest for meaning.

Numerous thinkers and literary experts have investigated the intricate and nuanced relationship between melancholy and gothic literature. Here we comprehend the Gothic as a shade of melancholia in part thanks to psychoanalysis. The Gothic's fascination with the paranormal and the eerie has been connected, in example, to Freud's concept of the uncanny, which is the sensation of unease or dread that develops when something is both familiar and unknown at the same time. Martin Heidegger and Kierkegaard are two more philosophers who have studied melancholy and the human condition. While Kierkegaard examined the idea of despair as a fundamental feature of the human condition, Heidegger focused on how language shapes human experience and the notion that humans are constantly in a state of becoming. The gothic's fascination with the darker facets of human experience has been related to both of these concepts. Julia Kristeva, a literary theorist, has also investigated the relationship between melancholy and the gothic. In her book *Black Sun*, Kristeva makes the case that the gothic signifies a sort of "symbolic death" that enables us to face and accept the more sinister facets of our psyche. Overall, scholars are still delving into the rich and intricate relationship between melancholy, Gothic literature, and philosophy. And this proves that the Gothic may be understood as an open form particularly apt at working through the darker sides of the human experience. It implies that the Gothic literary genre is a versatile style that excels at examining the darker parts of human existence, such as the mysterious, existential, and symbolic.

Conclusion

Gothic literature is an influential and essential movement rooted deeply in the 18th century. Having significant works throughout the centuries that deal with the human condition, psychology, deepest fears, and realities of the times enabled Gothic literature to be comprehensive and bear critical theories on both literature and society. In this chapter, I focused on giving an overview of Gothic literature, explaining its roots, and meaning while focusing mainly on the intersection of Gothic literature as melancholia. In analysing Gothic as melancholia, psychoanalytic reading and literary criticism are vital to understanding the effect of melancholia and its influence on modernism.

Gothic literature has been regarded by some scholars as a low literature form for a long time, especially in the 19th century; however, it is evident in both old and new research that Gothic is not simply grotesque literature, but a timeless and limitless interdisciplinary study of the human condition and notion of uncanny is a key element in this connection. The concept of uncanny and Gothic was first studied by Sigmund Freud and later recognised by many scholars in Gothic studies as explained in detail. The idea of melancholia by Kristeva further strengthened the understanding of Gothic melancholy, arguing that literature and art are based on a melancholy basis because they both deal with a sense of loss that is ultimately overcome with creative expression. Overall, scholars are still exploring the complex and intricate relationship between melancholy, Gothic literature and philosophy. This shows that the Gothic can be seen as an open form, particularly suited to exploring the darker aspects of human existence. It suggests that the Gothic literary genre is a diverse style that excels at exploring the darker aspects of human existence, such as the mysterious, the existential and the symbolic.

CHAPTER II

EDGAR ALLAN POE DARK MODERNISM AND MELANCHOLIA

"And so, being young and dipt in folly

 I fell in love with melancholy."

- Edgar Allan Poe, *Romance*.

Edgar Allan Poe was master of horror and storytelling and being the precursor of Gothic and innovator in the field of detective fiction, Poe is one of the most popular writers that still being studied and read both in academia and popular culture. His legacy as a writer and a cultural icon has endured to this day, with his works remaining essential and influential to many other writers, artworks and academic circles, deservingly due to his fascinating use of language, symbolism, and imagery which often featured macabre themes, psychological horror, and twisted plot twists that helped him shape his own distinctive literary style. He is often credited with helping to establish the modern short story and paving the way for later writers in the horror and detective fiction genres with his use of deductive reasoning and close attention to detail. Many of his works explore themes of death, madness, and the supernatural, and he is widely considered to be a master of the grotesque. In this chapter, Poe's *The Fall of the House of the Usher (1839)*, *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) and *The Raven (1845)* will be analysed through the lenses of melancholia theory, psychoanalytic close reading and literary criticism along with the methodology as previously explained.

Poe's struggle with life, poverty and alcoholism is well-known, and it is also evident in his works. He tried to meet his ends with trying to publish many works in different ways such as poetry, short story, editing and criticism and even though he was a successful writer, he continued to suffer and wasn't famous until many years after his death. It is generally

acknowledged in academia that Charles Baudelaire's translation of Poe's works and his articles on him have a significant influence on his legacy, appeal and thus his later fame internationally. In fact, Baudelaire's contribution to Poe's global acclaim was so significant that, in the words of Paul Valéry, the American author "would have been almost forgotten" if Baudelaire "had not taken up the task of introducing him into European literatures" and if Baudelaire did not view Poe as a model, then the latter's fame would fade away among the other forgotten American writers of his age" (Ibáñez and Guerrero-Strachan xxi). The number of authors who have asserted to be influenced by Poe in some manner or another suggests that Baudelaire's finding was significant, and Poe's impact was disseminated to other European writers thanks to the translation of his writings into French, notably Stéphane Mallarmé and Arthur Rimbaud, who both acknowledged Poe's influence on their own works. Along with Baudelaire, Poe's writing also had an impact on the works of Jorge Luis Borges, Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. With his book *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields (1898)*, which includes a figure based on Poe, Verne in particular created a tribute to Poe. In addition to translating Poe's works, Baudelaire was an admirer who saw Poe as an influence on his own aesthetic theories. With his themes of alienation, uncertainty, and terror, he thought Poe was a writer who had perfectly caught the core of the modern condition. Baudelaire's own writings, which include both poetry and prose that explore the same themes of decadence and the macabre, show how much he idolised Poe.

Edgar Allan Poe's relationship with and experience of death can be seen evidently in his works using all sorts of symbols and rhetorical imagery for the representation of death, especially in *The Fall of the House of Usher* while describing the resurrected heroine of the story. Poe's experiences of macabre, trauma, loss and death in his personal life are evident in his literary work, which frequently explores themes of mourning, grief, and the transience of life. For instance, many of his stories, such as *The Raven* and *Annabel Lee (1849)* feature

bereaved narrators who are consumed by grief and haunted by the memory of their lost loves. Poe's struggle with life, with no doubt had affected his writing accordingly. The loss of his loved ones, first his biological and adoptive mother, then his wife, and his close friends throughout his life, had severely depressed him and exacerbated his sceptical, melancholic and introverted personality. These experiences likely contributed to his fascination with illness, decay, and mortality in his writing. These dying women who had invaluable place in Poe's life disturbed Poe and made him question his beliefs about life, death and the thin line in between; therefore, mourning after them by their grave, weeping, he became a cemetery wanderer almost all his life (Ibáñez 46).

As explained in the previous chapter, Sigmund Freud wrote an essay entitled "Mourning and Melancholia" in which he explores the link between grief and depression, arguing that while mourning is a natural response to the loss of a loved one, melancholia is a pathological state that arises when the mourner's ego is unable to let go of the lost object. Poe's sense of melancholia and inability to let go of the past, the dead and grief can be linked to Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* in the sense that Poe's unresolved traumas, unending poverty and constant sense of loss are reflected in his writing and characters, who often seem to be struggling with the same hauntings that tormented Poe himself, allowing for a catharsis and release of his existential angst. Similarly, one potential connection between Poe and Julia Kristeva is their shared interest in the concept of the abject. The abject, according to Kristeva's definition in her book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (2018)*, is "what upsets identity, system, and order. what disregards boundaries, positions, and laws. the ambiguous, the composite, and the in-between" (4) Poe frequently includes elements of the grotesque in his literature, such as death, decay, and madness, which challenges societal norms and expectations. Moreover, according to Kristeva, the abject is both repulsive and seductive, enticing the subject to it but also arousing disgust. This is similar to how Poe's writing affects

the reader, evoking a sense of curiosity and horror with its macabre and unnerving themes. Furthermore, according to Kristeva, the abject is linked to the body and its physiological functions, such as excretion and decay. This relationship is further emphasised by Poe's frequent use of the concepts of bodily decay and decomposition in his writing.

Despite coming from different philosophical schools and eras, there are significant similarities between Poe and Heidegger. Their similar interest in the theme of death and mortality is one possible link. The temporal nature of human life and the fundamental connection between being and time are explored in Heidegger's philosophy. In his examination of death, Heidegger asserts that it is not merely an event that occurs at the end of life, but rather an essential aspect of human existence that gives meaning and purpose to life. Similarly, Poe's literary works often explore themes of mortality, decay and the fragility of human life. In works such as *The Fall of the House of Usher (1839)* and *The Masque of the Red Death (1842)*, Poe explores the psychological implications of dying and the fear of dying. In a similar way to Heidegger's emphasis on the fear and anticipation of death, he also uses Gothic imagery to evoke an atmosphere of unease and dread. Poe and Heidegger share similarities in their use of language and their willingness to question established literary norms. The centrality of language as our basic way of understanding and experiencing the world is emphasised in Heidegger's philosophy. He argues that language is a means of revealing the hidden structures of reality, rather than simply a tool for communication. Poe's writing is known for its use of symbolism, metaphor and complicated psychological themes. Through the use of ambiguous language, he often forces readers to understand his stories and characters in new and unexpected ways.

John Riquelme was a prominent Poe scholar who meticulously studied American literature from the 19th century. He was particularly interested in Poe's use of language and his examination of the more sinister sides of human psychology. He asserted that Poe used the

double to investigate the duality of human nature and the psychological tensions that result from it, not only as a Gothic literary device. Riquelme also wrote extensively about Poe's use of language and symbolism, suggesting that Poe's writing focused on utilising language to evoke a certain mood and atmosphere rather than just presenting a good story. According to Riquelme, while he was exploring the psychological dimensions of Poe's writing, he argues that Poe's occupation with the darker aspects of human psychology, such as madness and obsession, was a reflection of his own personal struggles and additionally, Poe's language was innovative and experimental in its use of narrative voice with down to the last detail, point of view, and chronology that these techniques contributed to the overall impact of his stories.

The book *"The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction: The Shadow and the Gothic,"* (1990) written by John Macmillan Herdman, contains one of his most illuminating chapters on Poe's usage of doppelgängers in his writing. According to Herdman, Poe used the double to examine the duality of human nature and the resulting psychological problems, not just as a Gothic cliché. For literary artists, particularly novelists, duality and the divided mind have long been sources of curiosity. This is especially true of the Romantic generation and their later nineteenth-century progeny. The double, or Doppelgänger, is a recurring motif in the literature of the time, and this work explores how it relates to the issue of evil. It implies that the literary double thrived at its peak when psychological and religious interpretations of human division were in agreement and suffered when they started to diverge. The concept of the double is a common theme in Gothic literature, and it usually refers to the idea of a character having a duplicate or shadow self that can either be a source of protection or a manifestation of inner turmoil and divided self. Herdman argues that the double in Gothic fiction is a symbol of the human psyche's dual nature, which is often split between reason and emotion, light and dark, or good and evil while providing a comprehensive analysis of the two and valuable insights

into the psychological and philosophical themes that still continues to be explore in today's academia.

The shadow, or the repressed and unconscious components of a person's personality, is represented by the double in terms of the Jungian idea of the shadow. However, the doppelganger has a rich literary history that dates back to early myths and stories. In German folklore, the doppelganger was considered a death omen, and running into one's own double was interpreted as an omen that one's own demise was about to occur. Many well-known works, including *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert* Louis Stevenson, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *The Picture of Dorian Grey* by Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, explore the idea of the double or doppelganger as a potent literary motif that is still used in contemporary literature to explore the complex and frequently contradictory nature of the human psyche. The unconscious facets of a person's personality that are frequently viewed as unpleasant, unattractive, or unwanted are referred to as their "shadow" in Jungian psychology. The repressed and immature components of the psyche are represented by the archetype of the shadow, in accordance with Jung. The parts of the self that are frequently ignored or disavowed are ultimately responsible for shaping conduct, ideas, and emotions. Jung develops his concept of the shadow in his well-known book *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (1951), contending that it also contains positive aspects of the self that are ignored or rejected by the conscious mind and additionally, he also argues that it's possible for the shadow to manifest in dreams, artwork, and other forms of creative expression.

Poe's use of enchanting words, experiments with syntax, creation of melody, and wild imagination are the reasons why his brilliant use of language still enchants readers after hundreds of years. Poe had a large and diverse vocabulary. He carefully chose his words, which were typically unusual and strange, to evoke a spooky and unpleasant mood in his writings. In

order to develop a unique and recognizable style, Poe also experimented with grammar and sentence structure. He frequently employed lengthy, complex sentences that were challenging to understand, which increased the sensation of disorientation and bewilderment in his writings. Poe was a master of meter and rhythm as well, and his poems and stories are well known for their musicality. He frequently employed numerous literary techniques, such as repetition and alliteration, to elicit a hypnotic response from the reader and heighten the work's emotional impact. Finally, Poe was a master at using strong imagery to stir up strong feelings in the reader. His use of symbolism and metaphor deepened the psychological impact of his novels, and he used descriptive language to create rich, immersive worlds. Poe is one of the greatest language masters in literary history because of the interaction of these elements, as well as his creative and distinctive storytelling style.

Poe's use of language and literary style are characterised by his careful and intentional word selections, which give his text an *echoic quality* by causing recurrence and resonance. The first line of *The Fall of the House of Usher (1839)* demonstrates the application of this approach: "During the whole dull, dark, and soundless day […] (95). The terms *dull*, *dark*, and *soundless* are used throughout the text to set the tone and ambiance of the narrative as well as to emphasise the oppressive and gloomy aspect of the environment Poe's fascination with the ability of language to elicit a physical and emotional response in the reader can be noticed in this echoic quality. He believed that meticulously choosing and placing words to elicit a specific effect, whether that effect was a feeling of horror, discomfort, or melancholy, was the most efficient approach to create an immersive and profound reading experience. Poe's literary legacy is defined by his attention to language and style, which has impacted numerous authors and readers since his time.

Poe's idea of *unity of effect*, which he thought was crucial to a literary work's success, is frequently linked to his theory of language. Poe believed that a literary work's language

should be deliberately selected and structured in order to have a specific emotional or psychological impact on the reader. Every word and every component of a piece of writing, he maintained, should support this idea, and any components that did not should be removed. Poe built on this idea in his article *The Philosophy of Composition*, using the poem *The Raven* as an example. He explained how he strove to sustain the feeling of sorrow and foreboding throughout the entire poem by carefully choosing the poem's phrases and rhyme scheme. Another literary concept that Poe used to create a dark, grotesque, melancholic aura was *chiaroscuro*. In the visual arts, *chiaroscuro* is the use of strong contrasts between light and dark to convey a sense of depth and drama. In literature, *chiaroscuro* refers to the use of contrasting components to create a mood or atmosphere in a book, such as light and dark imagery. Poe's use of *chiaroscuro* is often cited as one of the factors contributing to his mastery of language. His use of contrasting materials allowed him to paint clear, striking images that added to the psychological weight of his works. The term *terror enlightenment* describes the idea that being frightened can lead to a sense of enlightenment or self-awareness. Themes of madness, death and the unknown are often explored in Poe's writings, which can be disturbing and unsettling to readers. However, through the experience of dread, readers could develop a deeper awareness of themselves and the world around them. The concept of dread as enlightenment is often associated with the Gothic literary tradition, in which Poe played an important role.

Poe's writing career differed from that of his contemporaries such as Emerson, Hawthorne and Thoreau in that he did not focus on religious themes, wealth or a particular sense of place. Poe's literary pursuits were characterised by restlessness and versatility, as he wrote poetry, short stories and criticism while moving between cities such as New York, Boston and Baltimore. He also had a connection with his hometown of Richmond, Virginia, which he often visited. This restlessness and lack of a clear literary identity, combined with his turbulent personal life, contributed to Poe's reputation as a troubled and enigmatic figure.

However, his experimentation with different genres and styles allowed him to develop a unique voice and approach to writing that continues to fascinate readers today. Poe's focus on psychological horror, his use of language and structure to create tension and suspense, and his exploration of the darker aspects of the human experience have all contributed to his enduring legacy. His stories often delved into the unknown, exploring the limits of human knowledge and understanding, and he used his writing to examine the complex and often disturbing aspects of the human psyche. In many ways, Poe was ahead of his time, exploring themes and ideas that would later become prominent in literary and philosophical movements such as existentialism and modernism. His influence on later writers, both in the United States and around the world, has been immense, and his legacy continues to be celebrated and studied by scholars and readers alike.

"THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER"

First published in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine in September 1839, The Fall of the House of Usher is one of Poe's most famous stories, as well as an enigmatic and ambitious masterpiece that is challenging to interpret. It tells the story of an unnamed narrator visiting his childhood friend Roderick with his identical twin sister Madeline at their decrepit mansion. Roderick suffers from unknown ailments and claims that he can feel the pain of the collapsing mansion which he thinks sentient. As the story unfolds, the narrator discovers that the Usher twins are suffering from a mysterious illness that seems to be slowly driving them mad, and which is thought to come from their lineage because they were inbred and had no connection to the outside world, hence the curse. Roderick attempts to bury his sister and secure the coffin lid, thinking she is dead, but the narrator knew she was moving and alive, alas did not tell, and then when she haunts back becomes an obsessive figure in the story of Usher and the witness narrator (Gil 53).

The first main theme of the story is the literal and metaphorical disintegration of the Usher family. The Usher family is plagued by mental and physical illness, and it is believed that their family line is cursed. The family mansion, a representation of their legacy, is disintegrating and crumbling in on itself. The second theme is the doppelganger, as Roderick and his twin sister Madeline are described as being almost identical in appearance and share a strong psychic and emotional bond. The use of the doppelganger theme provides a tone of ambiguity and unpredictability to the narrative force. It is unclear that whether Roderick and Madeline are two different people or merely two halves of the same creature because, the distinction between their different identities is blurred by the fact that they are psychically linked and seem to share same thoughts and feelings. Madeline represents the dark side of her brother's conscience, unspeakable desires, and his dreaded double (Gil 52). The notion of doppelgangers is also linked to the story's overarching theme of decay and decline as, the last remaining descendants of the Ushers, the twins have deteriorated physically and mentally, mirroring the decline of their once-impressive ancestral members and home. The idea of encountering one's own double or counterpart is common motif in Gothic Literature and believed to be harbingers of death as explained in the previous chapter and Poe uses it to heighten the sense of psychological horror in the story.

Gothic aspects abound in the narrative, including the bleak and foreboding environment, the dilapidated house, and the psychological suffering of the protagonists. Poe uses vivid and evocative language to create a sense of dread and terror in the reader and creates a deeply layered and complex story that explores elements of decay madness, and the supernatural. The story's enduring power is a testament to Poe's mastery of the Gothic subgenre and his ability to capture the psychic terror and decay that define the human condition. Whether the narrator in the story is reliable or unreliable is a subject of debate among the academicians, some argue that narrator is describes the event as they are accurately without a bias while others

indicate that narrator has unstable mental state and undergoes emotional involvement in the events of the story thus deeply affected by the gloomy atmosphere of the house and twins deteriorating mental state, not to mention the gruesome yet foreshadowed ending of the story where buried-alive sister comes back from the grave, with bloody dress and eerie appearance and attacks and kills her brother where it seems unlikely for narrator to be neutral. It is also worth mentioning that narrator's account is quite limited to his own perspective and experience, and he may not have access to adequate information to fully grasp the situation. However, as Piñero Gil explains in her brilliant essay that the narrator also "tries at all costs to validate the facts, to make some sense out of them," however he fails as the secrets remain undisclosed (53). Conjointly, it is no secret that Poe uses this mystery and vagueness to let readers use their own imagination, in fact, unclear and unfinished stories without an end is trademark of Poe's mystery writing to create a more immersive and impactful reading experience. To conclude the close reading of this story, few quotations will be analysed in the light of the explained themes.

"'And you have not seen it?' he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence — "you have not then seen it? — but, stay! you shall." Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm." (96). The way in which misdirection and language are used in this extract from Roderick to create tension and link ideas is a literary masterpiece. Roderick asks if the narrator has seen 'it'. The indefinite pronoun leaves the reader wondering what exactly Roderick has seen. The holes are filled by the reader's imagination. The narrative takes a new turn when he opens the window to show the storm. At this point, Roderick is simply showing his emotional displeasure, represented by the storm, rather than revealing a supernatural monster.

"Not hear it? — yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Long — long — long
— many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it — yet I dared
not — oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am! — I dared not — I dared

not speak! We have put her living in the tomb! Said I not that my senses were acute? I now tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them — many, many days ago — yet I dared not — I dared not speak! (100)

This paragraph from Roderick continues the method of doling out information, delivering it in bits and pieces, and delaying the reader with dashes. The reader leans forward in anticipation of what Roderick will finally say as a result of this forward movement. The interjections of "pity me" and "I dare not" also serve to delay the conclusion, while keeping the reader's focus on Roderick. In this case, it's not just what he's heard that matters, but how it makes him feel. The story takes a new turn, and the tension rises when he makes the final claim that they buried Madeline alive. If Roderick is right, the fact that Madeline was afraid of this particular outcome adds a strong dose of dramatic irony to the narrative. The reader is uncertain whether he is speaking truthfully at this point, or whether he has become even more mad. If he is mad, he is making up a story to explain his symptoms, such as his exaggerated senses. If he is right, then everything the narrator has heard in the house makes sense. Just as the narrative reaches its climax, the narrator's ability to judge the circumstances is at its most blurred.

"While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened — there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind — the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight — my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder — there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters — and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the 'House of Usher'." (101).

This sentence concludes "The Fall of the House of Usher". The house begins to crack and then, as the narrator observes, literally crumbles. The pieces then fall into the lake, which swallows them whole. This line is inadequate as a realistic portrayal. Too much happens too quickly and completely. It takes a long time for a house to collapse, so it's almost guaranteed that it wouldn't disappear completely beneath the surface of the lake. Some pieces would land on the sand, others would float, and so on. The last line, however, fits as a dreamy and symbolic vision. Overall, Poe skilfully describes the macabre, melancholia, psychological horror and terror, as if painting a picture of death and mourning, in addition, he openly explores the fear of death, despair, anxiety and state of madness in *The Fall of the House of Usher.*

THE TELL-TALE HEART

The Tell-Tale Heart was first published in January 1843 in the first issue of The *Pioneer: A Literary and Critical Magazine* in Boston. This short story is a perfect example of obsession, madness, guilt and fear. It is written from the point of view of an unidentified narrator who tries to convince the reader that he is sane by describing a murder he has committed in gruesome detail and from a psychological point of view. The old man who lives with the narrator has pale blue eyes that capture his attention. One tragic night, the narrator finally decides to kill the old man to get rid of the eye's disturbing presence. After the murder, the body is dismembered, and the narrator buries it under the floorboards. He is tormented by remorse, however, and believes he can hear the old man's heart still beating beneath the floorboards because of the rhythmic sound it makes. The narrator becomes more and more frustrated as the noise grows louder and becomes more and more constant, and he finally confesses his crime to the police. The story explores themes of obsession, guilt and the fine line between sanity and madness. Poe uses the narrator's stream-of-consciousness narration to create suspense and a sense of dread. Even after the murder, the narrator can still hear the heartbeat, which acts as a powerful symbol of his guilt and eventual mental collapse. Overall,

The Tell-Tale Heart is a chilling and psychologically complex tale that exemplifies Poe's mastery of the horror subgenre.

The very beginning of the story describes the tension, frenzy and anxiety well, the narrator constantly tries to explain the situation, his perspective and reasons:

True! — nervous — very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am;

but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my

senses — not destroyed — not dulled them. Above all was the sense of

hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard

many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how

healthily — how calmly I can tell you the whole story (3).

The narrator rejects the idea that he is insane, and instead blames an unidentified disease for his heightened senses. He claims to have a keen sense of hearing that allows him to hear everything around him, including demons. The narrator tries to establish his authority and sanity with the reader by doing this at the beginning of the story. Despite his great fear, he wants the reader to believe that the story he is about to tell is the truth and that he is not mad. His persistent insistence on his sanity, however, would suggest the opposite, since a sane person wouldn't feel the need to do so. The narrator of this story is a classic case of an unreliable narrator who is also mentally ill, which makes his account of events extremely dubious. When the narrator tries to defend his actions, his unreliability becomes even more apparent. He says he killed the old man because he had what he calls a *vulture's eye*, which he describes as "pale blue with a film over it". The narrator claims that the old man's eye was frightening, but the reader is left wondering if this is really a figment of his imagination.

Poe was renowned for his masterful use of mystery and intrigue in his works, often leaving it to the audience to interpret the meaning of the events he described. A sophisticated

blend of language, symbolism and psychological suspense defined his literary style. Rather than giving the reader a clear plot, Poe would often weave multiple layers of meaning into his novels, leaving the reader to ponder the deeper implications and symbolism behind each event. In this way, Poe's work can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to confuse his audience. By withholding information, using deception and leaving clues for the reader to piece together, he aimed to create an interactive experience that required active engagement and critical thinking.

"In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them *here* to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim." (7)

The narrator's actions in "The Tell-Tale Heart" could be examined psychoanalytically in terms of his underlying desires and feelings. When the police come to search the house, the narrator appears calm and in control, but this is merely a display of his inner guilt and desire to be caught. He practically begs the police to search the house thoroughly, hoping that they will discover the body under the floorboards. The narrator also expresses his underlying desires and emotions through his use of language. For example, Poe describes the body hidden under the floorboards as being in "repose", suggesting that the body is not quite dead, but is only resting and will eventually rise again. This could be seen as the narrator's fear that his wrongdoing will one day come to light and his remorse will haunt him for the rest of time. The psychoanalytic view of "The Tell-Tale Heart" emphasises the narrator's hidden impulses and feelings, which drive him further into madness and guilt. It also shows how Poe uses language and symbolism in his writing to portray these psychological concepts.

THE RAVEN

The narrative poem *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe was first published in 1845. It tells the story of a man who, one night while mourning the death of his beloved Lenore, is visited

by a raven. In response to the man's initial question, the raven simply offers the word "Nevermore". Grief, loss and the human mind are all explored in the poem. The poem is composed in trochaic octameter, which adds to its melancholy and ominous tone. The poem is in eighteen stanzas. As the narrator's requests are met with only this response, the word 'Nevermore' is used repeatedly to convey a sense of despair and helplessness. The raven serves as a reminder of the narrator's loss and as a symbol of death and anguish throughout the poem. The narrator's mental health deteriorates as a result of his growing obsession with the bird. By the end of the poem, the narrator has come to terms with the fact that he will never see Lenore again and is left to his grief and the uncanny presence of the raven. Collectively, "The Raven" is a powerful examination of the psychological effects of fixation and despair, as well as the human experience of grief and loss. Its eerie imagery and use of repetition have made it one of Poe's best-known and most enduring compositions.

The main theme of the poem is noticeably mourning and melancholia where the narrator is grieving the loss of his beloved Lenore, and the raven serves as a symbolic representation of his grief and sorrow. The raven's constant repetition of the word *"nevermore"* reinforces the narrator's feelings of hopelessness and solitude. Additionally, the poem's overall tone and imagery create a deep sense of melancholia. The narrator is in a dark and dreary chamber, and the raven's presence only adds to the oppressive atmosphere. Poe uses his words carefully in magical harmony that further emphasises the gloomy mood such as *"ghostly,"* *"grim,"* and the famous line of *"darkness there and nothing more"* succumbs both narrator and the reader into the dark abyss.

The scene begins with a *"weak and weary"* character and a *"dreary"* or monotonous night. A figure who is already weary and exhausted introduces a story that is already weary and emotionally draining because, as we will see later, the character has suffered a great deal before this poem even begins. The peaceful nightfall creates an image of mystery and suspense

for the reader. Here the lines *'forgotten'* and *'nothing more'* subtly introduce the poem's recurring theme of loss. It also introduces our first emblem, the chamber door, which represents discomfort. The chamber door serves the same purpose as any other door: it allows the characters to enter their house or room from the outside. However, as we shall see, it also serves as a symbol of the character's vulnerability and weakness when he exposes himself to the outside world. In this verse, as a result of his reflection and mental wandering, something is approaching and *"knocking"* at his weaknesses and insecurities (the chamber door). Throughout the poem, Poe has included information about the room and what it contains, which clearly symbolises how the character feels.

Nothing is discovered except blackness, which heightens the tension. The reader understands that the character has discovered only darkness - a black hole - waiting for him through his insecurities and weaknesses. This is similar to what someone would discover if they looked inside themselves and finally made the decision to open up and look beyond everything that made them doubt themselves; they would discover a world of darkness. After he invited the darkness inside, a raven came into his chamber. When the narrator asks the raven if there is *"balm in Gilead"* (a reference to a biblical ointment), he initially sees the bird as a distraction from his grief and a symbol of hope. However, when the narrator realises that the raven's repeated response of *"Nevermore"* is a reflection of his own grief and the irrevocable loss of his beloved Lenore, the discussion becomes ominous and melancholy. The narrator asks the raven if he will ever be reunited with Lenore as the dialogue continues, becoming increasingly frustrated and desperate for answers. The raven replies again, *"Nevermore"*. The narrator eventually goes mad from hearing "Nevermore" over and over again, interpreting the raven's presence as a haunting reminder of his own loss and grief.

CONCLUSION

Edgar Allan Poe's exploration of melancholy, sadness, loneliness and dark Gothicism is characteristic of his creative work. Through his writing, he expressed his own inner anguish and wanted his readers to feel it too. Poe's distinctive style and the enduring influence of his works can be attributed to his use of gothic imagery, unreliable narrators, and themes of death and loss. As a master of the macabre and founder of the horror genre, Poe's work has influenced generations of writers and readers, leaving an enduring legacy. The gothic and horror genres have benefited from Edgar Allan Poe's contributions, making him a distinctive figure in American literature. He is known for exploring dark Gothicism, melancholy, grief and loneliness in his writings. Poe experienced grief and loss in his personal life, including the early deaths of his wife and mother, and his own struggles with alcoholism and despair. These experiences may have had an impact on his writing, which often displays a sense of despondency and a fixation on death.

Poe's use of complex vocabulary, vivid imagery and ominous themes set his writing apart from other writers. He often uses unreliable narrators to blur the lines between fact and fantasy in his works, adding a layer of psychological complexity. His works are deeper and more complicated because of the symbolism and metaphor he uses, which also allows readers to read them in a variety of ways. In general, Poe's writings are still widely read today because of their ability to make readers feel strong emotions such as terror, despair, and grief. The darker facets of the human mind that they explore continue to attract and interest readers, and their themes of melancholy, grief, loneliness, and dark Gothicism still strike a chord with readers today.

Dark modernism was heavily influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's themes of melancholy, grief, loneliness, and dark Gothicism. The literary and cultural movement known as Dark

Modernism, often referred to as literary modernism, first appeared in the early 20th century. It was characterised by an emphasis on the darker, more chaotic facets of human existence. Poe's study of the human mind and his use of erratic narrators and disjointed stories are considered early examples of modernist approaches. T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are just a few of the modernist writers who were influenced by him and his dark and melancholy themes, as well as his use of symbolism and allegory. Poe's emphasis on the irrational and the mysterious, and his interest in the grotesque and the macabre, also anticipated modernist writers' concerns with the absurdity of the human condition and the destruction of conventional values and beliefs. In this way, Poe's dark, pessimistic, and existentialist tendencies can be seen as a precursor to modernist writing. In conclusion, Edgar Allan Poe's exploration of melancholy, sadness, loneliness, and dark Gothicism had a lasting influence on literary modernism. His use of avant-garde techniques and his interest in the darker side of the human condition paved the way for other modernist writers, and his writings continue to inspire and fascinate readers today.

CHAPTER III

Eliot's Haunted Modernity

Eliot's Modernism

Eliot is one of the most representative figures of poetic modernism. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalised English poetry, and in series of critical essays he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones. His *The Waste Land* (1922), *Four Quartets* (1943), and *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915) are considered masterpieces and led to his recognition as the greatest 20th century poet. His poetry is known for its fragmented form, use of allusion and intricate symbolism, and often explores the themes of alienation, disappointment, and despair. As well as writing poetry, Eliot was a renowned literary critic and editor whose reviews and articles helped to shape modernist literature. He began working as an editor for Faber & Faber in 1922 and remained there for the rest of his career. His notable articles on literary theory include *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919) and *The Function of Criticism* (1923). His experiments with form in poetry, especially fragmentation and the use of allusion and intricate symbolism, and often explores the themes of alienation, disappointment, and despair, together with his critical formulations are at the core of the modernist movement, which is often considered as synonymous with his work.

The cultural and artistic movement known as Modernism may be said to have emerged, in the early 20th century, as a response to the major social and cultural changes brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation, and the upheavals of the First World War. Eliot's poetry, essays and plays contributed to the formulation of the defining traits and motifs of modernism. The central motifs are a disjointed, non-linear style, an emphasis on the individual's inner experience, a rejection of conventional literary forms and conventions, and a sense of disenchantment with contemporary society. Eliot's writing takes upon itself the task of

exploring the themes of alienation and he disintegration of established social and cultural systems. As Steve Ellis indicated in his *T.S Eliot: A Guide for the Perplexed (2009)*, many modernist writers especially Eliot was suffering from alienation and he portrayed his loneliness and seeking for a meaning of life in an isolated society; "Set in the squalor of the urban metropolis, the literature of modernism manifests the breakdown of social norms and cultural strictures, the rejection of history, substituting it with a mythic past, "borrowed without chronology," and the growing sense of alienation and isolation in a world wherein daily existence is synonymous with "living death."" (24). This rejection of tradition, as well as the sense of isolation and alienation that characterised contemporary life, is reflected in Eliot's writing, particularly in *The Waste Land.* Through his fragmentary, non-linear style and his emphasis on the individual's inner experience, Eliot sought to capture the complexity of modern life and the sense of disillusionment that pervaded contemporary society. In doing so, he helped lay the foundations for a new era of writing that defied old rules and championed the individual's search for meaning and understanding in a changing world.

Eliot's poetry is pervaded by a sense of eeriness. The use of a fragmented language and shifting perspectives evoke a sense of loss, disorientation, and ambiguity. His poems are often about sense of loss, disillusionment, and loneliness. At the same time, Eliot's poetry opens up to a spiritual and religious dimension. Many of his poems deal with questions of faith and redemption as interpretive key of the human condition, a perspective which perhaps account for a deeply personal and often haunting voice. Existential crisis and spiritual longing are intertwined to make for the hallmark of Eliot's brand of modernism. *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (1999), by Ronald Schuchard, explores these themes of grief, disillusionment, and spirituality in Eliot's poetry. According to Schuchard, Eliot's poetry is influenced by his own struggles with despair and spiritual crisis, which are reflected in his use of dark and eerie imagery. Schuchard also emphasises the impact of Eliot's Christian faith on

his poetry, suggesting that his desire for redemption and meaning is a recurring motif in his work. In Schuchard's view, Eliot's poetry is not only a mirror of the confusion and ambiguity of modern society, but also a deeply personal exploration of his own spiritual and emotional challenges. Eliot's fractured language and shifting views reflect his own fractured sense of self and belief, not merely artistic choices. In this sense, Eliot's poetry can be seen as a means of wrestling with the existential crisis facing many individuals in the early twentieth century. His poetry relates to the hardships of the individual in a rapidly changing and uncertain environment, giving voice to people struggling with their own sense of loss and loneliness. In addition to this, Eliot's relationships, and personal life, particularly the unhappy union with his first wife Vivienne Haigh-Wood, had no small role in forging this combination of existential crisis and spiritual longing of which *The Waste Land* became the prime example.

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot uses a convoluted, fractured form to portray the confused, chaotic nature of modern existence. The poem is full of allusions to both modern popular culture and classical literature and mythology, creating a collage-like effect that reflects the fragmented state of contemporary consciousness and explores the fragmented and disillusioned state of post-World War I Europe. Incorporating various cultural and literary references, including allusions to the myth of the *Fisher King*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest (1610)*, and the Buddha's *Fire Sermon*, featuring numerous ghosts and haunting apparitions, which can be interpreted as representing the collective trauma and loss experienced by the modern world as well as challenging the traditional modes of storytelling and representation as they serve as symbols of the past that still haunts the present. Eliot's personal experience as an American living in Europe is reflected in the poem's many transatlantic allusions. These allusions to American culture include references to the American West, the American South and American jazz music. By combining these many cultural aspects, Eliot creates a sense of displacement and fragmentation that reflects the whole experience of modernity. The poem effectively

captures the sense of boredom, despair and disdain for life in the years after the First World War, through a collection of brief, tangentially related narratives which, like the legend of the Holy Grail, echo a lifeless, meaningless world in which people are driven by their fears and unfulfilled desires, desperately searching for any promise or sign of salvation. As Schuchard argues, Eliot's personal struggle with mental illness and spiritual crisis (he converted to Anglicanism in the 1920s) were crucial to the development of this poetic style.

The Dark Angel

Drawing on Eliot's personal archives, Schuchard has carefully selected and analysed previously unpublished letters, diaries, and other materials which present Eliot as a complex and troubled figure, whose writing is infused with a sense of darkness and uncertainty. *The Dark Angel* of Schuchard's title refers to an evil muse that brings both inspiration and damnation. Schuchard uses the phrase to describe the recurring themes of despair and disillusionment of Eliot's poetry. It suggests the presence of a guiding force or influence that drives Eliot's vision of a world in decline, where modernity has left humanity disconnected from its past and fundamental values. The Dark Angel appears in *The Waste Land* as a harbinger of death and destruction, as it is clear in the section the titled "The Fire Sermon," where the anonymous narrator describes a "Dark Angel" who "devours" the souls of those who lost their faith.

Schuchard helpfully explains the origins of Eliot's *Dark Angel* Lionel Johnson's poem "The Dark Angel" (1893*)* (3). The poem *Dark Angel* was written by the English poet and playwright Ben Jonson and was first published in 1616. The poem is a reflection on death and the nature of mortality, exploring the concept that death is an inevitable aspect of existence and that everyone must face it at some point. In the poem, the narrator meets a strange entity known as the "dark angel". The Dark Angel is defined as a strong and terrifying apparition whose

appearance fills those who see it with terror. Despite his frightening appearance, the Dark Angel is portrayed as a vital element in the natural order of things. He is the agent of death, and his mission is to guide souls from this world to the next. As the speaker reflects, he realises that death is inevitable and that he must face it with courage and dignity. The poem is known for its use of vivid imagery and powerful language, which leaves the reader with a disturbing and unforgettable impression. It is often regarded as one of Jonson's most powerful and enduring works and remains a prime study and analysis for English literary scholars.

Eliot inherited what we may call the terrorising touch of his Victorian predecessors; he inherited, with the Dark Angel, a constant, malicious companion, along with the chatter of madness or chuckle of death. The legacy provided a connected bridge to his own spiritual dread and bodily disgust, positioning young Eliot at the edge of the abyss, far from any ordinary road he might have taken. What struck Eliot the most was discovering that this angel in fact did exist and had long tortured many other writers, too, such as Hawthorne, James, Flaubert, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and Turgenev (Schuchard 4). As we learn from Schuchard, Matthew Arnold and William Butler Yeats also sensed the Angel's increasing presence and studied its destructive effects; for them the Dark Angel is synonymous with ennui and restlessness.

Schuchard's thesis that Eliot's concept of the *Dark Angel* was inspired by Lionel Johnson's poem *The Dark Angel* is fascinating because it sheds light on the themes of spiritual anguish and bodily disgust in *The Waste Land*, in particular. The fact that the *Dark Angel* was a real entity that troubled other writers such as Hawthorne, James, Flaubert, Stendhal, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev meant that it was not a fabrication of Eliot's mind. The fact that his own Anglophone precursors, Matthew Arnold and William Butler Yeats, also sensed the Dark Angel' as an destructive presence, as a figure ennui and restlessness, meant that was neither a fabrication of Eliot's mind nor a personal fixation, but a widespread phenomenon in turn-of-the-century literary circles. I find that Schuchard's research paves the way for a helpful

discussion of the Gothic components in Eliot's poetry, in the sense in which I understand Gothic in this thesis, and that is as bordering on melancholy.

Schuchard's quote from Arnold to explain this suffering in literature in his times is particularly relevant here:

> They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic; the representation in poetry is painful also. (2-3)

Arnold discusses scenarios where a character is in a prolonged state of emotional discomfort and has no outlet for their pain. There is nothing the character can do to change their circumstances, and there is no prospect of progress. As there is little variation in their experience, this can lead to a sense of monotony in their description of their situation. According to Arnold, these situations can be morbid, as they are generally characterised by a sense of fear and despair. In real life, such events are more painful than sad because they do not always involve a crisis or a clear resolution. However, the portrayal of such situations in literature can be painful because it evokes feelings of sympathy and empathy in the reader. Scholars have pointed out the relevance of Arnold's observation in relation to the study of the *Dark Angel*, as the experience of being tormented by the *Dark Angel* can be interpreted as a form of ongoing psychological suffering that is hard to alleviate. This is exactly the psychological suffering depicted in Eliot's poetry through characters who engage in internal dialogue with themselves and feel spiritually drained. Yeats also noted in his work *The Trembling of the Veil (1922)* that his contemporaries, whom he referred to as "the tragic generation," were plagued by spiritual despair and experienced early career setbacks due to melancholia, dissipation, madness, and suicide (Schuchard 5).

The Dark Angel of melancholia presides over Eliot's poetry. It accompanies the poet in Boston, Paris and London, but it was in London, where he eventually settled to get married, that the Dark Angel transformed him as a poet of the modern city. London became "Unreal" just as Paris had been to Baudelaire before him: Eliot seemed to be living in a phantasmagoria of shadows and ghosts, and his unhappy marriage added to his sense of dislocation and displacement (Schuchard 13). Eliot forged the voices of his ghostly dreamscapes into a poem that conveyed the essence of this sense of isolation and grief in *The Waste Land*. The poem's disjointed form and startling juxtapositions of seemingly unrelated images reflect Eliot's unsettling experience. *The Waste Land* illustrates how the Dark Angel, understood as a symbol of psychological agony, shapes and guides creative work.

It is useful to remember here that Eliot had a complex and sophisticated relationship with Baudelaire. On the one hand, Eliot admired the poet of modernity and wished to imitate him. Baudelaire's influence is felt especially his early poems. Charles Baudelaire's influence on T.S. Eliot's poetry is well-documented, especially in his earliest works. Eliot's poem "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*", published in 1915, is one of the best-known examples of this influence. In "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*", Eliot uses a fragmented, impressionistic language to portray the speaker's inner thoughts and emotions. This approach to poetry is reminiscent of Baudelaire's own, particularly in his collection of poems entitled "*Les Fleurs du mal" (Flowers of Evil 1857)*. In addition, "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*" is strongly influenced by Baudelaire's work in terms of concepts and subject matter. Both poets use images from urban life and modern culture to convey their ideas of alienation, misery and boredom. In *'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'*, for example, Eliot uses the image of a 'yellow fog' to describe the sense of decay and lost beauty that he identifies with modern urban life. This image is similar to Baudelaire's vision in his poem *The Spleen of Paris (1869)*, in which he describes the city as decaying and rotten. Overall, Baudelaire's influence on Eliot's earlier poetry can be

seen in his use of a fragmented, impressionistic style, his exploration of the themes of modern urban life, and his use of powerful and evocative imagery to portray complicated emotions and ideas.

Eliot identified with Baudelaire's fascination for the city as well as his exploration of the darker side of the human nature and his use of fractured and elliptical language, particularly in *Flowers of Evil (Les Fleurs Du Mal 1857)*. In his critical articles, Eliot praises Baudelaire's ability to convey the essence of modern existence in all its complexity and ambiguity. In his article "Tradition and Individual Talent", Eliot cites Baudelaire as a poet who was able to establish a new type of poetry that was both modern and timeless. Eliot's debt to Baudelaire is perhaps most evident in his masterpiece *The Waste Land*, which draws heavily on Baudelaire's investigation of the city and modern life. *"April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land,"* the poem's opening lines recall Baudelaire's *Correspondences (1857)*, which depicts the city as a living entity. Baudelaire's use of language to express the difficulties of modern existence is also reflected in the poem's fractured structure and elliptical phrasing. At the same time, Eliot knew that he was different from Baudelaire, especially because of the spiritual tension in his own poems.

Eliot's Gothic

Since he had no interest in Gothic literature, T.S. Eliot cannot be considered as a Gothic writer. However, if, as discussed in the previous chapter, we consider the Gothic a discourse, genreless, and timeless, it is possible to identify Gothic elements in Eliot's poems. Considering that existential crisis, the truth of human darkness, and life itself are all sources of inspiration for Gothic literature, it is possible to interpret a modernist literary work from a Gothic point of view. A sense of Gothic sadness pervades Eliot's masterpiece, which employs themes associated with the Gothic literary imager: the themes of decay, disintegration, and despair.

In *The Waste Land*, the use of fragmentary narrative, disjunctive imagery and startling juxtapositions creates a sense of uncertainty and disorientation similar to the haunted landscapes of Gothic literature. There are also several references to ghosts and spectral figures in the poem, such as the drowned Phoenician sailor, the dead soldier, and the ghostly crowds that inhabit the final section. The symbolism here can be analysed as follows:

The Drowned Phoenician Sailor: In the opening section of "*The Waste Land*", the image of the drowned Phoenician sailor is portrayed as being "thrown up on the beach" and "reaped and gathered by the sea". This image of a drowning sailor, stranded at sea and at the mercy of the elements, is a powerful metaphor for the uncertainty and confusion of the poem. The description of the sailor as a "Phoenician" adds historical depth and complexity to the image, suggesting that the sailor's fate is part of a larger pattern of human pain and suffering.

The Dead Soldier: In the third part of *The Waste Land*, the dead soldier is described as lying "under the brown mist of a winter dawn" and "stretched out, still". The dead soldier, like the drowned Phoenician sailor, is a symbol of human suffering and loss, but his presence also conveys a more specific historical resonance, reflecting the catastrophic impact of the Great War and the sense of disillusionment and despair it engendered.

The Ghostly Crowds: The ghostly crowds that populate the final section of "*The Waste Land*" are perhaps the most disturbing and bewildering imagery in the poem. Described as *'multitudes, multitudes / rising and falling'*, they evoke an overwhelming and surreal sense of turmoil and uncertainty. Their ghostly appearance implies that they are not entirely of this world, and their constant repetition of the word "Shantih shantih shantih" adds to the overall sense of ritual and incantation throughout the poem.

These images of the drowned Phoenician sailor, the dead soldier, and the ghostly crowd, taken together, add to the general sense of doubt and confusion in "*The Waste Land*", recalling

a variety of historical and cultural connections, sometimes incomplete and disjointed. By juxtaposing these various images and references, Eliot creates a collage-like effect that is both unsettling and confusing, asking the reader to make connections and to make sense of them.

In addition to these overtly Gothic elements, Eliot's use of mythic and archetypal imagery also draws on the Gothic tradition. The poem's exploration of death, decay and regeneration is reminiscent of the Gothic obsession with the macabre and grotesque. The use of religious and occult symbols throughout the poem, such as tarot cards and the Fisher King, recalls the Gothic preoccupation with the supernatural and the inexplicable. Themes of decay and disintegration, common in Gothic literature, are recognizable in the poem's depiction of a world that is broken and suffering from spiritual and physical decay. The setting of the poem, which is desolate and lifeless, reflects this sense of decay. The poem also conveys a sense of despair and sadness, two important elements in Gothic literature. The poem also incorporates Gothic themes such as death, the paranormal, and the bizarre. For example, the opening part of the poem, *'The Burial of the Dead'*, alludes to the story of the Sibyl, a prophetess who was granted eternal life but failed to ask for eternal youth, as a result of which she aged until she died. Gothic literature often uses the idea of immortality giving way to decay and death. The poem also has other paranormal components, such as the 'Unreal city' and the 'hooded hordes swarming / Over endless plains'. These images give off an eerie, paranormal feeling. Overall, *The Waste Land* displays many Gothic themes, even though of course Eliot may not have intended to write a Gothic poem.

As previously mentioned, ghosts, spectres or apparitions redundantly appears in both Eliot's life and his poetry. His frequent use of fragmentation, allusion, and intertextuality gives his work a haunted quality. Eliot drew on a wide range of literary and cultural sources in his poetry, including Dante, Shakespeare, and the Bible. These allusions give his work depth and complexity, as well as a connection and fascination with the past, emphasising the gap between

past, present, and future. In addition to allusion, he adds deeply interwoven symbolism and imagery that heightens the uncanny and strange, such as the drowning sailor in *The Waste Land* or the "patient etherized upon table" in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. These images add to the sense of unease and dislocation that pervades Eliot's work, and they often have symbolic or allegorical implications that are open to interpretation. Finally, Eliot's sense of alienation and detachment from the world around him contributes to his fascination with ghosts. This sense of alienation is reflected in his poetry, which often features speakers who are alienated from the world or troubled by their own inner demons.

Haunted Modernity

In his essay *Modernist Ghost, Transatlantic Apparitions: The Waste Land* (2002), Simon Hay connects the links between Eliot's modernism with ghosts and consequently Gothic literature. He explores the impact of modernist literary and cultural contacts between Europe and America on Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Hay argues that the poem was influenced not only by Eliot's personal turbulences and cultural context, but also by a wider transatlantic discussion between modernist writers and artists. Hay begins by situating Eliot within a transatlantic network of modernist writers working with new forms and ideas in the early twentieth century. Hey emphasises that Eliot was deeply inspired by his exposure to French Symbolist poetry as well as the work of James Joyce, Ezra Pound and other European writers. At the same time, he remained involved in American intellectual groups such as the Imagists, a group of poets. Hay then turns to the question of ghosts and hauntings in The Waste Land. He argues that Eliot's use of spectral and ghostly imagery indicates a greater modernist interest in the uncanny and the destabilisation of old systems of identity and meaning. He argues that the poem's multiple voices and fractured form create a sense of uncertainty and anxiety that reflects the experience of living in a rapidly changing post-World War I society. At the same time, Hay argues that the transatlantic dimension of modernism adds another layer of complexity to the poem's

haunting imagery. He observes that Eliot's mixture of European and American cultural allusions and languages creates a sense of dislocation and hybridity that reflects both his own transatlantic identity and larger cultural developments in the early twentieth century. *The Waste Land* thus becomes a kind of transatlantic ghost story, haunted not only by personal memories and social anxieties, but also by the ghosts of modernist literary and artistic movements on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ernst Bloch pointed out in 1935 that although there are many evils to fear in today's world, specific fears of ghosts have become rare. He linked the rise of modernity with the decline of the Gothic and, in particular, the disappearance of ghosts from popular culture. Bloch believed that modernity was a process of disillusionment, and for this reason is incompatible with ghosts. For Bloch, ghosts and Gothic literature activate and exploit the fear and imagination that modernity seeks to dispel. Therefore, there should be no place for the gothic or the ghost in modernity. Despite modernism's aim to eradicate fear, the Gothic genre persists (Hay 129-130). Despite its incompatibility with modernity, this paradoxical persistence of the Gothic can be attributed to the way in which it confronts and exposes the fears and anxieties that modernity seeks to assuage. With its focus on the supernatural, the macabre and the mystical, Gothic literature allows for the exploration of darker aspects of human experience that modernity often overlooks. Gothic literature also highlights the limitations and failures of modernism to fully address and resolve the fears and anxieties of modern society. Hay argues that while the Gothic and modernism may appear to be incompatible, there is actually a fundamental connection between the two. Despite modernity's process of disenchantment, the Gothic persists, and many modernist writers rely on Gothic motifs as a framework to express the unspeakable fears and anxieties of modernity. Rather than being polar opposites that destroy each other, modernism and the Gothic are intertwined in a complex relationship. Many modernist works incorporate Gothic elements of ghosts, spaces, and supernatural occurrences

to explore the anxieties and fears that modernity has brought about such as Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* (1927) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *The Trial* by Franz Kafka (1925), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) by Oscar Wilde and *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce can be given as examples. In this sense, the Gothic becomes a mediating framework that allows modernist writers to give voice to the terrors of modern life. Therefore, the relationship between modernism and the Gothic should be re-examined as a nuanced and complex one, rather than one of complete opposition (Hay 132).

John Paul Riquelme also argues for a more nuanced relation between the Gothic and Modernism. In his 2000 essay, "Gothic and Modernism" he claims that the Gothic's anti-realist tendency makes it compatible with modernist writing. Furthermore, certain influences and developments are shared by the Gothic and by Modernism, and some Modernist writers integrate Gothic traditions and imagery into their work (586-88). And for this, it can be claimed that Eliot, Joyce, Woolf, and some other writers use Gothic imagery as part of their modernist style (Hay 149). Because of the anti-realist quality of Gothic symbolism and themes in poetry, Riquelme's article emphasises the idea that the Gothic and modernity share a basic compatibility. This similarity can also be seen in the mutual inspiration and development of the two literary groups. For example, many modernist writers, including Eliot, Joyce and Woolf, used Gothic imagery and traditions in their writing. In *The Waste Land*, for example, Eliot uses Gothic imagery to describe the disintegration and decay that characterises modern existence. The poem is full of references to Gothic literature, including Dante's *Inferno (1314)*, the legend of the Fisher King and the quest for the Grail. These references contribute to the sense of unease and ambiguity characteristic of Gothic literature as explained before. Similarly, in *Ulysses (1922)*, Joyce used Gothic motifs such as ghosts and haunted houses to depict the psychological breakdown of his characters. Woolf's use of Gothic imagery can be seen in her work *Mrs Dalloway (1925)*, where she uses the haunted house metaphor to describe her

characters' repressed feelings and traumas. The story is filled with images of darkness, shadows and haunted places that evoke feelings of dread and fear. Overall, the relationship between the Gothic and the modern is complex and multifaceted. Although the two literary movements appear to be diametrically opposed, they share many similarities and influences. For example, many modernist writers incorporated Gothic traditions and imagery into their modernist styles, using them to reflect the concerns and anxieties of contemporary life.

Gothic as Melancholia in Eliot

In this part, close reading of *The Waste Land* will be given with the emphasis of the Gothic as melancholia. First, there is an epigraph which is taken from Petronius' *Satyricon*. According to mythology, the god Apollo gave the Sybil a lifespan the size of a pile of sand. However, the Sybil failed to seek her eternal youth, forgetting an important detail of her desire to remain youthful and ageless, resulting in her becoming emaciated. continued to age her until she became an emaciated old woman. In some versions of her myth, the Sibyl, consumed by her own misery and suffering, begged the gods to free her from her curse and let her die. However, the gods refused to grant her wish and instead turned her into their voiceless oracle. She was locked in a jar or chamber and could only speak when questioned. Hence the term 'sibil', which means prophet or diviner. The story of the Sibyl has become a popular theme in literature, art and music, and has been used to explore themes such as the human desire for death, ageing and immortality. In Eliot's poem the part given is "Sybil, what do you want?", and she responds, "I want to die." Hence, she seeks the unattainable, and the poem begins with a wish that cannot be satisfied. First part of the poem is titled "The Burial of the Dead", and it can be said that there is an implication to Sybil's being undead, therefore unable to be buried to complete the circle of life. The poem continues not with a death but a spring, however, it is not full of life as expected:

> April is the cruelest month, breeding
>
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
>
> Memory and desire, stirring
>
> Dull roots with spring rain.
>
> Winter kept us warm, covering
>
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
>
> A little life with dried tubers. (1-7)

The opening lines of the poem emphasise the Sibyl's curse, and the poem maintains a thematic focus on a cycle of life and death. In an odd twist, the Sibyl longs for death and portrays death positively while portraying life negatively. Breeding, mixing, stirring, beginnings and endings, existence, and coexistence, infinitely merging. April is also usually Easter time, when Christ's crucifixion and resurrection take place, and burial means life, not death. Again, ironically there are no limits. Simon Hay argues that the Gothic reading of the first part of the poem is easier to analyse (135). Burying is a common trope in Gothic, so it is safe to say that Gothic frames are acceptable, especially in this part. Lifeless landscapes, dead branches, life-or-death situations in question, death by water, and other eerie images abound. It can be argued, however, that Eliot transformed Gothic into something new, rather than merely using Gothic imagery without any intrinsic motive or meaning (Hay 135). In the second part of *The Waste Land, A Game of Chess*, T.S. Eliot introduces the character of an aristocratic woman living a life of privilege and emptiness. Despite her privileged status, the woman does not seem happy or fulfilled. Eliot's use of Gothic motifs continues in this section of the poem, as woman is described as 'unnatural' and 'unrealistic'. These descriptions emphasise her disconnection from the natural world and the reality of her situation. Instead, she is consumed by her possessions and material wealth, which serve to further isolate her from those around her.

The emptiness of the woman is also emphasised by the surrounding imagery. The poem describes her "room with a view" as "filthy", "smelling cheap" and "stale cigarettes". These

images suggest that even the trappings of their privileged lives are ultimately empty and unfulfilled. Overall, this section of the poem can be seen as a critique of the empty materialism of the upper classes living in isolation from the real world. The Gothic motifs used by Eliot serve to emphasise the unnatural and otherworldly nature of this existence, as well as the emptiness and lack of fulfilment that accompanies a life devoted solely to the pursuit of material wealth. It is also from this point that Eliot laments the fall of the upper class into the middle class, and another possible meaning is nostalgia for the past. Eliot seems to "mourn with melancholic nostalgia" (Hay 140).

> Above the antique mantel was displayed
>
> As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
>
> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
>
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
>
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
>
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
>
> 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.
>
> And other withered stumps of time
>
> Were told upon the walls; staring forms
>
> Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
>
> Footsteps shuffled on the stair. (97-107)

In *A Game of Chess*, Eliot used the metaphor of a haunted painting to describe the past as a haunting ghost that still influences the present. The painting of Philomel, a character from Greek mythology who was raped and silenced, is given life using verbs such as 'stares', 'leans' and 'hushes'. These activities imply that the painting is more than a static object, but rather a presence with the ability to affect individuals who come into contact with it. Eliot is able to personify the past and give it a sense of actuality by bringing the painting to life. The unsettling presence of the painting serves as a reminder of the past that has remained silent. The image of the painting leaning out of its frame and turning into a ghost recalls the traditional Gothic theme

of haunted paintings or portraits. The painting also represents Philomel, a heroine who has been silenced and unable to tell her own story, contributing to the impression of the past as a haunting presence. The actions of the painting become a means of breaking the silence and revealing a history that has been buried or ignored. In this sense, the Gothic theme of the haunted painting becomes a vehicle for exploring the concept of the past as a haunting presence that affects the present. Traumatic memories permeate the space, evidence of a history that has been suppressed and erased, and the ghost is the materialised manifestation of these memories (Hay 138) and creates a Gothic structure.

Eliot also incorporates ghostly imagery in the third part of *The Waste Land*, The Fire Sermon, lines 191-257, where the spirits are described as interacting with each other. The poem is made up of quotations and fragments from many sources, and its language is a mash-up of historical cultural artefacts. It tells a story of pain and cultural decay. The language has a ghostly quality, hovering between life and death. The poem is not only about ghosts, but it is a ghost (Hay 142), a haunting presence that reflects the cultural and psychological anguish of the modern world. Eliot's use of fractured and allusive language creates a sense of bewilderment, further emphasising the ghostly presence of the poem.

And other withered stumps of time

Were told upon the walls; staring forms

Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.

Footsteps shuffled on the stair.

Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair

Spread out in fiery points
      (104-109)

The ghost that were "shuffling on the stairs" begins a conversation with the wealthy woman, and it can be argued that the interlocutor is the recently materialised ghost from the

painting. Alternatively, the interlocutor could be connected to the ghosts on the walls, establishing a link to the spirit realm. In "A Game of Chess", the ghostly presence that we previously considered to be the phantom from "The Waste Land" plays a specific role within the poem. The ghost we left "shuffling on the stairs" begins a conversation with the wealthy woman, and some interpretations argue that the interlocutor is the recently materialised ghost from the painting. Alternatively, the interlocutor could be connected to the ghosts on the walls, establishing a link to the spirit realm. The use of phrases such as 'withered stumps of time' and 'staring forms' allude to a ghostly existence, with relics of the past trapped within the walls. The ghost's liminal status, suspended between worlds, is reinforced by the footsteps creeping up the stairs. The image of the woman's fiery spikes in her hair signifies a haunting memory, trapped in time and engraved in the ghost's consciousness. This ghostly perspective heightens the eerie mood, emphasising the ethereal quality of the poem, the haunting presence of memory, and the disconnection and fragmentation of the modernist style.

Eliot demonstrates the complex relationship between modernism and the Gothic by writing a ghostly and haunting poem in which the Gothic serves as a mediating framework for modernist writers to examine the anxieties and concerns of modernity. The ghost exists in both realms, both alive and dead. This undead state is identical to that of the aristocratic woman. If fashion is the category by which the aristocrat measures her own existence, she is as dead as her ghosts (Hay 144).

> 'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'
> 'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
> 'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
> 'What shall we ever do?' (131-34)

The character's despair and weariness are emphasised in this part of the poem by her repeated questioning. The word "ever" in the final phrase implies a sense of futility and hopelessness in her search for meaning and purpose. The character's lack of agency and

direction is further emphasised by the repetition of "What shall I do?", as if she is trapped in a loop of meaningless life. Furthermore, the phrase "my hair down" implies a sense of abandonment and liberation, as if the character longs to be free from the constraints of her social class and the expectations placed upon her. This need for freedom is a constant theme in modernist literature, as characters often feel confined by social norms and long to break free in order to achieve authenticity and meaning in their lives. Overall, this section of the poem uses words and imagery to express the emptiness and dullness of the aristocrat's life, while also emphasising her longing for something more important and rewarding. The ghost represents the gap between life and death, materiality and ideality, and is indistinguishable from the living person. The modernist Gothic describes not only the past, with its insistent reappearance in the present, but also the present itself, is ghostly (Hay 144).

In his book *Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present (2014)*, Jameson argues that modernity is not a self-contained, autonomous reality, but rather the result of historical events and traumas and he argues that we can better understand modernity by seeing it as a trace or abstraction of these events and traumas, and that the referent of 'modernity' can be traced back to ancient forms of experience that continue to haunt the present (39). In the context of the modernist Gothic, this suggests that the ghostly components of the Gothic are not just relics of the past but live on in the present as a form of haunting. With its emphasis on the strange, the mysterious and the macabre, the Gothic provides a prism through which we can appreciate how past traumas and fears continue to shape and influence our present. In this sense, the modernist Gothic is more than a literary genre; it is a means of understanding the world in which we live. Modernity is the trace left by trauma; it is itself a ghost (Hay 151).

The final line of *The Waste Land*, in which the speaker states, "These fragments I have shored against my ruins", implies that the cultural allusions of the poem have been used to hold up a collapsing world. The poem describes a modern society haunted by the past, and this

haunting is expressed in Gothic terms. The broken structure of the poem reflects the modern world's dissolution of boundaries and distinctions, where many voices and opinions are mixed together. This fragmentation reduces our knowledge of the universe to a collection of unconnected cultural shards, and this sense of separation contributes to the Gothic mood of the poem. The speaker's attempt to fortify these fragments against his ruins represents the modernist urge to create meaning in a fractured world, but it also implies that this effort may ultimately be worthless.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is a modernist classic that explores themes of decay, fragmentation and loss of meaning, while being haunted by ghosts of the past and present. To create a sense of dread and unease, Eliot uses several Gothic motifs and tactics as explained in detail. The poem inevitably has a melancholy tone, as evidenced by its fragmented form, references to ancient literature, and depiction of a world in ruins. Eliot's portrayal of modernity as a wasteland devoid of meaning and purpose reflects his own sadness and disillusionment with modernity.

T.S. Eliot's personal hardships, including a rough childhood, mental illness, an unhappy first marriage and a deep sense of loneliness, play an important role in his decision to employ gothic motifs combined with the melancholy tone of *The Waste Land*. The poem's fractured and discontinuous form, and its depiction of a universe without meaning or purpose, reflect Eliot's experiences of mental illness, including despair and nervous breakdowns. In addition, the poem's recurring images of emptiness, isolation and decay reflect Eliot's sense of loneliness and alienation. The characters of *The Waste Land* are all adrift in a world devoid of connection or meaning, unable to interact successfully with one another or to discover a sense of purpose

or direction. The gothic themes of ghosts and the supernatural serve as a metaphor for the psychological and emotional traumas that haunt the characters throughout the poem.

The Waste Land was heavily influenced by the literary styles of James Joyce and Charles Baudelaire, and Pound was a close friend and mentor of Eliot's and the two worked together on the publication of *The Waste Land*. Joyce's masterpiece Ulysses inspired Eliot to experiment with form and language in *The Waste Land*. In addition, Baudelaire's themes of urban decay, ennui and alienation are echoed throughout *The Waste Land*, as in his collection of poems *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In conclusion, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is a modernist literary masterpiece that uses gothic literary patterns and melancholy themes to portray the fragmented and disoriented experience of modernity. Eliot's use of fragmented language and cultural allusions, as well as his infusion of gothic and supernatural aspects, create a sense of unease and dislocation that reflects contemporary anxieties. The poem's exploration of melancholy and its various manifestations, from the personal to the cultural, underscores the modern sense of loss and separation. Eliot created a work that both reflects and critiques the modern world, and its depth and complexity continue to fascinate readers and scholars alike. Overall, *The Waste Land* is a complicated and multi-dimensional literary masterpiece that resists easy interpretation. However, by examining it through the lens of Gothic as melancholia, we can gain a better understanding of its themes and techniques, as well as appreciate its lasting impact on the literary and cultural landscape of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER IV

SAMUEL BECKETT AND THE ABSURDITY OF

MELANCHOLIA

Samuel Beckett is widely regarded as one of the most influential and innovative writers of the twentieth century, and his works have often been analysed through the lens of modernism and existentialism. However, a growing body of scholarship has focused on the Gothic elements in Beckett's work, especially the motif of melancholia, such as Maria Beville's *The Sounds of Silence: Samuel Beckett's Haunted Modernism* (2012), J. P Riqualme's *Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett* (2000), Hannah Simpson's *"Strange laughter": Post-Gothic Questions of Laughter and the Human in Samuel Beckett's Work (2017), Christopher Langlois' Samuel Beckett and the Terror of Literature* (2017) can be given as examples. Beckett's use of Gothic tropes, such as isolation, decay, and fragmentation, is particularly effective in conveying the sense of despair and futility that pervades his writing. The Gothic mode, with its fascination with death and decay, provides a way for Beckett to explore the limits of human experience and the existential condition. But he is also a good example of the Gothic mode that I have been trying to describe in this thesis, as infused with a strong strain of melancholia. By embracing this type of Gothic melancholia, Beckett taps into the dark undercurrents of modern life, expressing the anxieties and fears that are often suppressed or ignored in more conventional modes of writing. This chapter will explore Beckett's engagement with the Gothic, with a particular focus on melancholia, to show how the Irish writer illuminates the human condition in all its absurdity and despair. I will examine Beckett's deliberately impoverished use of Gothic themes that first emerged in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and will explore how his use of alienated wanderers, environments

that envelop or imprison the human form, liminal states, ghosts/spectres, and vengeful cyclical narrative logic relate to the dominant sense of immobility and loss associated with the Gothic as melancholia. I will pay attention to his use of the female Gothic, to his Irishness and conclude with a close reading of *Ill Seen Ill Said (1981)*.

It can be argued that Beckett's many works have Gothic motifs and themes existent, but Ill Seen Ill Said is particularly remarkable in melancholic tone, because the novella explores themes of isolation, despair, and existential anguish while tells about an old women who lives alone in the wilderness, desolate place, and goes outside seemingly only to visit a grave, following the evening and morning star. Narrator depicts her mundane, repetitive, and meaningless days but the sparse and poetic language gives a pervasive sense of sadness with the minute detail in Gothic ambiance by employing foreboding descriptions. Symbolic imagery and surrealistic elements enhance the Gothic melancholia mood while touching upon existential themes of meaning in life, absurdity of being and the human condition.

Recent studies have shown that the Gothic mode is inextricably linked to the social and cultural problems, and its ability to communicate social concerns and anxieties through symbolic, allegorical, and oblique language has allowed it to persist over time. This method enables Gothic authors to address issues that are often hidden or ignored by official forms of writing. Beckett's writing is distinguished by an austere, minimalist style and a concentration on themes of sadness, nihilism, and the human condition. His works often explore the absurdity and meaninglessness of human existence, and many of his protagonists find themselves in seemingly hopeless situations. Beckett's early works, such as his first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932), were characterised by their experimental style and stream-of-consciousness narrative. Later he began to write plays, which became his main form of expression. His best-known plays, such as *Waiting for Godot* (1953), *Endgame* (1957) and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), are sometimes described as "absurdist" because they depict

individuals struggling with a lack of purpose or meaning in their lives. Beckett also wrote novels, notably *Murphy* (1938), *Watt* (1953) and *Molloy* (1951), which are characterised by their use of repetition, fragmentation, and a minimalist literary style.

Beckett's Female Gothic

Because his novels are full of references to great philosophers such as Augustine, Schopenhauer, and Leibniz, it can be suggested that Samuel Beckett's works can be understood as fitting into the history of novel ideas. It can be argued that the Gothic, particularly the female Gothic, is Beckett's writing's most dominant theme. The existence of recurring themes such as decay, loneliness, and psychological misery, usually associated with Gothic literature, demonstrates this. These Gothic characteristics are reflected in Beckett's works through the portrayal of individuals who are often trapped in bleak and oppressive environments with no clear sense of escape or closure. His art is particularly famous for its use of dark, frightening imagery, which creates a sense of tension and unease. Thus, the Gothic is an essential component of Beckett's writing style, which is characterised by a rejection of typical narrative frameworks and a focus on the darker parts of the human experience (Hansen 129).

There are studies on the connection between Beckett's works and female Gothic, especially as previously noted Jim Hansen's *Terror and Irish Modernism: The Gothic Tradition from Burke to Beckett* (2010), Enoch Brater's *The Seated Figure on Beckett's Stage* (2010), and Kathleen O'Gorman's *"but this other awful thought": Aspects of the Female in Beckett's Not I*, which is an essential essay from *Journal of Beckett Studies* (2017) can be given as examples. When we examine Beckett's work through the female Gothic tradition the theme of travel and home, which is often used to analyse his writing in terms of a metaphysical journey, takes on a new form. Instead, the emphasis shifts to the Gothic theme of male exile and female confinement, as pointed out by Hansen. According to Hansen, the Gothic tradition,

the dark double of British domestic literature, is characterised by the pattern of male exile and female confinement As Hansen shows, in the Gothic tradition, regardless of their status as wanderers or exiles, both male and female characters are subjected to restriction and isolation within this framework. The Gothic tradition emphasises the dark, psychological aspects of family life. Hansen argues that Beckett's works are more in keeping with the Gothic tradition, namely the feminine Gothic, characterised by confinement and repression. The pattern of male exile and female imprisonment echoes themes of isolation, entrapment and powerlessness that appear frequently in Beckett, reflected through themes such as death, despair and the constraints of language. From this perspective, Beckett's work can be seen as a critique of traditional notions of home and the patriarchal systems that drive them, as well as an exploration of the darker inner parts of the human mind.

The idea is that reading Beckett through the lens of the Gothic tradition, defined by Hansen's pattern of male exile and female confinement, changes our understanding of the themes of female subjectivity and portrayal of female characters in Beckett's writing. We can see the examples of this in many researches such as: Brenda O'Connell's *Samuel Beckett's 'Hysterical Old Hags': The Sexual Politics of Female Ageing in All That Fall and Not I* (2018), Marzia Caporale's *A Process of Reduction: Feminine Voices and Bodies in Samuel Beckett's Late Drama* (2004), and Julia Campbell's *The Entrapment of the Female Body in Beckett's Plays in Relation to Jung's Third Tavistock Lecture* (2005) can be given as examples. Like their female counterparts, male characters in the Gothic are exiled and confined rather than simply wanderers. Looking at Beckett's male characters through a Gothic lens, we can see that although they are characterised as wanderers or exiles, they are inherently confined and withdrawn. This confinement is not always physical; it can be psychological or existential. In Beckett's *The Unnamable (1953)*, for example, the narrator is imprisoned by his own thoughts and the constraints of language, preventing him from connecting with others or finding a sense

of purpose or meaning in life. Similarly, in *Waiting for Godot (1952)*, the two main characters are trapped in a single place with their own cyclical conversations, unable to leave or progress. Taken together, we can see how Beckett's characters are trapped and how they are unable to move forward (Hansen 130).

Beckett's writing can be seen as part of the Gothic tradition, emphasising imprisonment and repression's psychological and emotional components (Hansen 130). But the Gothic component also helps us see Beckett's writing, especially his pre-war fiction, as a critique of modernity. Beckett's use of Gothic elements that limit female subjectivity, such as imprisonment and oppression, allows him to reinvent the political problems between Ireland and England over Ireland's separation. By transforming the female experience into a universal concept, Beckett broadens the scope of feminist political critique to include all people who face oppression and confinement. Hansen ultimately shows that Beckett's use of Gothic motifs in his writing allows him to explore the limits of human subjectivity and autonomy. Beckett creates a universal vocabulary of pain that transcends gender by using elements normally associated with female Gothic literature, such as imprisonment and oppression. Hansen demonstrates that Beckett's work can be seen as a critique of modernity because it shows how individuals are produced and constrained by the social and political systems of their time. Beckett, therefore, broadens the scope of feminist critique to include all subjects created in and by modernity (Hansen 132).

> "The world of an elderly, dying woman is depicted in a stream of consciousness. (Enough. Quicker. Quick see how all in keeping with the chair. Minimally less. No more. Well on the way to inexistence.) The woman remembers nature, watches her memories float past. She is apparently alone in a cabin, lying still. If someone were to come by, he would detect no life behind her curtains. She walks the edge between life and death, hearing from death the howls of laughter of the damned and yet still relishing her memories, and vividly experiencing the present -- her breathing, her old hands. Finally, she decides to let go of life, and in that last precious moment, which she compares to the last morsel of food, the licking of lips after a meal -- she knows a kind of happiness" (Beckett 48).

This quote is from Beckett's article from *The New Yorker* in 1981 where he shortly explains the plot and gives little insight into the character in his *Ill Seen Ill Said*. Even from this text, it is possible to analyse the novella from a female Gothic perspective which is explained before. Firstly, the presentation of the old, dying woman's stream of consciousness represents the emphasis on the inner life and subjective experiences of female characters that is often explored in female gothic literature. The scattered thoughts and sense of detachment reveal her psychological state and the inner conflicts she faces. The woman's seclusion in the cabin, as well as the representation of her fleeting presence behind drawn curtains, suggests a sense of confinement and imprisonment. This is in keeping with the idea of female imprisonment prevalent in the female gothic, in which women are imprisoned by social conventions and expectations, or by their own mental or physical illness. Furthermore, the woman's exploration of her memories and her strong sense of the present moment reveal a need for connection, agency, and personal fulfilment. Despite her failing condition and impending death, she retains her individuality and seeks solace in her own ideas and experiences. This illustrates the strength and autonomy often associated with female gothic protagonists in difficult situations. Furthermore, the woman's decision to accept death as a constant companion could be seen as a way of coming to terms with the darkest parts of existence. This is in keeping with the preoccupation with mortality and the supernatural that is common in Gothic literature. The woman's final moments of delight and liberation, akin to the satisfaction of eating the last bite of food, could be understood as the recovery of agency and the transcendence of social restrictions. Overall, the section from a female gothic perspective emphasises the woman's emotional problems, her imprisonment in a failing body, and her desire for identity and fulfilment. It depicts the nuances of female life, the encounter with mortality, and the possibility of agency and empowerment in the face of oppressive conditions.

Beckett's Ill Seen Ill Said and Hauntology

Samuel Beckett's short novel *Ill Seen Ill Said* was published in 1981. The story follows an unidentified female protagonist who lives alone in a rural setting, her life marked by a sense of waiting, loneliness and decay. The work is notable for its elliptical, fragmentary form and its exploration of themes of mortality, language and perception. The novel can be seen as a study of the same idea - the feeling that life is ultimately meaningless, and that the language we use to express it is also futile. The novel is divided into sections, each containing a collection of fragmentary images and observations. The narrator describes a dark and lonely region populated by strange, surreal creatures and tormented by a persistent sense of absence. The narrator also contemplates her own mortality, vividly describing her physical deterioration and pondering the meaning of death and the afterlife.

> But see she suddenly no longer there. Where suddenly fled. Quick then the chair before she reappears. At length. Every angle. With what one word convey its change? Careful. Less. Ah the sweet one word. Less. It is less. The same but less. Whencesoever the glare. True that the light. See now how words too. A few drops mishaphazard. Then strangury. To say the least. Less. It will end by being no more. By never having been. Divine prospect. True that the light (52).

The following passage from Beckett encapsulates themes of loss, transience, and the bleak contemplation of existence from a Gothic melancholia perspective. The emphasis on the woman's abrupt absence and the eagerness to watch her before she reappears conveys melancholy longing and the transient nature of human existence. This transience corresponds to the Gothic obsession with the ephemeral and the melancholy contemplation of the impermanence of life. By emphasising a diminishing presence or essence, the repeated motif of 'less' contributes to the melancholy tone. It expresses the Gothic obsession with decay, disintegration and the disappearance of the self. The repetition of 'less' accentuates a sense of loss and evokes grief and longing for what has been or is fading away.

The connection between light and language underlines the Gothic melancholia motif. The shifting and fading light represent the fading of light and the loss of clarity and meaning. This relates to the dark mentality that often characterises Gothic literature, where doubt and obscurity reign supreme and the search for meaning becomes a cause for melancholic reflection. The phrase "to say the least" adds to the melancholy tone, conveying an underlying depth and meaning that is not fully expressed. It implies an unfulfilled desire, a realisation that the true extent of loss or absence cannot be effectively communicated. The idea that the process of fading will result in a state of 'never having been' adds to the Gothic melancholia outlook. The passage explores themes of existential vacuum and the haunting presence of absence, as the melancholy mind wrestles with the conundrum of being and non-being. Through its study of loss, the ephemeral nature of existence and the contemplation of absence, this text presents Gothic melancholia perspective. It depicts the melancholy longing for insight, the introspective look at the fleeting aspect of existence, and the haunting sense of loss.

Throughout the work, Beckett uses a variety of literary strategies to create a sense of fragmentation and dislocation. With numerous changes of perspective and sudden shifts in tone, the story is sometimes elliptical and difficult to follow. The language is simple and straightforward, with an emphasis on repetition, ambiguity, and understatement. At the same time, Beckett's choice of language underlines the underlying concerns of the novel. The repeated use of certain phrases and images - such as the description of the "bee-loud glade" - gives a sense of the cyclical nature of life and death, while the narrator's frequent musings on the limitations of language underline the difficulties of articulating the experience of existence. Thus, *Ill Seen Ill Said* is a sombre and highly contemplative piece that addresses some of humanity's most important problems. Through its fragmented structure and elliptical language, it offers a compelling reflection on the nature of life, death and the human condition.

At first glance, Samuel Beckett's late literature and theatre would appear to be the polar opposite of what is typically called Gothic. Beckett's work is austere and minimally formalist, emotionally and plot-free, syntactically challenging and stubbornly avant-garde. Nevertheless, Beckett's writing has always contained features that seem to beg for, but also to resist, classification as Gothic. From the late 1940s onwards, Beckett frequently used post-mortem narrators, haunted by disembodied voices, and strangely tormented, trapped characters, as well as characteristics of more classic Gothic fiction, such as repetition, ambiguity, and narrative unease or anxiety. However, Beckett's later works become increasingly and overtly ghostly. Beckett emphasises the term in some of his later works, for example by naming a late play *Ghost Trio (1976)* and by having the speaker of *A Piece of Monologue (1979)* sum up his life as *"[t]hirty thousand nights of ghosts beyond. Beyond that black beyond. Ghost light. Ghost nights. Ghost rooms. Ghost graves. Ghost . . . he all but said ghost loved ones"* (269) (Fraser 772). In the 1973 short text "*Sounds*," the protagonist concludes by sitting at a table in the dark and silence, listening for "*no such thing no more than ghosts make [. . .] no such thing as a sound"* (268).

Jacques Derrida invented the term "hauntology" in his 1993 book *Spectres of Marx* to describe the circumstance in which the past is not fully present, but still has a strong influence on the present. Hauntology can be seen as a way of understanding how the past continues to affect our present, even when we are not fully aware of it. Derrida links the concept of hauntology to that of the "spectre" or ghost. Spectres are figures that are neither present nor absent but exist in a limbo between the two. Spectres are both real and imagined beings that represent the complexities of the past and its continuing effect on the present. Hauntology is also linked to the notion of deconstruction, which is central to Derrida's philosophical approach. Deconstruction involves a critical assessment of the underlying assumptions and binary oppositions that shape our worldview. Derrida sought to expose the underlying instability of

binary oppositions such as presence/absence or self/other by deconstructing them and showing how they are continually destroyed by the very notions they purport to describe. Hauntology can thus be understood as a method of understanding how the past continues to influence the present, even as we strive to move beyond it. It serves as a reminder that the past is never completely erased, but rather exists in suspended animation, exerting a powerful influence on our present. Hauntology is a powerful tool for exploring the complexity of the past and its continuing impact on our lives.

Interestingly, the Gothic elements in Beckett have been understood from the vantage point of hauntology. Graham Fraser, for example, in his article "No More Than Ghosts Make": The Hauntology and Gothic Minimalism of Beckett's Late Work" (2000) builds on Derrida's hauntology and argues that Beckett's late work could be viewed through the lens of hauntology, as his characters often seem trapped in the past, haunted by the memories and traumas that define them. In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, a novella that self-consciously displays the concepts and practices of late Beckettian Gothic. Ill Seen Ill Said contains so many Gothic characteristics that it reads like a distilled, high modernist imitation of the Gothic tale. The novel's setting is simple: a disembodied, floating eye inspects a circular, desolate landscape, following the movements of an immaterial old lady as she marches between the ramshackle hut that serves as her 'abode' (44) and a 'distant tomb' (16) at the edge of the scene (Fraser 773).

Characters in Beckett's works are often trapped in a cycle of repetition and waiting, tormented by memories and traumas from which they cannot escape. In plays such as *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, the protagonists are caught in a limbo, unable to move forward or leave the past. These works are examples of hauntology because they show a world in which the past is always present and has a profound effect on the present. Later works by Beckett, such as *Ill Seen, Ill Said (1981), Worstward Ho (1983) and Stirrings Still (1986-89),* are even more obviously haunted by the past. These works often use a fractured, elliptical form to depict

the difficulties of expressing the experience of life, emphasising the idea that the past is not easily accessible or understandable. The idea of hauntology is also represented in Beckett's use of repetition, which emphasises the cyclical aspect of existence and how the past continues to affect the present.

> Times when she is gone. Long lapses of time. At crocus time it would be making for the distant tomb. To have that on the imagination! On top of the rest. Bearing by the stem or round her arm the cross or wreath. But she can be gone at any time. From one moment of the year to the next suddenly no longer there. No longer anywhere to be seen. Nor by the eye of flesh nor by the other. Then as suddenly there again. Long after. So on. Any other would renounce. Avow, No one. No one any more. Any other than this other. In wait for her to reappear. In order to resume. Resume the – what is the word? What the wrong word? (16-17)

This section explores the idea of the 'other' in relation to the mind's eye and its many interpretations. The ambiguity surrounding the identification of this "other" leads to a ghostly perspective in which the boundaries between the living and the dead, the real and the imaginary, are blurred. The passage implies that the "other" could refer to other entities or personas within the story itself. It could represent the narrator as a symptomatic reader, someone unwilling to accept the absence of a fictional thing sought. The "other" could also refer to one of the Twelve Guardians who control the temporal aspects of the story. The "other" could also refer to the dying woman herself, as the defining other to the desiring perceiving subject. She has a fascinating staying power and an undying commitment to a deceased loved one, actively wishing for the ghost's return (Piette 85). This section examines the relationship between presence and absence, the living and the dead, from the perspective of a ghost. The 'other' might be thought of as a ghostly presence that exists beyond the reach of the searching eye. The old woman eludes the narrator's attempts to fully grasp or possess her as a literary incarnation or a ghostly materialisation of desire. She has a terrifying presence that defies rational explanation and remains in the realm of the unknown. In summary, this uncanny section emphasises the elusive character of the 'other' and the existence of ghostly beings within the story. It explores

themes of absence, longing and the enduring power of the spectral world, asking the reader to consider the boundaries between the living and the dead, and the unanswered ambitions of the characters that haunt them (Piette 85).

Furthermore, it also explores the idea of the 'other' in relation to the limits of vision and perception. The searching eye, represented by the gaze, attempts to identify and grasp the elusive essence of the 'other'. The "other" resides outside the sphere of vision, evading direct visual perception and entering the spectral domain. The mind's eye, associated with creativity and interpretation, is also involved in the effort to comprehend the inexplicable. From a ghostly point of view, the text questions the ability of the gaze to properly grasp or characterise the spectral realm. It highlights the inherent limitations of vision and encourages reflection on the boundaries between the seen and the unseen. This leads us to analyse the gaze behind the story.

The Gaze

The notion of the gaze is a key element in *Ill Seen Ill Said*. The act of staring at, examining or scrutinising something or someone is referred to as the gaze. The gaze can be interpreted as a representation of the oppressive forces that dominate the lives of the protagonists throughout the novel. The protagonists are subjected to the gaze of various forces, such as the sun, moon and stars, which have a powerful and inescapable influence on their lives. Beckett's use of the gaze reflects his wider concerns about the nature of power and domination. The gaze is a method of exerting influence over others, of subjecting them to the will of the observer. In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, the protagonists are subjected to the gaze of many forces over which they have no control, leaving them powerless and trapped. Language, which operates in a different register from the gaze, is one of the ways in which the characters attempt to escape the tyranny of the gaze. Language allows us to subvert or pervert the norms of seeing, to escape the coercive power of the gaze. However, language remains inextricably linked to

the gaze, with 'ill said' closely linked to 'ill seen'. In other words, language can be used to undermine the power of the gaze, but it cannot completely escape its effects. Beckett's use of the gaze in Ill Seen Ill Said reflects his wider concerns with power and domination. The characters are subject to forces over which they have little control, leaving them feeling weak and trapped. Beckett presents a unique perspective on the human condition and the search for meaning and purpose in a world dominated by forces beyond our control by examining the ways in which the gaze and words interact.

Beckett's concern in *Ill Seen Ill Said* is not with describing the nature of the forces acting on the individuals, but rather with their results and these influences go unquestioned, unexplained, or unmentioned, yet they have a huge impact on the lives of the protagonists (O'Riordain 250). Rather than focusing on the forces themselves, Beckett examines how the protagonists attempt to escape their oppression, mostly through language. Language, according to Beckett, provides a method of escaping the dominance of the gaze. Neither visible nor invisible, it operates in a different register from light. However, its effect is closely linked to sight, with the badly uttered being directly linked to the badly seen. Language, in other words, can be seen as a means of subverting or perverting perception, providing an escape from the coercive power of the gaze. Beckett suggests that language could evolve towards neutrality, serving as a platform for forces to act. This neutrality is neither good nor negative, but rather both, allowing forces to act without being constrained by any moral or ethical framework. In this way, language disrupts the power of the gaze and provides a way out of the repressive forces that govern the characters' existence. Beckett's use of language in "Ill Seen Ill Said" could be interpreted as an attempt to disrupt visual norms and provide an escape from the repressive forces that rule the characters' lives. By exploring the ways in which language and perception interact, Beckett offers a unique perspective on the human condition and the search for meaning and purpose in a world driven by forces beyond our control.

In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, vision is described as doubly distorted, meaning that it is tainted in two ways. First and foremost, vision is impaired. The protagonists of the story struggle to see properly because of numerous influences such as fog, mist, and darkness. This is a distortion of vision, as vision has generally been seen as a reliable means of understanding our surroundings. Throughout the novel, however, vision is shown to be an inadequate tool for understanding the world. Secondly, language has distorted vision. Language is used to undermine or distort visual conventions, thus providing an escape from the coercive power of the gaze, as mentioned earlier. However, the act of perverting perception through words is a perversion in itself. This is because language is usually thought of as a way of clarifying and expressing our ideas and experiences, yet in the novel language is used to obscure and confuse our knowledge of the world. In the narrative, language perverts both the affirmation and the denial of vision. The affirmation of vision is distorted because vision cannot function properly, and the denial of vision is distorted because it is done through language, which can itself be vague and imprecise. This implies that there are no obvious and simple ways of understanding the universe, and that all attempts to do so are ultimately flawed and untrustworthy.

The portrayal of vision as doubly distorted in *Ill Seen Ill Said* is linked to ideas of the melancholy Gothic and hauntology. The protagonists struggle with a constant sense of loss, loneliness, and the futility of understanding their surroundings, which persists throughout the story. The Gothic tradition's emphasis on decay, absence and the haunting presence of the past is reflected in this melancholy mood. The distortion of vision in the novel symbolises the dark gothic's exploration of the limits of perception and the underlying darkness and uncertainty of existence. The characters' reduced vision represents their inability to fully perceive the world around them, creating a sense of isolation and detachment. The presence of fog, mist and darkness adds to the sense of melancholy ambiguity, blurring the lines between truth and illusion. The use of words to distort perception adds further depth to the themes of the dark

gothic and hauntology. Language, often used to communicate and clarify our feelings, becomes a source of obfuscation and uncertainty in the story. The use of words to subvert visual norms echoes the hauntological concept of the past haunting the present, disrupting established ways of understanding and challenging linear narratives. This linguistic distortion emphasises the inherent elusiveness and ambiguity of meaning, adding to the sense of melancholy uncertainty and the inability to grasp a fixed and ultimate actuality. Overall, the novel's exploration of the complexities of perception, the persistence of loss and the haunting presence of the past is underscored by the relationship between the gaze, Gothic melancholia and hauntology. It challenges the reader to confront the underlying sadness and ambiguity of existence and embodies the Gothic tradition's interest in the interplay of light and darkness, presence and absence, and the limits of human understanding.

Death and Non-Existence

Beckett argues in *Ill Seen Ill Said* that our attempts to understand and interpret the world are flawed and limited, and that this is true not only of our perception, but also of our attempts to communicate and convey what we observe through language. This concept is closely related to the issue of death and non-existence, since the limitations of our understanding and communication ultimately force us to confront the truth that we are finite creatures with limited knowledge and expression. The ambiguities and uncertainties of existence, which Beckett sees as marked by a sense of grief and loss, are reflected in the contradictory nature of language, which can both explain and confuse our perception of the universe. It can be seen here:

> Reexamined rid of light the mouth changes. Unexplainably. Lips as before. Same closure. Same hint of extruding pulp. At the corners same imperceptible laxness. In a word the smile still there if smile is what it is. Neither more nor less. Less! And yet no longer the same. True that light distorts. Particularly sunset. That mockery. True too that the eyes then agaze for the viewless planet are now closed. On other viewlessness. Of which more if ever anon. There explanation at last. This same smile established with eyes open is with them closed no longer the same. Though between the two inspections

the mouth unchanged. Utterly. Good. But in what way no longer the same? What there now that was not there? What there no more that was? Enough. Away (49-50).

The narrator here wonders what keeps the eye from closing permanently, allowing the old woman to be seen by another kind of eye, the narrator speculates that the old woman can only be seen by this other eye and not by the fleshly eye and despite this potential, the fleshly eye is forbidden to close permanently (O'Riordain 253). The narrator then wonders what prevents one from simply being done with the old woman, or why it is so difficult to move on from this preoccupation with visiting her. The answer to this question is that it is the end of life that prevents the eye of the flesh from closing. In other words, death is the only thing that prevents the eye from closing. The narrator implies that it is the fear of death and the desire to continue living that prevents him from letting go of his fixation on meeting the old woman. This paragraph underlines the central theme of the novel: death and mortality. The old woman is often associated with death and dying, and her presence reminds us of our own mortality. The narrator believes that our fear of dying and our desire to live prevent us from letting go of our obsessions and moving on. This implies that human experience is shaped by a constant struggle between the desire to live and the inevitability of death, and that this struggle is ultimately what gives our existence meaning.

"Both complete visibility and complete lack of visibility define an attempt at achieving death, through complete comprehension or complete denial. Ill seen defines the impossibility of such an achievement; it maintains sight within the time of dying, between pure visibility and invisibility" (O'Riordain 253). As O'Riordain indicates, the narrative implies that both total vision and total absence of vision are attempts at death. Total comprehension is the urge to understand everything, while total denial is the desire to ignore everything. However, the novel *Ill Seen Ill Said* shows that neither of these approaches leads to death. Instead, the novel preserves a state of being "ill seen", in which vision remains between pure visibility and

invisibility at the point of death. The narrative focuses on the movement of vision within the domain of dying, rather than on death or being. The time of dying is a neutral period that is constantly moving towards death, and the novel depicts this movement through the lens of sight. This deflates the ontology and metaphysics of presence, which assumes the existence of a stable and continuous reality, while rejecting the ideal absence, which assumes the absence of any reality. This line underlines the novel's central theme of death and dying, and the way in which this theme is approached through the lens of vision.

The novel implies that the attempt to achieve death through perfect knowledge or complete denial is ultimately futile, and that the only way to approach death is to accept its inexorable progress towards us. Acceptance involves the deflation of philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, as well as the rejection of idealised concepts of absence or non-existence. In addition, O'Riordain continues and rightly asserts that "This neutral movement of interpretation is the articulation of the ill seen ill said, the point where they come into contact is the point of interpretation. Interpretation lies between what is ill seen and what is ill said, and this is why this point is tied to writing" (255). The point of interpretation is where what is 'ill seen' and what is 'ill said' collide. This point of interpretation is linked to writing and lies between the apparent passivity of perception and the perceived activity of speech. It is always "ill seen" and "ill said" because it is the writer's response to the command not to see or write in terms of light or unity.

However, this point of interpretation corrupts both the 'ill seen' and the 'ill said' because neither is self-sufficient, and it prevents both from being anchored in any particular place or connection to the world because the world itself is the interpretation, the fable. This leads to the neutrality of interpretation, which is the inability to be done with interpretation and the need to misinterpret again. This conception of interpretation and misinterpretation is related to the Gothic as melancholia, where a sense of loss and grief permeates the acceptance of death. The

inability to establish a fixed position and the need for reinterpretation create a constant sense of loss and sadness, which can be understood as a mirror of the Gothic as melancholia. This sense of loss and sadness is exacerbated by the fact that interpretation is always "ill seen" and "ill said", never fully capturing or comprehending the truth of the world. *"The mind betrays the treacherous eyes and the treacherous words their treacheries"* (Beckett 48).

In conclusion, Beckett's perspective on death in *Ill Seen Ill Said* deflates metaphysical and idealised beliefs about it. Instead, the novella takes a melancholy view of death, in which acceptance of mortality is combined with a profound sense of regret and loss. This is in keeping with the Gothic tradition of exploring themes of decay and mortality. Beckett invites the reader to reflect on the fleeting nature of existence and the emotional weight of approaching death through a contemplative atmosphere and desolate setting. The story implies that the attempt to achieve death, either through perfect knowledge or complete denial, is ultimately worthless. Instead, the story preserves a state of "unseen" in which vision remains within the period of death. This condition of "ill seen" is a deflation of the ontology and metaphysics of presence, in which vision lives alongside the march towards death, rejecting idealised concepts of absence or non-existence. Overall, "Ill Seen Ill Said" is a unique and complex examination of mortality, dying and the importance of sight in the process.

The novel's emphasis on the fragility and vulnerability of the human body reflects the Gothic as melancholia. The old woman at the centre of the novel is portrayed as weak and debilitated, nearing the end of her life. The novel's portrayal of the old woman's struggle with illness and death is linked to the Gothic's emphasis on decay, disintegration, and the fragility of life. Melancholy is often seen in the Gothic tradition as a natural response to the inevitability of death. This sadness is not always a sign of despair or hopelessness, but rather an appreciation of the beauty and meaning of life in the face of its inevitable end. The sadness of Ill Seen Ill Said is also linked to the novel's acceptance of death as an ongoing fact. The novel's emphasis

on the movement of sight within the sphere of death is a profound reflection on the acceptance of this truth, and the melancholy that results from this acceptance is a monument to the value and fragility of life.

Irishness and Gothic Melancholia

Beckett's use of the Gothic themes and motifs in his works, particularly *Ill Seen Ill Said*, demonstrates his interest in the melancholy acceptance of death and loss. This concept is often linked to his exploration of the female Gothic, in which female characters, such as the heroine of *Ill Seen Ill Said*, are portrayed as lonely and trapped in their own imaginations. Beckett's Irishness gives him a unique perspective on the Gothic genre, as he often incorporates parts of Irish folklore and mythology into his writing. Beckett's Irishness plays a significant role in his work, as he draws on Irish literary traditions and cultural history. Although Beckett lived in France for much of his life and wrote most of his major works in French, his Irish heritage remained an important part of his identity and influenced much of his writing. One of the most visible manifestations of Beckett's Irishness in his work is his use of language. For example, in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, he uses the Irish environment and mythology to create a sense of place and history, which is evident in the vivid descriptions of the countryside. Beckett's Irishness can also be seen in his use of language, which has distinctive rhythms and phrases that reflect the Irish vernacular. As a whole, Beckett's portrayal of vision and language in *Ill Seen Ill Said* highlights the limitations of our attempts to make sense of the world, as well as the inherent flaws in our techniques of perceiving and interpreting our environment. His work implies a constant conflict between the need for clarity and the inherent distortion and obfuscation that comes with language and perception.

Beckett's work often combines aspects of the Irish language, such as Irish words and phrases, as well as Irish speech rhythms and intonations. This can be seen, for example, in his

early play *Murphy* (1938), which is set in Dublin and uses dialect and colloquialisms. Themes and images that recur throughout Beckett's writing show his Irishness. Many of his plays and novels deal with themes of exile, dislocation, and alienation, which represent the reality of many Irish people forced to leave their homeland in search of work or opportunity. Beckett's use of harsh, barren settings, as in his drama *Endgame (1957)*, can be interpreted as a reflection of the rugged beauty of the Irish countryside and Beckett's Irishness can be seen in his interest in Irish literature and culture. Beckett was familiar with the writings of James Joyce, W.B. Yeats and other Irish authors, and his work can be understood as part of a larger Irish literary tradition. Beckett's interest in the Irish language and tradition is also evident in his translations of Irish poetry, such as his work on the poetry of Brian Merriman. Beckett's Irishness thus informed his life and work, influencing the language, concepts and images that appear throughout his work. While Beckett's work is part of a larger European literary tradition, his engagement with Irish culture and history is central to his identity and contribution to the literary world.

The Gothic elements in Samuel Beckett intertwine with his Irishness. The Gothic undertones in his work can be perceived particularly in his connection with Irish history and culture.. For example, the Irish tale of the banshee, a female spirit who is said to predict the death of a family member, has Gothic elements and is often used in Gothic literature. Beckett's use of bleak, solitary settings, and his exploration of themes of isolation, exile and despair echoes the bleakness and gloom of the Gothic tradition. In fact, it might be said that Beckett's work, like Joyce's, is a response to Ireland's Gothic cultural imagination. Despite their dated and lifeless appearance, Beckett's skilful use of Gothic literary tropes helps to express the concept of autonomy. In other words, Beckett's use of Gothic motifs is a deliberate attempt to express a more profound philosophical and cultural message about the search for autonomy and the constraints of old structures and traditions. By using these Gothic elements in new and

unorthodox ways, Beckett questions the foundations of traditional literary forms and explores new ways of presenting complicated thoughts and themes. It is important to read Beckett into both the Irish literary and European modernist traditions rather than extracting him from either, as placing Beckett in the tradition of the Irish Gothic and its generic accoutrements, we politicise Beckett's vague, literary "Irishness". (Hansen 145) This remark implies that it is crucial to consider Beckett's writings in the context of both Irish literary and European modernist traditions rather than isolating him from either. Political dimension can be added to Beckett's work by locating him within the Irish Gothic tradition and exploiting the literary aspects associated with it that may not be apparent if we only consider his nebulous connection to Irish literature. This perspective acknowledges Beckett's Irish origins while situating him within the larger modernist movement. In doing so, we can better understand how Beckett's work reflects and confronts the dominant literary and cultural traditions in Ireland and Europe at the time.

In *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body, and the Law (1998)*, David Punter, a critic concerned primarily with the Gothic, claims that there is "more to be said about Beckett as a Gothic writer, and perhaps more to be said in general about the minimalist, reductive component of Gothic which stands over against its manic, self-justifying, self-doubting proliferations" (18). Punter argues that Beckett's minimalist writing style, which contrasts with the exaggerated and self-reflexive nature of Gothic literature, can nevertheless be explored within the Gothic tradition. While Beckett's work may lack the intensity of conventional Gothic works, Punter argues that themes of confinement, loneliness and nihilism can be discerned in a more subtle way. Punter suggests that by analysing the power dynamics and control evident in Beckett's work, such as the use of language and physical confinement, we can gain a better understanding of power structures both in Beckett's stories and in society as a whole. This perspective highlights the potential for interdisciplinary research by allowing us to examine

Beckett's themes through the prism of Gothic literature, thereby broadening our understanding of both Beckett and Gothic literature. In summary, Punter's argument for examining Beckett's writing through the lens of Gothic literature offers fresh insights into the themes and ideas embedded in Beckett's work, while also enhancing our understanding of Gothic literature as a whole.

The Gothic mode, since its emergence as the shadow side of the Enlightenment privileging of reason, has transmuted from the formulaic to the largely indefinable, however, convergences between Beckett's oeuvre and the Gothic are not difficult to discern (Mooney 167). The Gothic genre has changed over time from a familiar formula to a more enigmatic, difficult-to-define form. Yet there are strong parallels between Beckett's work and the Gothic tradition. The Gothic has been seen as the dark side of rationality since the dawn of the Enlightenment, and Beckett's works often explore themes relating to the limits of reason and the human experience of isolation, imprisonment, and despair. The Gothic is known for its emphasis on suspense, terror and the supernatural, and Beckett's writing often incorporates ludicrous and surreal circumstances that evoke the uncanny. In this sense, Beckett's writing can be seen as a continuation of the Gothic tradition, even as it experiments with new and inventive literary forms and techniques.

David Punter declares that "disequilibrium" is the trademark of the Gothic, a condition wrought by the juxtaposition of "a tendency towards moral and structural stabilising" and a contrary inclination towards fragmentation, instability, and moral ambivalence", has obvious parallels in Beckett's continual postulation and cancellation of forms of order (Punter 43). He argues that this idea is particularly relevant to Beckett's work, which constantly proposes and then deconstructs systems of order. Beckett's writing is characterised by a sense of ambiguity, confusion, and uncertainty, which is often reflected in the style of his works, such as his use of repetition and fragmentation. Beckett's characters are often caught in situations in which they

cannot find a secure footing, and their attempts to impose order are continually thwarted. This creates a sense of imbalance and instability reminiscent of the Gothic tradition. The protagonists in many of Beckett's works are trapped in absurd situations that challenge their sense of identity and purpose. They may long for security and meaning, but their desires are continually frustrated by the chaos and unpredictability of their surroundings. At the same time, Beckett's writing frequently demonstrates the arbitrariness of systems of meaning and the fragility of moral frameworks. As a result, the reader is always in a state of disequilibrium, not knowing what to expect or where the story is going. Beckett's use of many literary devices, such as the repetition of phrases, the subversion of narrative expectations and the fragmentation of language and meaning, reflects this. These tactics create an atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty reminiscent of the Gothic genre. Thus, Punter's observation that Beckett's work shares significant aspects with Gothic literature highlights the diversity and richness of Beckett's writing and argues that it can be successfully understood within a variety of literary traditions and settings.

Beckett himself acknowledged that *All That Fall* (1956) is inherently Gothic nightmare in a 1956 letter to Nancy Cunard, describing the play's birth in classically Gothic terms: "Never thought about a radio play technique, but in the dead of t'other night got a nicely gruesome idea full of cartwheels and dragging feet and puffing and panting which may or may not lead to something" (Worth 197). The Gothic or Gothic-parody, sound effects which radio enables take precedence over character or setting and, as a result, we experience the play primarily as an eerie soundscape of halting footsteps, voices, torn across by deathly silences. Beckett's original inspiration grasps the essentially ghostly nature of radio drama, in which voices emanate from silence and return to it, conjuring brief snatches of illusion in which we are never, in Beckett's hands, allowed to entirely believe (Mooney 172). It is interesting the fact that Beckett always refused categorically to consider *All That Fall* (1956) being presented on stage,

insisting in 1957 that "[w]hatever quality it may have depends on the whole thing's *coming out of the dark*" (Zilliacus 3). Beckett is primarily interested in strange condition of suspensions between existence and non-existence, entirely appropriate to the death of his caste, and entirely appropriate to the transience of radio.

Beckett's work is strongly influenced by the Gothic, as evidenced by the fragmentation and disjunction that pervades his work. His interest in the idea of entropic decline is evident in the circularity and repetition of his narrative frameworks. The Gothic's emphasis on atmosphere and mood over plot is similar to Beckett's rejection of standard plot in favour of dreamlike or hallucinogenic forms. This implies that, as in the Gothic, activity in Beckett's universe is useless and ultimately pointless. Beckett's work often features characters trapped in their own minds, unable to free themselves from their own inner struggles, creating a Gothic-like sense of dread and anxiety. The Gothic's darkly parodic relation to the realist mode allows Beckett's stories to foreground the inadequacy of any given account; the Gothic narrative, with its illegible letters, mise-en-abîme and unreliably garrulous retainers, is entirely unable to render an account that is not in some way confused, distorted, slanted or thoroughly unverifiable (Mooney 180). Mooney discusses the Gothic elements of the trilogy (Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnamable 1955) include a deathbed confession, mysterious forces that dictate the composition of the confession, claustrophobic settings, and denatured characters. The deathbed confession is a traditional Gothic literary tradition that appears in the trilogy in the form of Molloy's and Malone's stories, in which the protagonists are forced to confess their experiences. In the trilogy, the mysterious forces that control the writing of the confession can be understood as an extension of the Gothic obsession with fate and determinism. The diminishing location and increasing claustrophobia of the bed and urn, which become increasingly denatured and disembodied, contribute to the gothic mood of the trilogy. The trilogy's intertwined plots emphasise the unreliability of the characters' stories, which is a

prominent aspect of Gothic literature, and it can be argued that the trilogy is a Gothic parody, using several Gothic book motifs but subverting them in Beckett's own way, making the narratives even more disorganised and fragmented.

In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, Beckett employs similar strategies to those used in his trilogy to create a gothic mood and defy standard narrative structures. The novella's dark tone is heightened by the diminishing location of the bed and urn and the increasing sense of confinement. This sense of confinement parallels the gothic notion of confinement and isolation and heightens the protagonists' sense of unease and claustrophobia. Furthermore, like *The Trilogy*, *Ill Seen Ill Said* explores the theme of unreliable narrative that is prevalent in Gothic literature. The novella's protagonists' stories are disjointed and disorganised, making it impossible to discern a clear and consistent narrative. This violation of standard narrative tactics is in keeping with Beckett's experimental bent and defies the reader's expectations. Furthermore, *Ill Seen Ill Said* could be seen as a Gothic parody, in the same way that Beckett's trilogy critiques Gothic traditions. While the novella shares gothic traits such as darkness, loneliness and a preoccupation with mortality, Beckett's particular style subverts these clichés. Ill Seen Ill Said's plots are deliberately disorganised and disjointed, adding to the sense of confusion, and weakening the typical gothic framework. Ultimately, *Ill Seen Ill Said* draws on the gothic legacy while defying its norms through its gothic characteristics and parodic overtones. It creates an atmosphere of disquiet and disorder, reflecting Beckett's distinctive narrative style and his exploration of the human condition in the face of uncertainty and mortality.

In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, he uses the Irish environment and mythology to create a sense of place and history, which is evident in the vivid descriptions of the countryside. Beckett's Irishness can also be seen in his use of language, which has distinctive rhythms and phrases that reflect the Irish vernacular. As a whole, Beckett's portrayal of vision and language in *Ill*

Seen Ill Said highlights the limitations of our attempts to make sense of the world, as well as the inherent flaws in our techniques of perceiving and interpreting our environment. His work implies a constant conflict between the need for clarity and the inherent distortion and obfuscation that comes with language and perception.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of Samuel Beckett's works, particularly *Ill Seen Ill Said*, reveals a multi-layered engagement with literary and philosophical issues. Beckett's use of Gothic motifs and themes such as melancholy, the gaze and visual distortion creates a haunting and introspective atmosphere throughout his works. The Gothic tradition, with its themes of decay, mortality and the examination of the human mind, intersects with Beckett's unique narrative technique. Through fragmented narratives, unreliable storytelling and a subversion of typical Gothic elements, Beckett defies conventional frameworks and forces the reader to confront the existential concerns that lie beneath the surface. Furthermore, Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology emerges as a key theme in Beckett's writings. Ghosts, both real and metaphorical, represent a sense of lingering absence and the haunting spectre of the past. This complicates Beckett's examination of identity, memory and the ephemeral nature of life. In addition, Beckett's Irishness pervades his works, imbuing them with a distinct cultural perspective. Loss, displacement and the search for meaning are themes that connect with the historical and cultural background of Ireland, deepening the gothic and melancholy overtones of his writing. Finally, Beckett's literary world is one of ambiguity, where language, perception and existence are questioned and deconstructed. Through his creative use of form, his examination of human vulnerability and his interplay of Gothic melancholia themes, Beckett challenges the reader to confront the complexity of the human condition and to accept the uncertainties of life. In delving into the intricate themes and stylistic choices present in Beckett's works, it could be helpful to gain insight into the profound and thought-provoking nature of his literary

contributions. His exploration of the Gothic, melancholy, hauntology and Irishness reveals the

depths of human experience and challenges us to consider.

CONCLUSION

The Gothic genre, with its exploration of melancholia, has played an important role in defining literary movements and expressing the complexities of human emotion. This study examines the works of Edgar Allan Poe, T.S. Eliot and Samuel Beckett, highlighting their different methods of incorporating Gothic aspects into their writing and exploring melancholia in the context of modernism.

Edgar Allan Poe's dark modernism explored the depths of human misery and psychological suffering, using Gothic tropes to evoke terror and unease. In his grotesque tales and poems, Poe explored the darkest recesses of the human psyche, revealing the fragility of the human condition and the inevitability of pain. His works demonstrate the Gothic's ability to address and express melancholic emotions, and function as a forerunner of the haunted modernity later explored by many writers.

T.S. Eliot's concept of haunted modernity embraced the Gothic as a technique for conveying the bewilderment and alienation experienced in the modern world. Eliot's poems, particularly "The Waste Land", captured the fragmented and disjointed aspect of modern existence, where past and present merge in an unsettling way. Eliot explored the fears and disillusionment of the post-war era through allusions to Gothic imagery and themes, creating a world haunted by the ghosts of the past and the haunting uncertainties of the present.

Famous for his absurdist storytelling, Samuel Beckett presents a unique perspective on melancholy in "Ill Seen Ill Said". Through his minimalist style and vivid imagery, Beckett depicts the fundamental absurdity and futility of human existence. The protagonists in Ill Seen Ill Said are trapped in a never-ending cycle of longing, grief and hopelessness, evoking the essence of melancholia. Beckett's examination of this state of melancholy reveals existential angst and the absurdity of life itself. Throughout the novella, the lines between reality and

illusion are blurred, creating a gothic atmosphere that contributes to the character's, and the overall, sense of dread and disorientation.

In conclusion, the Gothic genre has provided a powerful lens through which to examine the human condition and the intricacies of modern existence through its examination of melancholia and its reinterpretation by writers such as Poe, Eliot and Beckett. By combining gothic aspects with their everyday reality, these writers highlighted the uncanny and haunting aspect of the world we live in. Ultimately, in the face of an increasingly uncertain and gothicised reality, their works encourage us to confront our own fears, anxieties and the dark depths of the human condition.

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