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Tragic Heroism and the Gothic Self in Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe: An Eco-Critical Reading of Selected Short Stories

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Dedication

To my beloved family members from my lovely Mother Yasmina and my great father Massoud to my siblings whom I appreciate having such close people like them in my life: Olfa, Zahra, Abire, Abdullah, Salha, Dikra, and Ahmad.

To my grandmother whom without her I would be lost, and to all my relatives whom I love.

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Dedication

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To my two brothers " Oussama" and "Moundher"

To all my mother's and father's family

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Abstract

This study examines tragic heroism in selected short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, situating their narratives within the Gothic and Dark Romantic tradition as reflections of nineteenth-century existential and social instability. It investigates the positioning of the human subject within natural and symbolic environments, focusing on how identity, belonging, and moral consciousness are shaped through interaction with external forces. Drawing on an Ecocritical framework informed by Deep Ecology and the concept of the Ecological self as developed by Arne Næss, the study reconsiders the human–nature relationship as an interconnected system rather than a hierarchical opposition. In this perspective, nature functions as an active force in shaping meaning, ethical tension, and psychological transformation.

Through an analytical reading of “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832) and “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844), the research argues that the human figure emerges as a fragmented and ambiguous self-shaped by fear, isolation, and moral uncertainty. The study further proposes that the Gothic self in these texts reflects a crisis of Ecological and existential disconnection, where tragic heroism arises from the tension between inner consciousness and external environmental forces. Ultimately, the findings suggest that these narratives extend beyond literary representation to offer broader philosophical insights into human existence within the natural world.

Key words:

Dark Romanticism, Deep Ecology, Eco-criticism, Gothic Self, Tragic Heroism

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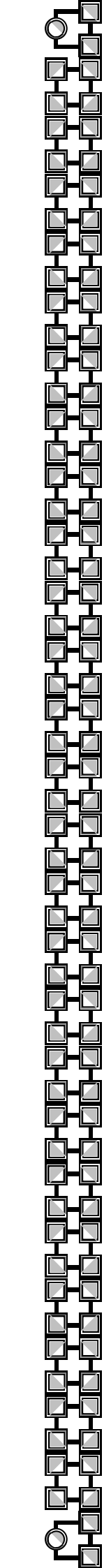
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General introduction

Background of the Study

In the 18th century, the Enlightenment, also called, the Age of Reason (1737-1809), dominated American thought. This philosophy valued logic, science, and order. It was all about building a stable society based on rational ideas. However, by the early 19th century, people started to feel that this focus on pure reason was too cold and limiting, this led to the rise of Romanticism (1800-1850), a movement that prioritized emotion, imagination, and the individual. In America, the most important form of this was also known as Transcendentalism (Gray 114). it was led by thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau who promoted the notions of self-reliance and individualism as key concepts. They also believed that God is in nature, and one can connect to the spiritual world by being in it.

The romantic view was optimistic; it believed that people are inherently good, and society often corrupts them (Gray 115). However not everyone agreed with this optimistic view. A group of writers, now known as the Dark Romantics, attempted to flip the tides. In their perspective, they believed that the Transcendentalists were ignoring the obvious reality of sin, evil, and human weakness. While they shared the Romantic interest in emotion and the supernatural, they focused on the darker sides of the human mind, believing that humans have an ability for evil and that nature could be mysterious and terrifying, not just peaceful and good.

The American Dark Romantic reaction was mainly expressed through the literature of key writers who explored these darker themes. Edgar Allan Poe is a pioneering figure, his stories and poems dive deep into the human psyche, many of his characters struggle with insanity or obsession. He created atmospheres of terror and fear using Gothic elements like haunted houses and premature burials. Several themes in his poems and stories are a representation of grief, loss, and the finality of death. (Augustyn 100).

On an equal footing, Nathaniel Hawthorne reacted strongly against the perfect world of the Transcendentalists. His work often deals with sin and guilt. In his famous novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Hawthorne examines how a single sinful act leads to lifelong guilt and social judgment. He was fascinated by how the sins of past

generations, like the Puritans', haunt the present. Many of his works show human imperfection, and regress as an inevitable reality. (Augustyn187)

Both Poe and Hawthorne have never met in real life; however, they witnessed the same literary era and they shared the same beliefs against the optimistic Transcendentalist vision of the individual and nature. Through Dark Romanticism, they provided a crucial counter-argument, their focus on guilt, madness, and evil, creating a more complex and, arguably, more realistic portrait of the human experience in 19th-century America (Velella 1).

The Problem Statement

American Romanticism and transcendentalism regarded nature as a sublime and spiritual force through which humanity could access divine truth and inner harmony. However, this optimistic vision was challenged by Dark Romanticism, which interpreted nature as oppressive, unstable, and morally ambiguous.

Within this shift, writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe depict environments marked by decay, isolation, and symbolic darkness. These representations suggest that nature is not merely a backdrop for human experience but an active force shaping psychological instability and existential anxiety.

Therefore, this study addresses the tension between transcendental idealism and Dark Romantic representations of nature. Through an Ecocritical approach, this research investigates how Dark Romanticism reconstructs nature as a site where environmental decay and psychological conflict intersect, thereby challenging the transcendental vision of harmony between human beings, nature, and the divine.

Literature Review

Recent studies have explored the themes of madness and macabre in the Dark Romantic works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. These studies have, either highlighted nature as a symbol, in those writings, emphasizing its role in deliberating the gothic setting, or emphasized the human psyche through an Ecocritical perspective.

A dissertation by Margaret. L. Finn (2010). 'Immanent Nature: Environment, women, and Sacrifice in the Nature Writing of Hawthorn, Catharine, and Orne Jewett', that studied and criticized the neglecting of the contemporary environmental critics to the chosen authors as a writer of nature, the study focused more on Hawthorne, highlighting through an Ecocritical reading the relevance of their works in today's world. The study suggested that by adopting the Ecofeminism studies, the importance of those writers' works appears in their positioning to the female at scenes of primal violence at the heart of New England colonization

In Antony Kago Waithera's article, "The Symbols of the Sentient House of Usher" (2022), Ecocritical approaches were employed to explore how symbolism functions in depicting concerns about nature in Poe's work. Guided by Ecocriticism, the study discussed themes including death, tradition, and environmental rights, which led to connecting such portrayals with decay in the world, especially in African nations, and with the pollution caused by the harmful actions of humankind.

As well as this, examined Edgar Allan Poe's selected short stories by focusing on the background of the narratives and aiming to draw readers' attention to the idea that the world is essentially eccentric. The study declared "The characters of the stories are given much lesser importance, and the focus is centered on the environmental setting, the description of nature," presenting this perspective as a matter of ethics toward nature (2022).

According to in the research "Exploring the Dark and Gothic: An Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne's Gothic Elements in American Literature," (2024), the analysis of the selected short stories *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe and *The Birth-Mark* by Nathaniel Hawthorne focused on themes of mental disorder, symbolism, and science versus nature. The study found that these themes hold great importance in reflecting the reality of today's modern world, while also quoting Richard Fusco's view regarding the role of Gothicism in reflecting unpleasant yet common human instincts.

A study titled, “Gothic Elements in Selected Short Stories by Edgar Allan Poe,” (2025). Examined Poe’s masterfully crafted tales that not only reflected the dark and mysterious atmosphere of the nineteenth century but also transcended the boundaries of literary genres. The research selected *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and *The Cask of Amontillado*, highlighting Poe’s employment of horror, madness, and the supernatural. Through examining such themes, the article emphasized the ways in which Poe’s narrative techniques and atmospheric settings contributed to the overarching Gothic ambiance

In *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review*, an article by entitled “Decentering Ecophobia in ‘Young Goodman Brown’” (2025). discussed the relationship between human beings and nature, the negative side of Ecophobia in relation to the Anthropogenic, and the marginalization of forest-dwelling communities within the Ecogothic as a post human perspective. The article argued that Ecophobia in *Young Goodman Brown* hinders the development of a healthy Ecological awareness for the future

While existing studies have explored the Dark Romantic works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne from philosophical and psychological perspectives, less attention has been given to Dark Romanticism as a subject of Eco criticism. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by bringing together these two authors and their selected short stories and analyzing them thematically through the perspective of Deep Ecology and Arne Naas’s Ecosophy.

Most of the well-known stories have already been explored by scholars. To avoid confusion and repetition, the selection was random because it was not focusing a specific narrative. The aim was for them to be new and original as far as scholarship is concerned

The Aim of the Study

The American tragic hero is a character rooted in nature and shaped by the environmental aspects fashioning his personality. To highlight this, Ecocriticism, a branch, helps explore the way the human psyche and the environment overlap. While

Eco criticism encompasses traditional writing about nature and environmental themes, it also addresses literature related to urban and fabricated environments

This study aims to interpret the tragic hero's gothic attachment to nature through an Ecocritical perspective and his tragic down fall that is caused by him either attaching to nature or separating from it.

Research Questions

- 1- How does nature project the macabre and the opaque in relation to the characters' psyches?
- 2- How does nature function beyond symbolism, to shape the narrative in the stories?
- 3- How do the authors represent their tragic hero as steeped in his/her gothic atmosphere?

Hypotheses

- 1- Through gothic and natural elements intersecting together in reflecting the human inner side, nature becomes an illustration of macabre. Manifest nature as a subliminal reference for human to celebrate his sufferance and woes.
- 2- Nature is not merely symbolic; it functions as a moral framework within the narrative.
- 3- The description of weather and climate change and the author's tone are their tools in representing tragedy.

Research Methodology

The study aims to identify the major environmental elements shaping the tragic Gothic hero and to examine how the protagonists' psychological and moral conditions are reflected through their relationship with nature. Furthermore, the study compares the two short stories by exploring the ways in which nature mediates fear, isolation, fragmentation, and transcendence within the Gothic imagination.

Although certain aspects of the analysis may resonate with the Ecological uncanniness later theorized by Timothy Morton, the study is primarily grounded in a reversal of Arne Naess's concept of Deep Ecology. Rather than presenting Ecological interdependence as a harmonious path toward spiritual unity and self-realization, the selected texts transform this interconnectedness into a Gothic condition marked by psychological fragmentation, moral ambiguity, and distorted communion with nature. In this sense, the study examines how transcendental harmony gradually shifts into Ecological and internal rupture within the Gothic mode.

The study followed a set of analytical steps, where the selected stories were, first, carefully read to identify the human-nature relationship, and then these passages were classified according to the main concepts of Deep Ecology. By highlighting the unusual relationship between humans and nature, as a character, the results were discussed and linked to the theoretical framework; the Ecological-self, interdependency, and functional wholeness, to emphasize factors of environmental decay, the dissonance in harmony, and the tragic ending.

Significance of the Study

This study offers a deeper interpretation of Dark Romantic literature through Ecocriticism. By analyzing the selected short stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, the research highlights the role of nature as more than a physical setting, presenting it instead as a reflection of inner conflict, fear, moral ambiguity, and the fragmented self.

The study does not only apply Ecological theory. Instead, it builds its understanding directly from the texts. It combines Ecological ideas with psychological and Gothic interpretation. Nature is not only seen as an external object, but also as connected to human psychological experience. Silence is interpreted as a form of inner repression that appears both in the mind and in the environment. In this way, the study develops its ideas through close reading of the texts themselves rather than

only relying on fixed theoretical models. This is what makes it significant, because it allows theory to emerge from the literary analysis.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured into three chapters. The first chapter establishes the socio-historical, political, philosophical, and literary context of the nineteenth century, with particular attention to Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and Dark Romanticism. It situates Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne within this intellectual and cultural milieu, highlighting how their thematic concerns and stylistic choices emerge from and respond to status quo of their time.

The second chapter develops the theoretical framework of the study by engaging with Ecocriticism as a critical approach in literary studies. It examines its key concepts, defining features, and historical emergence, while also incorporating Arne Naess's notion of Deep Ecology and the Ecological self as a guiding philosophical foundation for the analysis.

The third chapter presents a close Ecocritical reading of Hawthorne's "*Rappaccini's Daughter*" (1844) and Poe's "*Silence: A Fable*," (1832) analyzing how both texts articulate human-nature relationships through thematic comparison. It explores how Ecology and nature intersect within the selected narratives.

The conclusion briefly synthesizes the findings, demonstrating how these literary works, when interpreted via an Ecocritical lens, shows the interdependence between humanity and nature.

Chapter One:
Sociopolitical and Literary
Contexts of 19th Century
America

Introduction

In this chapter, the sociocultural background will be explored. It highlights the main events in the 19th century America, including the consequences of the civil war, changes caused by urbanization, and the influence of immigration, then, to provide a clearer perspective on the study, the chapter emphasizes on the Dark Romantic movement emergence, and the main concepts of Gothicism, gloominess, evil, and heroism. Moreover, it examines the philosophy beyond the characterization and psychology of tragic hero.

The American man is a significant figure who has been shaped and reshaped through history. Since the spread of the New Land ideology, individuals have been open to change and to create their own new identities (Gray 87). One of the historical elements that proves the resilience and effort of these new settlers is the Declaration of Independence, which encompassed rules and rights that defined their aspirations. This struggle with identity did not begin in a single period nor did it cease in a certain era; rather, it has continued through the centuries.

This chapter draws attention to individualism, gothic heroism, development, and change, as well as the relationship between humanity and the environment. It emphasizes the environmental elements that shape the American man and his mentality, highlighting the hardships of life as essential components in forming identity and thought processes. This context is intricately linked to the literary concept of gothic heroism found in the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

1.1 The Sociocultural Atmosphere during the 19th Century

Under similar circumstances, Americans struggled to establish a sense of unity within an increasingly heterogeneous social fabric. Following independence, the United States turned its attention toward territorial expansion and consolidation. By the 1860s, the population had risen to more than 30 million, largely due to the acquisition of new territories and sustained waves of immigration (Gray 88). This demo-

graphic surge produced an unprecedented level of diversity, replacing a singular cultural model with a multiplicity of lifestyles and social practices.

As in any developing nation, the central priority in nineteenth-century America became economic growth. From the late eighteenth century to the 1850s, the economy was predominantly agrarian; however, this structure gradually gave way to industrial development, marking a decisive shift toward factory-based production (Gray 88).

These changes affected people, at that time, and they started making slogans of strength, development, superiority and individualism in order to motivate those people. Most appreciably, this change in the American society was mainly theological, at the time, religion was not central but some people believed in that: "a kingdom of God depends on perfecting human society" (Gray 90) referring to America. People draw their attention toward improvement more, and that put in question the tension between religious ideal and materiality (Mandelker 8-10).

1.1.1 The Effect of Civil War on the American Individual

One of the most influential events in the construction of American identity was the American Civil War (1861–1865). The US was divided into two parts, the north and the south, this division was not only on the geographical level, but on the economic and social level too. The conflict mainly opposed the Northern industrial based economy states, which gradually rejected slavery, and the Southern agriculturally based economic states (cotton production), whose economy relied heavily on enslaved labor (Zinn 163-164).

The war exposed a major contradiction in American ideology: one founding principle of the nation was that all men are equal (Rafuse 13) consequently, the very existence of Afro-Americans became a matter of questioning and debate this contradiction created a moral and social tension that deeply affected the American social atmosphere and the stability of its national identity. Although later historical interpretations sometimes emphasized political and economic factors over slavery itself, the institution of slavery remained central to the conflict (Gary and Alan 12 -13).

Unfortunately, the civil war resulted in an economic devastation contributing to a deeper crisis of identity. Southern society, once built on slavery and a rigid social hierarchy, was forced to redefine itself in the aftermath of defeat. Former slaveholders lost not only wealth but also their social status, while freed African Americans struggled to achieve true economic independence.

What is rather alluring is the fact that the war did not only cause material damage, but also deep enduring psychological harm. Researches in this term showed that the trauma caused by war persist across generations, this form of harm is complex and not easy to overcome. Many soldiers returned home exhibiting symptoms we now recognize as post-traumatic stress disorder, including violence, paranoia, and suicidal tendencies, even though such conditions were not understood at the time (Sommerville).

1.1.2 The Effects of the Industrial Revolution and Urbanization

Before the Civil War, the Northern states were already undergoing an early phase of industrial expansion. From the 1760s onward, the growth of railroads gradually reshaped economic life, enabling greater labor mobility and encouraging farmers to shift toward market-oriented production (Gray 89).

In the post-Civil War period, the United States faced the challenge of reconstruction, during which scientific progress, technological innovation, and infrastructural development became central forces of change. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the country was clearly transitioning from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. The spread of machines, steamboats, and an expanding railroad network accelerated this shift, while also stimulating large-scale migration from rural areas—especially the South—toward rapidly growing industrial cities in the North (Atack et al. 12).

Yet this rapid industrialization came at a social cost. Although it generated economic growth and technological progress, it also intensified inequalities under

capitalism, widening the divide between industrial elites and the working class. Many immigrants who arrived in American cities seeking opportunity were instead absorbed into demanding and often precarious labor conditions, becoming a flexible source of cheap labor.

1.1.2 The Effect of Migration Reshaping the American Social Reality

Urbanization and mass immigration also transformed the cultural landscape of American society. People from different regions and ethnic backgrounds gathered in rapidly growing cities, creating cultural diversity but also social tensions, these tensions "involve the loss of familiar, including language, attitude, social structures and values" (Bhugra and Becker).

Ethnic communities often formed separate social groups, and racial discrimination persisted causing the so-called cultural bereavement: which is according to Eisenbruch "the experience of uprooted person resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values, and self-identity" (Bhugra and Becker). As a result, many Americans experienced a sense of identity conflict: they had to choose between preserving their original cultural heritage or fully assimilating into the emerging American identity

1.2 The Philosophical and Literary Context In 19th Century

Nineteenth century writers attempted to represent the internal and external struggles experienced by individuals living in a rapidly changing society. At first, identity crisis was an issue that needed to be changed, the enlightenment movement, back then, emerged to free the American man from the constraints of a fanatical movement, it paved the way to the American voice's freedom. Man needed a more relatable and exceptional way to prove himself. Within the hardship circumstances, groups of thinkers stood out to achieve the American man's intention, believing that he is distinctive and needs more than the material and technological tools to achieve that distinctiveness.

The American man needed to express and feel his existence worth, as Emerson expressed "we will work with our own hands, we will speak with our own minds" emphasizing the importance of expressing oneself (*"the Romantic Period"* 00:00:05-00:08:15). Thus, the romantic era began (1780-1800) with thinkers and writers who draw attention to the central of the self and the beauty of nature, believing that art could best express universal truth than science.

In order to highlight this emotional expressive side, and to motivate the poor American people, new compounded words appeared to strength and unite their identity, driven by the subliminal sense that calls for empowering human comprehension from meditating nature beauty (Vansparckener 26).

1.2.1 From Transcendentalism to Dark Romanticism

Self-reliance, self-realization, and self-expression were widely spread concepts during this period, Americans felt their need life aspects more than rational and logical experiments (Vanspanckeren 26). The intellectual movement of the period was Transcendentalism (1840-1860), promoted optimism, and spiritual growth, it came from being transcendental; one can go beyond a limit or range of thoughts or belief. Transcendentalist thinkers encouraged individuals to develop their inner strength and maintain faith in human potential, reflecting the belief that God, the universe, the self, and the other important matters, one must go beyond everyday experience in the physical world seeking for the ideal (*"the Romantic Period"* 00:11:23-00:14:25).

The transcendentalists believed that good is in everyone, however, the reality of industrial expansion, social inequality, and psychological pressure often contradicted this optimistic vision. As a result, another literary tendency emerged that explored the darker aspects of human nature known as anti-transcendentalists. Romanticism in American literature focused on emotions, imagination, and the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine. From this broader movement developed Dark Romanticism, which emphasized the complexity and darkness of the human psyche. Writers associated with this movement portrayed individuals as deeply con-

flicted beings, often struggling with guilt, fear, or moral ambiguity (*"the Romantic Period"* 00:08:38-00:11:14).

1.2.2 From Exceptionalism to Tragic Hero

During the Romantic period, people appreciated the founding fathers, being considered as the salvation of the nation, the elite of society that led the country's future from darkness to light. With this epitome of greatness, the portrayal of the American hero was created and promoted, since then, the sense of exceptionalism amplified. With this perception in mind, the image of the nation as both "the surpassing of the past and the hope of the future" (Beyrs 85. For the people, America is not only a different nation "but also unique and superior in values and responsibility" (Beyrs 86). This idea was engraved in comics, art, and stories as the ideal American romantic hero who save people from the evil power that meant to destroy the world.

Yet, behind the ideals of optimism, and national greatness, existed uncertainty, struggle, and moral contradiction. The American man was no longer depicted solely as a heroic builder of civilization, but also as a complex individual confronting the challenges of a rapidly transforming world.

The tragic or the gothic hero, the literary or visual narratives embodied for example, has developed through the years, between 18th and 19th centuries (Abrams 110). From the ideal person whose heroism is signed by his sad end to the common person who struggles through his life with the hardship of life, sin, or/and guilt. Many of the Dark Romantic writers, such as Melville, Poe, and Hawthorne illustrated this character; isolated, mad, conflicted, flawed, in their works in which their actual life was their inspiration, and as it is claimed that "the death of [their] close family members clearly had an impact on the philosophy and writings of the romantics" (Phillips and Andrew 62).

Dark Romanticism challenged the earlier idealized image of the American hero. In the early national period, American leaders and intellectuals often presented the American man as a morally strong, independent individual capable of building a great nation based on noble values. This belief contributed to the notion of American distinctiveness. Yet literary works influenced by darker romantic perspectives re-

vealed a different image. Instead of the perfect hero, they introduced the tragic hero, a character shaped by suffering, internal conflict, and the darker forces of human nature.

1.2.3 Altering Identities: The Syndrome of Sin, Guilt, And Evil

Since the earliest days of Puritan settlement, questions of sin and spiritual failure have been woven into the fabric of both private life and public discourse. What made the nineteenth century distinctive, however, was the way these inherited moral categories became the raw material of a major literary tradition. As Kealiher argues, illness and death in nineteenth-century American literature functioned as "a psych historical product of Puritan religious practices regarding sin and spiritual anguish," in which the physical body became the most visible sign of moral and spiritual corruption (6). This was not a literary invention; it drew on a deeply established Puritan belief that "God would visit swift punishment upon those who transgressed His laws", and that "sin left a mark not only on the soul but on the flesh itself" (Kealiher 7).

What made this moral inheritance particularly powerful in the nineteenth century was the way it shaped the emotional inner life of the individual. Watts draws a crucial distinction between guilt and shame: while guilt is tied to specific wrongful actions, shame relates to the self as a whole, making it a broader and more devastating emotional experience (56). Historically, the earlier Puritan period had relied heavily on public shame, in which the transgressor was exposed before the community. By the nineteenth century, however, this had shifted inward; guilt replaced shame as the dominant moral experience, and the suffering it produced became private, personal, and increasingly difficult to resolve (Watts 58). This is how moral failure contributed directly to the psychological breakdowns and nervous disorders that characterized so many literary figures of the period, and which writers made it central in their narratives.

The concept of evil, occupied a central place in the literary and philosophical imagination of nineteenth-century American writers. Kahn argues that evil in litera-

ture is not simply a moral category imported from theology, but a fundamental aesthetic and human problem that writers are directly discussing it through their works, since literature is capable of revealing the reality of evil in its full human complexity (98). This is a particularly important observation in the American context, where the experience of evil was never abstract or theoretical; it was embedded in the lived realities of war, slavery, social inequality, and psychological suffering of the period. Evil was not something that existed outside the self or could be safely projected onto others; it was a force that operated from within, corrupting the mind and the conscience of the individual in ways that were as terrifying as they were unavoidable. This internal dimension of evil, which Kahn identifies as "one of literature's most persistent and unresolvable concerns," gave the Dark Romantic tradition its distinctive character (Kahn 98). In this way, the literary treatment of evil in nineteenth-century America became inseparable from the broader questions of identity and moral consciousness that defined the period, as writers used the character of the individual who struggles with his moral failings. to explore what it truly meant to be human in a world where darkness and light were never clearly separated.

1.2.4 The Gothic Psyche: A Metamorphose into Madness

With the gothic tradition, the identification of madness has been reviewed in relation to religion to define true madness ... What is, but to be mad? In reality, is not madness the greatest mysteries of all? Mental illness and the unconscious are merely misleading symbols, which translates into standard approaches to madness and its history being subject to a set of misunderstood beliefs and questions (Madness A Brief History).

With the gothic tradition, the identification of madness has been reviewed in relation to religious aspects that led to psychological issues. In showing psychotic behavior, individuals were considered punished by God; a belief drawn from the 16th century.

In this regard, moods were seen to be related to elements of nature and the external world. The relationship between the internal and external is tight because the

former is attached to the external natural features in the universe, where man is in assonance with the world. That period was characterized by difficulties and complex social and historical circumstances, which caused the emergence of psychological problems, leading to instability, fear, and rapid changes that profoundly affected the psychological state of individuals.

1.2.5 Falsified Deities: A Decline into the Abyss

During the 19th century, American style of life was shifting in nature. People started questioning their religious beliefs, doubting their connection to the divine. With the new order, the age of science led people to cling to the experimental approach in the sense that they began to rely on what they could prove existed. As being drained by the puritan rigidity, most Americans favored the secular mode of life to meet their social and economic needs. In other words, their inclination towards civil life led them to lose interest in the Church and the religious practices imposed by the puritanical creed.

False deities emerge when the individual loses their authenticity and spiritual essence, leading to veneration of symbols and material objects as sacred. This transformation represents a descent into the abyss, stripping faith of its unique rituals, and causing moral values to lose their authenticity and character, replaced by superficiality. The sacred loses its history, and religious take on a new chapter shaped by outward appearances rather than genuine faith (Eliade Mircea *The sacred and the profane* 1963). With such uncertainties, the American individual has become a maleficent figure, aspiring for evil and destruction rather than growth

1.3 Poe and Hawthorne: A Dark Genius

In the literary tradition, intellectual cleverness is often measured in the way a writer views the world around him and manages to skillfully reconstruct it as a fictional one. As a literary prodigy, these writers paint a psychological landscape to interpret the cultural and political aspects in their society and the world. The writer's

environment is therefore influential as it fashions his psyche and enables him to inspire the life of the characters in the stories based on external events.

The environment which influenced these writers can prove either positive or negative. In American literary scene for example, the Romantic movement emerging to deny the age of reason propelled thinkers and writers alike to create a darker, opaque vision of the world around them. With the amalgamation of the age of science and passion, a new idiosyncratic identity emerged through a dark and a tragic romantic vision (Vanspanckeren 78).

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the Dark Romantic writers that capture the essence of an individual's feelings over time, one of the most significant aspects of Dark Romance is the psychology of the mind and how it should be interpreted concerning romance" (Andraskar 94).

1.3.1 A Life Tilting with Uncertainty

Edgar Allan Poe, a short stories writer, was born in 1809. After his mother died, he was being raised by his foster father, he lived an unstable relationship with him, he controlled key decision Poe's life, Also the marriage to his very young cousin Virginia Clemm at the age of 13, this indicates fragile family circumstances (Augustyn 100). As for his writing career, he began by writing for newspaper and magazines "Poe's work owes much to the concerns of romanticism with the occult and the satanic, it owes also to his own feverish dreams to which he applied a rare faculty of shaping plausible fabrics out of impalpable materials" (Augustyn 105).

He relied on writing for his livelihood, he was distinguished by his priciest analytical style, which inspired him to create a new type of story, he is known more by horror, death and madness he also wrote poetry (The Raven), he contributed to the development of science fiction and horror. Poe's career was characterized by diversity (poetry, horror...) making him one of the most important writers of the 19th century.

On an equal footing, Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the major literary figures, he was born in 1804 in Salem to puritan family (Augustyn 181), he lost his father

when he was young which affected his mental state, Hawthorne lived for a long period in seclusion. He married Sophia Peabody and enjoyed a relatively stable family life (Augustyn 184). Yet, when he wrote on guilt and sin, it appeared that his life was greatly influenced by his family religious past.

Both Poe and Hawthorne focused on Dark Romanticism and inner conflicts, they both use horror mystery and dark symbolism, emphasizing morality and guilt with many stories exploring themes of sin, psychological punishment. They excelled in their narrative style the used innovative story telling technique and vividly described emotions and atmosphere.

Despite this, the two writers differ on several point like Hawthorne tends to moral and religious conflict characters deeply connected to society and descriptive style, in the other hand Poe he cares about psychological horror and mystery, isolated characters and intense style. As being to be one the greatest writers of the 19th century, Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne revealed the depths of human psyche, one by horror and psychological ambiguity, the other by moral and religious conflict but both profoundly influenced American literature with their symbolic and dark style.

1.3.2 Portraying the Psychological Landscape

The darker side of American romantic literature, especially in the works of writers like Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, is a rejection of optimism since the two writers are pioneer of Dark Romanticism and at that time in America they were facing problems, the romantic era and philosophy held that people could be perfect and improve themselves. Poe and Hawthorne portrayed evil as an absolute reality, unlike Emerson who saw evil as an absence of all what is good (Philips and Ladd 65), since all their works indicate that the human mind is not inherently inclined towards goodness, truth, and justice.

Hawthorne's view of human fallibility, he focuses on guilt and the fact that humans are prone to horror, his psychological problems with his family and his failed experience on the farm led to psychological perspective based on intellectual skepticism and a rejection of the idea that man is perfect (Augustyn 38)

As for Poe, he portrays human knowledge as a source of enlightenment. Nonetheless, the psychological state of his characters is often one of alienation oscillating between a longing for nature, and the constraints for sin. In his narratives, Poe incites a drive in the human heart to do all that is evil and ugly precisely because it is so, and he also uses horror as an emotion to put the readers in a psychological confrontation with death because he often suffers from psychological problems from his family (100). As disturbed individuals, Poe, Hawthorne accepted the Calvinist doctrine who believe in the original sin, considering that humans are inherently inclined towards evil.

These writers doubted and abandoned reform projects aimed at achieving human perfection, they believed that human nature is not solely directed towards good and truth, and that human also possess curtly and evil, leading them to draw inspiration from mystery and darkness, this presenting a bleak view of human experience.

1.3.2.1 Dark Romantic Heroes in Disguise

The pressure that the American society imposed on individuals to better prosper and fashion themselves led them to stereotypically abide by certain norms stifling them. With similar expectations to meet the standards, a new character was reconstructed to contrast the conformity that the romantic ideologies attempted to project.

The inner crack some individual felt in American society during the 19th century was manifested in people's demeanor and conduct that somehow simulated the atmosphere of the age. With the civil war and its gloomy consequences, people lost faith in their ability for a better change. In the literature of the period, the Dark Romantic tragic hero was characterized to be a good person whose life disappointment caused him to do evil as a way to retaliate. The tragic hero is a character in the romance genre, which emerged to portray an individual with an inner evil that grows and develops due to certain misgivings that bewildered his being.

1.3.2.2 Macabre Themes and Gloomy Contexts

Macabre themes and gloomy context are what Poe tends to favor. He does not consider darkness merely as a frightening element, but goes beyond that to a deep

psychological dimension, he excels at depicting bleak worlds, such as abandoned houses and cramped rooms and desolate landscape that reflect his psychological state and the inner turmoil of his character these environments generate and intensify the emotion in the narrative, and his obsession with death grows which he often portrays as a terrifying yet a beautiful feeling, this duality leads to the concept of tragic beauty (Thimmanna 735).

In addition, Poe's employs gruesome controversial and disturbing images for the reader. He also has the ability to transform fear into a tangible experience, these terrifying elements are linked to psychological state because its character often suffer from madness, guilt and obsessive thoughts, his use of supernatural elements such as ghosts, curses and a sense of mystery leave the reader wondering what is real. His use of metaphor and symbolism also strengthens the atmosphere of terror and anxiety while deepening the themes, he points out that suffering and inner conflict are in evitable aspects of existence and that desire is not only unconscious attitude of his characters (Thimmanna 735).

Ultimately, all of this embodies his history and impact as a master of the horror genre capable to transforming darkness and fear into a rich and captivating artistic expression (Thimmanna 734). In his moderation, Nathaniel Hawthorne adorned his dark vision of the world with societal prejudices and scientific trickery that stemmed from Puritanism and science. The stories and themes he created tend to be a mixture of the old and the new where his upbringing as a Calvinist effected the way he portrayed his characters. Hawthorne's religious atmosphere is well suited for his dark romantic attitude. He managed to refuse religion with secular thoughts in order to deny the transcendental perspective and the ability of man to better himself.

1.3.3 Narrative Prodigy and Stylistic Verbosity

The literary brilliance of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe is evident in their masterful narrative technique and exceptional skillful use of language. They both demonstrate what might be termed refined storytelling, producing works of profound impact. Both writers combine intelligence, precision, and stylistic power. For example, Hawthorne's novels are characterized by a tightly structured and integrated

narrative system. His works are described as tightly integrated, indicating that every detail is carefully considered and every part has its place; omitting any part would diminish the overall structure (Augustyn 4).

This demonstrates the strength of the narrative cohesion, which helps convey profound ideas. Furthermore, his use of metaphor and symbolism elevates his stories beyond simple storytelling. This narrative technique reflects his interest in human sin and guilt, the central themes in his works (Augustyn 4). Alongside his intelligence and skillful construction, his style is characterized by clarity and precision, qualities that contribute to a sophisticated form of stylistic eloquence. His language strikes a balance between ease and difficulty; it is neither excessively simple nor overly complex. It achieves an equilibrium that enhances both readability and meaning.

Poe achieves suspense and psychological impact through meticulous word choice, vocabulary, and attention to detail, aiming to elicit an emotional response from the reader. Hawthorne's style differs from Poe's; he leans more towards emotion, his language rich with fear, anxiety, and contemplation. Both writers utilize stylistic richness as a functional element in constructing their narratives. Ultimately, their narrative brilliance lies in their ability to seamlessly integrate language with mastery. Through their mastery of narrative structure, they can reveal and enrich meaning rather than conceal it, thus, contributing significantly to the development of American literature. They have crafted a history imbued with depth, precision, and narrative beauty.

1.3.3.1 “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832) and “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844)

In Edgar Allan Poe's “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832) he employed Dark Romanticism through intensifying the macabre and the mysterious unnatural in his story through a limited cast of characters he only focused on the human and the non-human amidst the natural environment to promote the binarity and the dialectic between the internal and the external. Similarly, in his “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844), Nathaniel Hawthorne displayed his more contemplative and symbolic narrative style where his language is both rich and enigmatic, steeped in symbolic imagery, particularly evident in the descriptions of the garden.

He deliberately employs a simple yet reflective style, allowing themes of sin to gradually emerge. Unlike Poe, who provides the reader with a logical resolution, Hawthorne leaves many questions unanswered, thus reinforcing the sense of mystery. Poe, on the other hand, focuses on rational analysis under harsh circumstances. Ultimately, I believe Hawthorne's style is symbolic, while Poe's is analytical and dramatic, depicting evil and gruesomeness within the self as a way to refashion the way people transform from goodness to darkness due to the internal and external conflicts they experience.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the sociopolitical and literary context of the nineteenth century, with particular attention to how Gothic writing reflects a fragile and unstable human psyche. Both writers portray the mind as vulnerable to anxiety, obsession, and inner conflict, where isolation and guilt often lead to psychological breakdown, madness, and the loss of identity.

This inner collapse suggests a deeper darkness within the self, reinforced by recurring motifs of disillusionment and weakened faith. The idea of “false gods” reflects a broader crisis of spiritual authority, which leaves characters confronting existential voids and emotional disorientation. Such instability is further linked to the authors’ experiences, marked by personal losses and family difficulties that shaped their artistic vision.

In Hawthorne, this appears through themes of sin and guilt, while in Poe it emerges through sorrow, trauma, and psychological suffering. Despite these differences, both share a distinctive literary sensibility characterized by strong narrative control, vivid description, and psychological depth. Ultimately, their work transforms inner turmoil into enduring literary expression, securing their lasting influence within Dark Romanticism.

Chapter Two:
From Eco-criticality to
Deep Ecology

Introduction

This chapter attempts to define environmental criticism and highlight its intellectual foundations and its development from thoughts. Then it addresses the main characteristics previous environmental that distinguish environmental critical analysis including its focus on representing nature. In addition, the chapter moves to literary criticism emphasizing its importance in revealing how texts shape and reflect environmental consciousness, and how literature becomes an effective means of expressing and discussing environmental concerns.

The chapter represents the main approaches to literary environmental criticism. The second chapter of this study examines the relationship between literature and the environment in the late twentieth century reflecting the essential need to consider the human being's place in the world, thus, revealing a new perspective for interpreting literary texts.

2.1 Ecocriticism: Definition and Foundation

Ecocriticism elucidates relationship between human and non-human nature and it is a study of culture and cultural products like (art works, writing ...) that in some way is connected with human relationship and nature, environmental criticism is also considered a response to needs and problems, based on human understanding of their necessity. It is a humanistic concept concerning our relationship with the natural world in an era of environmental destruction, as it seeks to reconnect researchers and scientific research with the world's real concerns. (By Thomas K. Dean, Cardinal Stritch College).

Ecocriticism is a subfield of a literary scholarship between literature and nature the term ecocriticism coined by William Ruckert in 1978 it means house and judge (Issit Micah 2022)

Ecocriticism "simply defined, Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (Cheryll

Glotfelty). The definition attempts to capture the core idea of Ecocriticism briefly and clearly. It suggests that Ecocriticism as a theory is as significant as Feminist or Marxist criticisms because it aims to highlight the importance of nature in literary studies.

As a theory in literary studies, Ecocriticism emerged in the late 20th century. At That time, scholars began connecting literature and the environment together, Ecocriticism was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology", the interest in Ecological studies took place with the late Victorian era, starting institution and preservation to protect nature and animals. Most notably, Beatrix Potter 1866-1943 who was concerned as an activist with preserving nature.

The term Ecocriticism has always been attributed to William Rueckert in spite of the fact that Cheryll Glotfelty played a major role in shaping this field by establishing it within academic studies. As Harold Fromm explains, in the introductions to his book "The Ecocriticism Reader", the development of Ecocriticism is through the integration of literary studies with environmental thought. In this regard, the multi-disciplinary nature is one of the most important pillars of Ecocriticism, as it combines literature, Ecology, and environmental ethics, attempting to explore how natural texts are depicted and the relationship between humans and the environment. Ecocriticism is based on cooperation and expansion, as researchers have contributed to the rapid growth and development of this field, adding to the bulk of work on green literature and Ecocritical studies (Cheryll G and Harold).

2.1.1 Characteristics of Ecocriticism

Although environmental criticism is a separate academic discipline, it is multi-disciplinary, bringing together various sciences. It seeks to explore the interrelationship between the living and the non-living (abiotic) world the relationship between literature and the physical environment since antiquity. Environmental criticism uncovers environmental influences in literature and is, therefore a discipline connected to politics, spirituality, the philosophy of moral science. Environmental criticism

studies nature, and it also studies the wilderness, advocating a return to nature (Das 161).

"According to Dept Das 2020 Ecocriticism has no universal model, it is still developing. The scholars are engaged in wending its nature and scope, several characteristics are found from their approach to this theory" (Das 160). As it seems, nature as an organism seems to influence all aspects of life, connecting the living to the non-living. With this, nature stands as an element that is rooted in other aspects of life as it constructs and reshapes them in a way or in another.

2.2 Literary Ecocriticism and its Importance

In literature and philosophy, humans have been identified by reference to their relationship to nature being inner and outer. The connectedness to nature, in this regard, is related to the universe, foraging the micro and macro in one sphere. The relationship of nature and man has been widely manifested in writings of philosophers and thinkers from romantic era. In recent years, the relationship between literature and nature is deep, has been widely explored in literary criticism and environmental studies in the sense that "Ecocritics want to use texts as a way to get at the world itself, they also differ from postmodernists by rejecting the idea that everything is socially and linguistically constructed. To them, nature really exists as a force that effects human beings and which human beings can affect" (Dobie 262), Ecocriticism believes that literature must connects to the real world, not just to language, Ecocritics argue and show that the text and the writer and the poet is dependent of the external natural world as a source of inspiration.

Literary works are constantly evolving, and with them, literary criticism has also evolved. Since ancient Greece, literary criticism has witnessed growth throughout the ages, passing through the early modern period and the Enlightenment, then the nineteenth century and Romanticism, culminating in Modernism and Postmodernism.

In the twentieth century in particular, literary criticism diversified to include multiple approaches such as Psychoanalytic criticism, Formalism, Deconstruction, Feminist criticism, Reception theory, and Reader-Response criticism, in addition to

postcolonialism and New Historicism. This century was characterized by its complexity as a result of major events such as the world wars, the Great Depression, and liberation movements (Parker, 445). Consequently, different schools of criticism emerged, such as Marxist criticism, Russian formalism, and New Criticism, alongside psychological, feminist, and reader-response criticism.

Ecocriticism emerged as a field that is different from Feminism or Marxism, for example. In its early phase, it concentrated on nature writing, with critics examining literary representations of the natural world. The field expanded more than beyond pastoral and romantic poetry to include a wide range of genres and media, shifting from a narrow literary focus to a more exploratory aspect of how nature is constructed across cultural forms.

As an academic discipline, it became famous in 1970s through scholarly gatherings. The creation of the Association of *Study of Literature and Environment* in the early 90s added to the importance in the field as it brought together a diverse group of scholars, writers, and environmentalists, extending its influence beyond national boundaries (Dobie, 262). In its approach, literary Ecocriticism denies the belief that humans are separate from or superior to the natural world. Ecocriticism uses literature as a way to read the world around and interpret the harmonium between one and the universe.

2.2.1 Approaches to Literary Ecocriticism

The approaches of literary criticism, especially in regard to the field being connected to the natural world, connecting the natural world to a literary text cannot always provide the reader or the audience with tools to conduct a giving study. There are certain aspects related to how should one conduct an analysis using an Ecocritical lens. Some scholars suggested that Ecocritical approach to a literary text should be played similar to the way one conducted any other literary interpretation, the construction of meaning based on any literary framework, similar to Marxism for example, or Feminism Ecocritical reading, should be focused on three main thesis (Dobie, 263).

Hence, approaching a literary text through Ecocriticism requires one to forge the relationship between nature and man, understanding the ways in which nature dominates one's soul and takes over his own perceptions. The natural world is an amalgam of plants, animals and humans connecting in harmony together. In his animalistic dimensions, man manages to be a part of his environment in the sense that he adopted nature's qualities and projects his own into it.

2.2.1.1 Anthropocentrism vs. Anthropomorphism

In literary studies, anthropocentrism became a matter of discussion for the Ecocritical studies. As Ecocriticism focuses on different kinds of relationships between human and nature, it is crucial to understand how the human beings see themselves within nature. As an environmental ethical term, anthropocentrism is defined as the behaviour of positioning 'humans as the focal point of existence; that is to say, the existence of the humanity is pivotal.

Further, it argues that 'there is ultimately an ontological hierarchy of beings: where it places God on the top, then the Angels, then humans, and down after there are animals and planets" (Thorsby, 00:04:03-00:08:04), as it is noticed in this paradox, which is considered ethical, human beings are superior to nature and they can use it for their purposes to survive and live. What supports the most this superiority of the human being is the dualistic separation between human and non-human; as many thinkers agree that human beings have both a physical and spiritual or immaterial existence which makes them unique from other non-humans (Thorsby 00:13:23-00:14:50).

The Ecocritical view to this superiority is slightly different, where when anthropocentrism argues that humans are on the top and in the centre of the world, Ecocriticism argues that the human beings are equal to nature and non-human beings should be taken into consideration and give it as importance as the human beings. This concept is known as non-anthropocentrism under the branch of Ecocentrism, that "emphasizes the intrinsic worth of all living and non-living components of nature" (Frantz, Patricia et al). It has been crucial for them to draw attention to the effect of human civilization; therefore, they emphasize the unity of the ecosystem, "Ecocriticism [then] often took the form of glorying in nature, celebrating its freedom

from culture, lamenting how culture contaminates nature, or exposing the scandal of pollution, or culture's destruction of nature"(Parker 440). Human industrial life has damaged nature, as its progression restricts nature's freedom to flourish. Therefore, environmental criticism calls for liberating nature by emphasizing simplicity and detachment from the complexities of industrial life that destroy ecosystems and sever the connections between living beings, including humans.

In the other hand, where Ecocriticism align itself with the "traditional critics who believed that a focus on language threatened their sense of the concreteness of actual life and the actual world we live in" Robert Parker here meant to say that "the concept of nature is cultural, and the concept of culture is natural. There is wilderness in civilization, and there is certainly civilization in wilderness." That is to say when we understand a certain natural phenomenon we cannot ignore the coexistence of the two and that it is a must to depend in our understanding of nature on our cultural perspectives and methods of interpretations (440). This perspective from which Ecocriticism sees Anthropomorphism; which is the practice of attributing human qualities to non-human entities, does not stand with the traditional critics who considered this practice as a limitation to our understanding of nature, though it seems aesthetic and powerful, yet, as John Ruskin complained, "it can misrepresent the described object [...]. It can appeal to a superficial and humanly self-serving way of misinterpreting the world around us" (Parker 440). The critics consider this way of describing nature as a false for it impose the humanly presence banding us from seeing the reality of the non-human specificity.

Therefore, Ecocriticism adopted the humanist concept of non-anthropocentrism, to give nature the voice it had been missing. Without missing previous concerns of the humanity, non-anthropocentrism claims that even nature has such privilege of worth and dignity and the duality of the human's existence must give them the ability to adept and evolve within it not controlling it (Iovino 47).

2.2.1.2 Representation of Nature in Literary Texts: Humanising the Non-Human

When dealing with natural elements in literature, one thinks immediately of narrative imagination, yet the natural concept in literary works is wide and interdisciplinary. The Ecocritical interpretation, on this term, of the narrative imagination pursued to elaborate the wideness of the concept of nature; that it includes social and cultural ethics as it is claimed that "literature can choose to be ethically charged and to communicate an idea of responsibility. In the age of ecological crisis this responsibility is global" (Iovino 30). This ethical charge or even other themes related to nature in literature are often described through anthropomorphism,

In his vision to the tendency of the authors toward anthropomorphism and the misinterpretation of the language critics, Robert Parker suggested that:

The critics of Robert Frost poetry which argue that Frost's poem use anthropomorphism to mock, rather than to endorse, the anthropomorphizing characters' naïve misunderstanding of nature. In Frost's sonnet "Design" (1922), the speaker finds a white spider on a white flower holding a white moth. When he feels terrified that the convergence of three white objects looks "Like ... a witches' broth," a broth that "steered" them together into an oppressively uniform "design of darkness," his terror tells us a good deal about him, and about the human desire to anthropomorphize, to project human-like will onto the natural world. But it tells us little about the spider, the flower, or the moth. (441)

From this perspective, Ecocriticism did not take the matter of humanizing the non-humans from an ethical and cultural dimension, but from a thoughtful and emotional dimension. Anthropomorphism here had been misunderstood as an act of anthropocentrism, but the Ecocritics argue that humanizing the non-human in a such way of describing nature make it easier to recognize it concretely rather than imposing human attributions on it. In Frost's example, the critics complicated the concept of anthropomorphism saying that it limits our understanding of nature feelings by restricting it to our varying perspective, but ecocritics, material Ecocriticism specifically, says that if it is a must to portray nature emotionally from our senses, this does not mean that it is a negative practice on nature behalf. Although we must consider the way of using such tool cautiously.

Material Ecocriticism, the branch that had been affected by new materialism, under these conditions, is an important approach for the ecocritics, because it discusses the pivotal aim of Ecocriticism and Environmental Studies on the whole (Oppermann 75). This approach assumes that the "matter" with its richness with meanings is "a site of creative becoming and dynamic expressions" (Oppermann 89). Therefore by making the abstract concrete it would drop the wall between humans and nature to co-exist harmonically and coherently. From this concept one can understand that, when Ecocriticism adopted the new materialism approach it did not neglect the fact that nature has the right to express itself but it tended to interpret the 'materialized' and humanized nature as a being that meant to speak itself. On this term, the approaches of animal studies and critical plant studies manifest that when literature uses a humanized character it sheds light on what had been underestimated by humans and questions, more, the human and non-human relationship rather than centralizing the human beings over the ecosystem.

In this context as Parker (2019) stated "critical plant studies asks how plants respond to their surrounding environment, how they feel and think, how humans and human literature and other cultural representations think about vegetal life, understand plants, misunderstand them, use them and abuse them, and exalt them or try to reduce them to their use value for humans" (451). Here, defining the main questions on animal studies, he stated that "Animal studies draws on questions of epistemology (the theory and study of knowledge), asking what animals are, and how the study of animals can shape our knowledge of human animals. And it draws on questions of ethics, asking how humans should treat, represent, and learn from animals" (447). The relationship between man, animals and other natural elements is primarily based on man's perception of the non-human as aspects related to the universe and to himself.

2.3 Deep Ecology and Ecological Self

Identifying the human self is pivotal to go through it, though not initial, in order to understand where does the human beings stand in the nature-human relationship, one can extract the essence of the intertwine between these entities. According

to the Norwegian activist Arne Naess, from an ecological perspective, defining one-self should be through recognizing one's interests and belongings and responsibilities (Arne 226). Self-realization, here, and questioning human values and purpose is what makes the process deep and that is why it is called Deep Ecology (Prabhat 23).

Deep Ecology is a philosophical approach of environmental Ecocritical studies that call to shift the perspective of humans to their relationship with nature. It aims to change and disregard the anthropocentric human perspective saying that, 'humans are important to the ecosystem, but not central' (00:05:15-00:05:53 Thorsby). From an environmental scientific point of view, Deep Ecology supports the claim that earth can survive without humans. Hence, humanity's matter should be about how can they survive within its boundaries and its ecosystem (Andersen 00:02:34-00:05:25). As Priya Prabhat (2026) stated, in her *"Contrasting the Position of Deep Ecology and Shallow Ecology with Special Reference to Arne Naess and Vandana Shiva."* (2026), "Deep Ecology rests on the basic premises of the intrinsic value of nature, the critique of industrial materialism and technology, and the relevance of ecological principles results in shaping person's mode of evaluation that finally reflects into practices and actions performed by him/her."(23).

In his philosophy, Arne Næss criticized what he called Shallow Ecology; an approach that keeps humans at the center of environmental concerns and focuses mainly on technological solutions to ecological problems. In contrast, Deep Ecology calls for a broader understanding of the relationship between humans and nature, based on interconnectedness and the intrinsic value of all living beings (00:02:48–00:04:50 Thorsby). As Priya Prabhat explains, "Naess main claim is that ecologically responsible policies are apprehensive only in part with pollution and resource depletion. There are deeper concerns that based upon principles of diversity, complexity, symbiosis, autonomy, decentralization, egalitarianism, and classlessness" (Prabhat 23). In this sense, Deep Ecology seeks to address the roots of the ecological crisis rather than its surface effects alone.

Deep Ecology also challenges the belief that nature exists primarily for human benefit. Instead, it argues that nature possesses value in itself. As Parker states in *How to Interpret Literature*: "Deep ecologists believe in respecting the inherent value of nature as much as the value of the human. They see traditional environmentalists

as too focused on managing nature for the benefit of humans, whereas Deep Ecologists value nature, by ethical choice, for its own sake” (442). Therefore, Deep Ecology does not aim to place nature above humanity, but rather to encourage a more balanced and ethical relationship between them. It also attempts to make people more aware of the consequences of modern lifestyles and environmental exploitation.

One of the central ideas in Naess’s philosophy is the concept of the ecological self. According to him, human identity cannot be understood in isolation from the natural world. The self develops through relationships with both human and nonhuman beings. As Naess explains, “There is no completely isolatable I, no isolatable social unit” (Pavo 17). This idea reflects what Priya Prabhat describes as the recognition that “the self must be acknowledged as profoundly associated with and as part of nature, not detached from it” (Prabhat 24). In other words, Deep Ecology views humans as part of an interconnected system rather than separate from it.

Naess further argues that self-realization comes from expanding one’s sense of identity beyond the narrow ego. This process involves empathy, awareness, and recognition of the interdependence of life. In *An Ecological Approach to Being in the World*, he suggests that humans should identify not only with other people but also with animals and plants. Through this broader understanding of the self, individuals become more conscious of their responsibility toward nature and more critical of actions that threaten ecological balance (Sessions 225–226).

2.3.1 Arne Naess's Ecosophy

For Naess, philosophy is not only theoretical but also practical. He defines Ecosophy as “a discipline, like philosophy itself, which is based on analytical thinking, reasoned argument, and carefully examined assumptions on nature and our relationship to it” (Prabhat 23). His philosophy therefore encourages individuals to develop an ecological awareness that can guide their actions and values. Although he rejected anthropocentrism, Naess did not diminish the importance of humans. Rather,

he believed that human beings have a responsibility to participate in the protection and development of the natural world.

Another important aspect of Naess's thought is the significance of wilderness and untamed nature. He believed that direct contact with wild places helps individuals move beyond the limits of the isolated self and recognize their connection with the larger living world. In this context, nature becomes more than a background to human experience; it becomes a space of personal and ethical transformation. This idea closely resembles the Romantic view of nature, particularly in the works of William Wordsworth; where natural landscapes shape moral awareness and imagination. Romantic literature, therefore, anticipates many of the ecological ideas later developed by deep ecology.

He agreed to Fromm's terminology; in the way it is appropriate and relevant to his philosophy: "animals and plants have interests in the sense of ways of realizing inherent potentialities which we can study only by interacting with them. We cannot rely on our momentary impulses, however important they are" (231); it is through sustained contact with undomesticated nature that the boundaries of the individual self-dissolve, giving way to the expanded ecological Self that identifies with the living world as a whole. His lifelong attachment to Tvergastein, his mountain retreat in the Norwegian highlands, was not incidental to his philosophy but constitutive of it: place is the ground upon which abstract ecological principles become lived and embodied reality.

On terms of defining the self, Arne Naess Ecosophy T determined the human self in three ways; the ego that stands for the biological desires and needs, the self that stands for the boundaries set by the existence within a family and a community which calls to equally care for the welfare of the immediate family and closest friends, and the Self that stands for the self that every living being has, that creates the relation between them, more specifically the relation between human and nature. As Naess holds, "The identity of the individual, 'that I am something', is developed through interaction with a broad manifold, organic and inorganic. There is no com-

pletely isolatable I, no isolatable social unit.” (Pavo 17). That is to say, the identification of a being, specifically the human, is based primely on one's understanding and acknowledgment of his surroundings, and it cannot occur when he is solely away from it.

Naess's philosophy, as he said, is his personal belief, and by calling it Ecosophy T (The letter T represents his mountain hut Tvergastein in Norway) he called everyone to adept their own philosophies, saying that "what is most important in a personal Ecosophy is its potential to make an individual realize that he/she must begin to care for the well-being of the ecosphere." (Pavo 16), as he thought that "human beings play a role in fulfilling or carrying out nature's capacity to grow and develop. [...] Rather, each person has a contribution or role to play in the unfolding or emergence of such design" (Pavo 18), when Naess set his philosophy as a rejection to anthropocentrism, he did not mean to underestimate the human, but, oppositely, he estimated the human role in growing and cultivating nature.

"Self-unfolding or Self-realization is Naess' claim that all life forms have the right to live [...] Equality, on such note for Naess, refers to an egalitarian attitude which means that each life form is to be considered vital to the fulfilment of potentials for development of other life forms in nature. In Ecosophy T, this egalitarian attitude hopes to inspire or motivate individuals to be critical of activities that might hinder the growth and development of other life forms." (Pavo 18-19). Going from the relationship between humans and nature to being equal to it is Naess's main aim through his personal philosophy, Hence, the pivotal and essence goal of Deep Ecology and Ecological Studies in saving the nature from human abuse can be achieved.

Conclusion:

The interdisciplinary nature of Ecocriticism allows critics to explore the relationship between literature, society, history, and the environment. As a critical approach, it raises important questions about the relationship between humans and nature and about humanity's responsibility toward the natural world.

Deep ecology, in particular, expands this perspective by emphasizing interconnectedness, ecological responsibility, and the intrinsic value of all living beings. Through these concepts, Ecocriticism offers an effective framework for reading Romantic literature and understanding how Romantic writers represented nature not simply as scenery, but as an active and meaningful presence connected to human identity.

Chapter Three:
Fading into Nature:
The Ecocritical Dissolution
of the Tragic Hero

Introduction

This chapter analyses Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "*Rappaccini's Daughter*" (1844) and Edgar Allan Poe's "*Silence: A Fable*" (1832), comparing the themes and contexts in relation to Ecocriticism as a theory. This chapter is an interpretation of the corpora's Dark Romantic aspects. It highlights the way nature intertwines with the characters in the stories, showing Both stories blend Romantic and Gothic elements, portraying nature as a dualistic relationship: inherently beautiful and alluring, yet harboring threat and corruption. They reflect the psychological problems and inner turmoil of the characters, the loss of freedom, and the breakdown of communication between the self and the world through external forces that control the fate of characters who remain silent and powerless. Furthermore, the stories reveal a complex relationship between humanity and nature, one devoid of harmony and characterized by pain and mutual destruction. Nature, which should be a refuge, has become a tragic element and a mirror reflecting the characters inner turmoil. Nature assumes the role of humanity, feeling and reacting, thus adding dramatic tension.

This study aims to analyze the changes From Romanticism to Gothicism the disintegration of the human self, and the absence of balance, understanding, and harmony between humanity and nature, ultimately leading to tragic endings as the characters are unable to transcend their fate.

3.1 Synopsis of *Rappaccini's Daughter* (1844) and *Silence: A Fable* (1832)

"*Silence: A Fable*" (1832) revolves around a narrative demon, as he tells about a man who lives alone in a scary and empty place near a river, the devil tries to scare the man with the help of strange changes in nature: animals disappear, the atmosphere is terrifying and the storms are very intensified. Despite all this, the traveler remains constant and calm and does not show a reaction even when silence and darkness intensify. In the end, the devil is disturbed because he failed to intimidate the man and influence him despite all attempts, where the man remains constant in the strength of the human soul. But he is intimidated by the ending and he escapes he disappears when silence prevails

“*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844) a fictional Dark Romantic short story by Hawthorne Nathaniel the story is told from a third person perspective located in a southern region in Italy the story is told by Giovanni Guasconti a student of literature at the University of Padua. living in an isolated apartment Giovanni found his intimacy through his window that looks at a beautiful well-cultivated garden but what interested him the most is the pretty girl, Beatrice, living next door.

Beatrice was the only daughter to a very famous physician, Rappaccini, who was obsessed with poisons and cultivated his garden upon his poison experiments, but the sad fact Giovanni revealed later is that the pretty lady was one of the scientist's experiments and that she poisons and hurts who ever come close to her yet she was hanging on the garden especially a gem Sharp, though, it was why she had been living in isolation from the outside life which Governor considered as an unfair matter on Beatrice' happiness behalf. Giovanni did not give up his love to Beatrice and asked a physician he knew to help him to get a medicine for her, Giovanni gave the antidote to Beatrice hope of saving her, but the opposite happened because her body had fully adapted to the poison. Beatrice expressed her sadness before her death due to Giovanni's lack of trust in her and her father's harsh experiences. In the end, Rappaccini's ambitions turned into a tragedy.

3.2 Gothic Morphosis Romantic Nature and Fragmenting Self

In the romantic sphere, transcendental aspects happen in alignment with nature and the universe. The relationship between nature and man is manifested in his spirituality and fullness. In “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844) by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the gothic self is hidden. Sometimes there is connections, there is good with nature, but, generally, it is not always good because the gothic side is hidden inside oneself. In addition, this is how it happens, so in “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844), Beatrice is the example of beauty, serenity and fullness, because she seems to be in enlightenment with nature she flowers, she wears the flowers, and takes care of the garden.

She is peaceful, so she is a reflection of everything there around her, in a way to mirror transcendence and peace, therefore, and with that harmony with flowers and nature, she seems to bring everything into context; the animals, insects, the at-

mosphere, but within those gothic aspects of her character; because, the transformation does not appear in a shift. Transformation into darkness is beneath the surface of her beauty, and harmony, there, is through her eyes seems to be maleficent. Thus, the transition from Romanticism to Gothic represents a significant shift in the story.

Nature is often portrayed as a source of tranquility and spiritual inspiration, a refuge for expressing deep emotions and connecting with the inner self. In his text, Hawthorne transformed nature from a peaceful space into a mysterious and frightening entity. In this context, Beatrice's serenity also changed, by becoming a dangerous figure after having been a balanced. *"Beautiful as the day and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much, she looked redundant with life, health, and energy: all of which attributes were bound down and compressed. as it were, and girdled tensely. in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone."* (Hawthorne 3).

In the story of *"Silence: A Fable"* (1832) by Edgar Allan Poe, the dark side clearly appears as the events of the story were in a dark and brutal place near a stagnant river, where the demon tells his experience with a man who tries to scare him, black waters, trees and silence. This explains that nature is not beautiful but scary and it can be against man. The black romantic story represents focusing on fear and isolation and showing human weakness in front of nature and evil because the man in the story is not afraid of disasters and storms, but he is afraid and cannot face silence, and this shows his declaration that "I am the real horror myself". This shows that nature reflects the dark side of the evil soul. In Edgar Allan Poe's *"Silence A Fable"* (1832), the man is surrounded by the natural world to find serenity.

The mutation process is not yet apparent as his stillness contradicts the atmosphere. Where the transformation appears gradually from the disorder of nature to the terrifying silence during the change of the environment from silence and chaos to complete tranquility, as the man collapses when silence prevails, despite the fact that he was initially unaffected by storms and terrifying factors. This indicates the transformation of fear from outside to internal and psychological. *"Then I cursed the elements with the curse of tumult; and a frightful tempest gathered in the heaven where, before, there had been no wind"* (Edgar 2).

In “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844) and “*Silence A Fable*” (1832), the two figures are identified by reference to the outside world governing them. Interestingly, the transformation does not show, it is inner, it is organic, similar to the way nature evolves in the process of developing or disintegrates in the process of withering.

3.3 Haunted Voicelessness: Conditioned to Harm

The position adhere to Beatrice as a female in the story reflects the status quo of her gender as an 18th century figure. On an equal footing the man in “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832) by Edgar Allan Poe is the representation of Silence itself he cannot deliver the speech because he is ignorant of what to say or numb to the reality surrounding him.

The way nature seems to align with Beatrice character defines her personality as a young girl of her age. Yet, she is, unlike any other female in the story, distinctive because of her upbringing and fashioning. In her silence, Beatrice seems submissive, abiding by the rules of her father; a young lady whose life is tailored for her. But she is indifferent, detached from her father and the world outside the garden with such voicelessness, she depicts the intimacy of the garden and the flowers themselves. She cannot articulate speech because she is intoxicated and muted due to the gothic aspects haunting her.

Silence in both stories is not explained as the absence of speech, but rather a profound state of pain and oppression imposed by external forces on the characters, In the story of “*Rappaccini's Daughter*” (1844), Beatrice lived under her father's scientific experiments where she became attached to poison and lacked her ability to live freely. Her silence reflects her submission to her father and his experiences because she did not make her choose, her destiny, but submit to him. This is what made her a prisoner inside the body and the environment at the same time.

In the story of “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832), the man faces a mysterious power around him and loses his ability to speak and act, this silence is the result of the control of a superpower and not just a fear of what makes man helpless in front of nature and lacks voice.

And gladly will I undertake it," cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent towards the magnificent plant, and opened her arms as if to embrace it. "Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfume breath, which to her is as the breath of life!" (Hawthorne 3).

Beatrice lived in a dangerous environment that made her associated with harm. She inadvertently hurts everyone around her. Despite this, she avoids others because of her danger, and this indicates that harm is not her nature and that she rejects this order imposed on her. The contradiction in the personality appears from her transformation after she was a pure soul in exchange for harm. Beatrice is a girl who was prepared without her knowledge to be a harmful person through this harm becomes a part of her existence against her will.

With a demonic atmosphere, the silence of the mysterious man in "*Silence: A Fable*" (1832) is intimidating to him and to the nature around him "*and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude, but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock*". (Edgar 2). In his stillness, the mysterious man denies communication with the outside through words. His voice is echoed in monstrosity. As a matter of fact, the man in serenity is the one orchestrating the gloominess of the land. It is not a separate aspect that frightens him. It is a projection of the demon inside him. In other words, the mysterious man in the story is only quiet because his physical body does no longer function for him. Once the interior aligned with the external, the macro and micro intertwined and his egoistic, dark side became featured in the macabre atmosphere. The man's interior intertwined with nature and regenerated chaos and distortion. He becomes the creator of nature, as his bestiality refashioned in the so-called demon, wanting to control his peaceful, this reading can be extended further by considering the demonic voice not merely as an external manipulator but as the articulation of a silence that cannot express itself. The man's muteness does not indicate absence, but repression, where the inability to voice his inner darkness necessitates its projection into a speaking entity. In this sense, the demon operates as the medium through which the man's internal gloom is verbalized, transforming silence into narration and interiority into spectacle. As long as this alignment persists,

the man remains in an unnatural serenity, not because he is detached from the horror, but because he is indistinguishable from it. However, this convergence is not stable. When the man ultimately flees, the unity between the internal and the external collapses, and fear re-emerges as a sign of separation. The demon's articulation withdraws *"And as the Demon made an end of his story, he fell back within the cavity of the tomb and laughed. And I could not laugh with the Demon, and he cursed me because I could not laugh"* (Edgar 3), leaving behind a silence that no longer speaks but merely remains. Thus, the man's return is not a simple restoration of self, but a reconstitution of his physical being through the rupture of the very projection that had once embodied his inner darkness, marking a shift from fusion to fragmentation within the Gothic inversion of Romanticism.

3.4 Interchained in Dissonance: Distorted Co-creation

In *"Rappaccini's Daughter"* (1844), Beatrice is an example of the gothic-self in her co-existence with nature. The harmony between her and the garden is nurtured and empowered through the way she attends to it, watering the flowers and cultivating them. In a similar act, Beatrice becomes the land, she is no longer human as she unites with the elements in the garden in oneness. In her behavior, she is the land that carries the garden, with that innate relationship, she portrays the bearer of the plants. Thus, she becomes nature itself acting and reacting to the organic elements around her: *"Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon, and crossed herself, sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom"* (Hawthorn 6).

As a poisonous figure, Beatrice generates poison, her attachment to the flowers is forged through the venomous substance intoxicating her body. As a land, she poisons the flowers through the only cultivation she can offer. Yet, this poisoning is not a deliberate act of cultivation, but an inherent condition of her being; she does not add poison to the garden so much as she embodies it, becoming a contaminated ground in which poison is native rather than applied. With an interdependent rela-

tionship between them, she becomes the manufacturer, not as an active agent, but as a medium through which poison circulates, reinforcing the closed toxic Ecology that binds her and the garden together.

Hawthorne used the gloomy but beautiful language to show that forgotten fact about Beatrice, he described deeply at first the beauty of the garden, but then once Giovanni entered it, he described:

"The aspect of one and all of them dissatisfied him; their gorgeousness seemed fierce, passionate, and even unnatural. There was hardly an individual shrub which a wanderer, straying by himself through a forest, would not have been startled to find growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket", showing the differences between the surface and the deep awareness of them, because when Giovanni was observing the garden from above through his window he saw nothing but beauty, but once he entered it he could feel and see the hidden darkness beneath it".(Hawthorne)

In Edgar Allan Poe's "Silence A Fable" (1832), the relationship with nature is unclear as the external world is controlled by a demonic figure, manipulating the scene. In that sense, the man shows no sign of harmony or connection to the outside atmosphere not because he is distant but because he is an agent reigning over the scene; *"And the man sat upon the rock, and leaned his head upon his hand, and looked out upon the desolation. He looked down into the low unquiet shrubbery, and up into the tall primeval trees, and up higher at the rustling heaven, and into the crimson."* (Edgar 2).

In fact, the man in serenity is the one orchestrating the gloominess of the land. It is not a separate aspect that frightens him. It is a projection of the demon inside him. In other words, the mysterious man in the story is only quiet because his physical body does no longer function for him. Once the interior aligned with the external, the macro and micro intertwined and his egoistic, dark side became featured in the macabre atmosphere. The man's interior intertwined with nature and regenerated chaos and distortion. He becomes the creator of nature, as his bestiality refashioned

in the so-called demon, wanting to control his peaceful, serene side; *"And the man trembled in the solitude; —but the night waned and he sat upon the rock."*

The relationship between man and nature in this fable is not one of equal action, but of exchange. The man is deeply disturbed, but he does not express this through movement or action. Instead, his pain becomes fixed inside him, and this makes him completely still. His stillness is not emptiness; it shows that his emotions are trapped inside; *" And his brow was lofty with thought, and his eye wild with care; and, in the few furrows upon his cheek I read the fables of sorrow, and weariness, and disgust with mankind, and a longing after solitude."* (Edgar 2)

Because he does not express his inner suffering, nature begins to show it instead. The sea, the land, and the atmosphere become active and unstable. They do not simply copy the man's feelings; they give shape to what he cannot express. What is inside him, appears outside in the natural world.

This creates an uneven situation. The man does not act, but nature becomes active. However, this does not mean they are separate. His inner disturbance moves into nature and becomes visible there. In this way, the man and nature are connected, but they do not show the same kind of chaos at the same time. The reason both are not chaotic in the same way is that they have different roles in this system. The man keeps the disturbance inside him, while nature expresses it outside. Together, they form a cycle where suffering is not repeated in the same form, but transferred and reshaped between them;

"Then I grew angry and cursed, with the curse of silence, the river, and the lilies, and The wind, and the forest, and the heaven, and the thunder, and the sighs of the water-lilies. And they became accursed, and were still. And the moon ceased to totter up its pathway to heaven and the thunder died away—and the lightning did not flash—and the clouds hung motionless and the waters sunk to their level and remained—and the trees ceased to rock— and the water-lilies sighed no more—and the murmur was heard no longer from among them, nor any shadow of sound throughout the vast illimitable desert." (Edgar 3)

3.5 Nature Unnatural: From External to Internal Rupture

Most of Hawthorne's writings emphasize his refusal to the ideal sense of mankind through his integration of science in his fiction. He mostly portrayed his obsessed characters with science as mad and abnormal people. (Chipman)

In "*Rappaccini's Daughter*" (1844) Hawthorne illustrates doctor Rappaccini as an awkward physician. This scientist is attached to science, he is external, in a way that led him to destroy nature turning it into an object and manipulating it in line with his ideas. Through which Hawthorne expressed how a man, like doctor Rappaccini, can exploit nature for his selfish purposes. He described his tendency in using nature regardless the consequences in doctor Baglioni's words when he said: *"His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard-seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge."* (Hawthorn 4)

Giovanni, on the other side, is an external man, because he is an observer; he keeps watching Beatrice and the garden from the outside, from his window, and even when he enters the garden, he remains detached chasing Beatrice external beauty with his eyes away from the place she actually belongs to "the garden". Giovanni is not interested in Nature as a being he sees it as a source of evil: *"several also would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness indicating that there had been such a commixture and as it were adultery of various vegetable spaces, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of men's depraved fancy glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty"*(Hawthorn 10).

Giovanni did not find a way to fully harmonize, identify, or align with nature as a peaceful and galactic character, hence, he cannot connect with nature amidst the unnatural scene he experienced; *"Giovanni knew not what to dread; still less did he know what to hope; yet hope and dread kept a continual warfare in his breast, alternately vanquishing one another and starting up afresh to renew the contest. Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions."* (Hawthorn 7)

In a transcendental framework, the man approaches nature with a clear expectation, that it is not merely a physical setting, but a meaningful and almost spiritual system. Nature is supposed to reflect inner truth, offer calm, and guide the subject toward a higher form of understanding. Serenity, in this sense, is not emptiness but harmonious connection: a quiet moment where the self feels expanded rather than isolated.

This is also close to the Romantic idea of the sublime. Nature is vast and overwhelming, but still meaningful. The human feels small, yet included in a larger order. Fear and awe coexist with a sense of unity.

"Then I grew angry and cursed, with the curse of silence, the river, and the lilies, and the wind, and the forest, and the heaven, and the thunder, and the sighs of the water-lilies. And they became accursed, and were still. And the moon ceased to totter up its pathway to heaven—and the thunder died away—and the lightning did not flash—and the clouds hung motionless—and the waters sunk to their level and remained—and the trees ceased to rock— and the water-lilies sighed no more—and the murmur was heard no longer from among them, nor any shadow of sound throughout the vast illimitable desert." (Edgar 3)

In Poe's "Silence: A Fable" (1832), this expectation collapses. The landscape does not respond, does not reveal, and does not guide. Instead of serenity, there is stagnation and opacity. The fog no longer suggests mystery that can be understood; it becomes something that blocks understanding altogether. This is where the rupture happens. Nature stops functioning as a bridge between the human and the divine. The man hopes for an ecological unity where self and world are connected, breaks apart. Rather than becoming one with the environment, he becomes external to it, as if he is standing outside a world that no longer communicates.

3.6 Nature and the Human Feature: Withered into Tragedy

In "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844), anthropomorphism operates through the emotional and symbolic fusion between Beatrice and the garden. Hawthorne does not present the plants as passive natural objects; instead, they are given emotional presence and relational value through Beatrice's behaviour toward them. When she

speaks to the flowers, nurtures them, and calls the gem shrub “my sister,” she projects human identity onto nature; *"And gladly will I undertake it," cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent towards the magnificent plant, and opened her arms as if to embrace it. "Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfume breath, which to her is as the breath of life!" The shrub is transformed into a human, capable of feeling and understanding.*" (Hawthorn 3)

In this regard, the garden acquires human-like feature while Beatrice herself gradually appears less separated from nature and more like it.

"Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms, as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace; so intimate, that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom, and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers. "Give me thy breath, my sister," exclaimed Beatrice; "for I am faint with common air! And give me this flower of thine, which I separate with gentlest fingers from the stem, and place it close beside my heart." (Hawthorn 6).

To say it another way, Beatrice humanizes the plants, yet the garden naturalizes her. As a consequence, she becomes emotionally, physically inseparable from the poisonous elements. The boundaries between woman and plant collapse, creating a hybrid existence in which human and nonhuman life mirror one another. The garden therefore functions not merely as setting but as a living community with which Beatrice shares identity and emotion.

"I would fain have been loved, not feared," murmured Beatrice, sinking down upon the ground. — "But now it matters not; I am going, father, where the evil, which thou hast striven to mingle with my being, will pass away like a dream — like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart — but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?" (Hawthorn 20).

The tragedy at the end emerges from the destruction of this intimate bond. Beatrice's death is not only the death of a character; it is the rupture of the relationship

that allowed the garden to appear animate and emotionally meaningful. Once she dies, the flowers lose the human connection that gave them voice and personality. Nature returns to silence, and the poisoned flowers cease to be perceived as beings capable of feeling the universe.

In “*Silence: A Fable*” (1832), the anthropomorphic effect operates differently from Rappaccini's Daughter. In Poe's story, nature becomes human-like not through intimacy or affection, but through fear and darkness. The man does not form any bond with nature; instead, he remains silent, distant, and separated from the dark landscape around him. This separation generates fear and tension.

The demon dominates the atmosphere, and as the man is externalised within this hostile environment, nature appears to take on demonic quality. The river, the sea, and the land are cloaked in darkness and seem infused with a disturbing force that spreads across the landscape, affecting the man himself. Rather than being alive, nature is perceived as animated, as if it were participating in a larger evil.

In this sense, the demonic atmosphere and the landscape merge into a single overwhelming force.

"And mine eyes fell upon the countenance of the man, and his countenance was wan with terror. And, hurriedly, he raised his head from his hand, and stood forth upon the rock and listened. But there was no voice throughout the vast illimitable desert, and the characters upon the rock were SILENCE. And the man shuddered, and turned his face away, and fled afar off, in haste, so that I beheld him no more."; the man's escape reflects his fail to encounter and adapt with his current situation, thus, he collapses and despairs in a tragic way." (Edgar 3); the tragedy unfolds through his struggle against this frightening and incomprehensible world. He is finally unable to endure the terror and flees in fear, showing the collapse of human stability before a gloomy environment.

This tragedy is further intensified by the presence of a deity as a higher power that remains silent and unresponsive. Its absence deepens the man's isolation, as he is left alone before a world that appears both hostile and unreadable. The silence of the

divine contributes to the sense that meaning is inaccessible, leaving only fear, disorientation, and withdrawal.

Conclusion

This analysis shows that silence in the two stories is not just the absence of speech, but a sign of pain and internal oppression because the characters seem unable to think and determine destiny because there are those who control them and their ability. The relationship between man and nature is embodied as an overlapping relationship, but it is not healthy, that is distorted, as it is a source of pain instead of being a source of comfort and reassurance, so nature becomes a reflection of man's internal problems, as it ends up with a fate that emphasizes the weakness and fragility of man in front of the forces that besiege him.

This shows the importance of this work in revealing the literary and intellectual transformation from romanticism to Gothic and how to use nature and silence to express anxiety and fear.

General conclusion

The struggle of the American people with a unified national identity, shaped by multiculturalism and human diversity that characterized nineteenth-century America, formed the lived reality that both Poe and Hawthorne witnessed throughout their lifetimes. Compounded by the personal hardships each author endured, these historical circumstances inclined them toward darker modes of thought and belief, a disposition that manifested in their literary rejection of idealism and their shared conviction in the inherent wickedness of human nature. Both authors articulated this anti-optimistic worldview through the literary mode of Dark Romanticism, which constitutes the central subject of inquiry in the present study.

Through a thematic analysis of Hawthorne's "*Rappaccini's Daughter*" (1844) and Poe's "*Silence: A Fable*," (1832) it becomes evident that nature occupies a pivotal thematic position in both texts. An Ecocritical reading of the two stories reveals that the characters' unity with the natural world is consistently rendered in sinister terms, prompting critical reflection on the nature of the human-nature relationship. In Poe's narrative, nature functions as a projection of and response to the character's psychological torment; its apparent stillness serving as the calm that precedes catastrophe. Hawthorne, by contrast, employs nature as the medium through which Dr. Rappaccini's megalomania is enacted and exposed. Beatrice, in turn, embodies a form of unity with the natural world that, while constitutive of her self-realization, proves ultimately destructive; a dark harmony that carries within it suffering and loss, and that ultimately costs Beatrice her life.

From this point, it becomes clear that nature in both texts operates not merely as a symbol of unity, but as a comprehensive embodiment of the human life cycle and its relationship to the surrounding environment. Nature is portrayed as an inseparable element of the narrative, one that shifts the reader's perception from viewing the natural world as a refuge for contemplation to a site of self-dissolution. Despite its outward beauty and grandeur, nature in both stories serves, in a distinctly unconventional manner, as the most revealing mirror through which the characters come to

confront their darkest and most wretched selves. It is this dynamic that ultimately drives both narratives toward their tragic endings.

The aspect of Deep Ecology most centrally engaged in this study is Arne Næss's theory of the ecological self and his principle of biocentric equality, along with his emphasis on diversity within the ecosystem. Applying these concepts to the framework of Dark Romanticism redirects them toward an altogether different trajectory. While Ecocritical theory broadly adopts an affirmative and life-affirming orientation; standing in sharp contrast to the pessimistic and anti-redemptive tendencies of Dark Romanticism, the Ecocritical lens, when applied to these Dark Romantic texts, creating a distinct critical insight: it illuminates the role of nature-contemplation not as a path toward harmony and self-realization, but as the very mechanism through which the characters are confronted with, and ultimately consumed by, their own dark selves

This study contributes to the enrichment and strengthening of literary studies through an exploration between Dark Romanticism and Ecocriticism, as they are two critical trends that rarely meet in one study in depth. This study comes to expand the field of research by highlighting the underlying environmental dimension within the dark narratives of writers and by employing the concepts of Deep Ecology in the analysis of the two stories. The study reveals that nature in Dark Romantic literature is an active and worrying force that reflects the darkness of the human soul and its multiplication is not only described as an aesthetic background or a source of spiritual harmony. This study also offers a rereading of the concept of the ecological self within a literary context interspersed with pessimism, where loneliness with nature shows a destructive experience that leads characters to suffering and collapse. Thus, the study contributes to expanding the understanding of the representations of nature.

The importance of this study appears in addressing the complex relationship between man and nature. Instead of portraying nature as a haven for tranquility and meditation, it was described as a space for psychological confrontation. The study changes the concept of nature with serenity and purity, as the two writers present nature in a way that reflects human corruption and anxiety, revealing the dark dimension of psychological awareness and his relationship with the surrounding world. The

study also reflects contemporary issues related to the fragile status of man. Although the two texts belong to the nineteenth century, they anticipate many fears and consequences of man's attempt to control nature. Hawthorne's embodied science through the personality of the doctor Rappaccini, and Poe's portrayal of self-collapse within a suffocating natural space carry deep connotations in an era in which environmental concerns are increasing.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the literature of Dark Romanticism continues to maintain its importance because it reveals a worrying fact that the relationship of nature and human darkness is deeply interrelated and intertwined. Based on this, the study shows that nature and the human self are characterized as two inter-related forces formed through conflict and the inevitability of the destruction.

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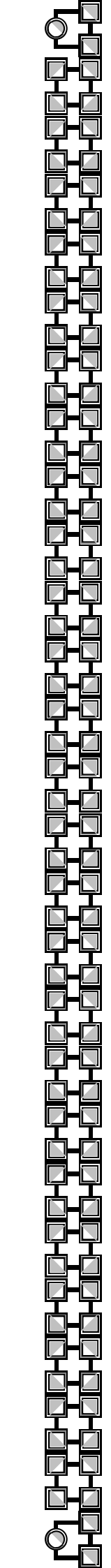
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Résumé

Cette étude examine la notion d'héroïsme tragique dans certaines nouvelles sélectionnées d'Edgar Allan Poe et de Nathaniel Hawthorne, en les inscrivant dans le cadre du romantisme noir et du gothique comme reflet des crises existentielles et sociales du 19ème siècle. Elle interroge la position de l'être humain dans son environnement naturel et symbolique, ainsi que la manière dont l'identité, l'appartenance et la conscience morale se construisent à travers l'interaction entre le sujet et les forces extérieures.

En s'appuyant sur une approche écocritique fondée sur le concept d'écologie profonde développé par Arne Næss, cette recherche repense la relation entre l'homme et la nature comme un système d'interdépendance plutôt que de hiérarchie. Dans cette perspective, la nature n'est pas un simple décor, mais une force active participant à la construction du sens, des tensions éthiques et des transformations psychologiques.

À travers l'analyse de *"Silence : A Fable"* (1832) et de *"Rappaccini's Daughter"* (1844), l'étude montre que le sujet humain apparaît comme une entité fragmentée et ambiguë façonnée par la peur, l'isolement et l'incertitude morale. Elle soutient également que le moi gothique dans ces récits reflète une crise de déconnexion écologique et existentielle, où l'héroïsme tragique naît du conflit entre la conscience intérieure et les forces environnementales extérieures. Enfin, les résultats suggèrent que ces textes dépassent la simple représentation littéraire pour offrir une réflexion philosophique sur l'existence humaine et la responsabilité éthique envers la nature.

Mots-clés :

Romantisme Noir -Écocritique -Interdépendance écologique -Le Moi gothique -
Héroïsme tragique

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة مفهوم البطولة المأساوية في القصص القصيرة المختارة لكل من إدغار آلان بو وناثانيال هوثورن، والتي تنتمي إلى سياق الرومانسية المظلمة والاتجاه القوطي بوصفها انعكاساً لاضطرابات القرن التاسع عشر الوجودية والاجتماعية. حيث تدرس هذه الدراسة موقف الإنسان داخل محيطه الطبيعي والرمزي، وكيف تبنى الهوية والانتماء والوعي الأخلاقي من خلال تفاعل الذات مع القوى الخارجية. وبالاعتماد على منظور نقدي بيئي مستند إلى مفهوم البيئية العميقة كما طوره أرني نيس، تعيد الدراسة النظر في علاقة الإنسان بالطبيعة باعتبارها علاقة ترابط وتداخل بدل علاقة هيمنة أو انفصال. في هذا السياق، لا تُفهم الطبيعة كخلفية سلبية، بل كقوة فاعلة تسهم في بناء المعنى والتوتر الأخلاقي والتحول النفسي.

تخلص، (1844) *"Rappaccini's Daughter"* و (1832) *"Silence: A Fable"* قصتي تحليل خلال ومن

الدراسة إلى أن الذات الإنسانية تظهر ككيان مجزأ وغامض يتشكل عبر الخوف والعزلة والاضطراب الأخلاقي. كما تقترح أن الذات القوطية في هذه النصوص تعكس أزمة انفصال بيئي ووجودي، حيث تنشأ البطولة المأساوية من الصراع بين الوعي الداخلي والقوى البيئية الخارجية. وفي النهاية، تشير النتائج إلى أن هذه القصص تتجاوز حدود التمثيل الأدبي، لتقدم رؤية فلسفية حول الوجود الإنساني والمسؤولية الأخلاقية تجاه الطبيعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الرومانسية المظلمة -النقد البيئي -الترابط البيئي -الذات القوطية -البطولة التراجيدية