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The Uncanny as the Intrasubjectivity in the (m)Other: Edgar Allan Poe's "Morella"

Öteki Olarak Anne ile Kurulan Tekinsiz İç-İçelik: Edgar Allan Poe'nun "Morella" Adlı Kısa Öyküsü

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Sigmund Freud tarafından kavramsallaştırılan "tekinsizlik" duygusunu merkezine almaktadır. Örneklem bağlamında ise bu kavramın sunduğu kuramsal izleği takip ederek, Edgar Allan Poe'nun "Morella" isimli kısa öyküsündeki örüntü gizemine odaklanılmaktadır. Amaçlanan, öyküde "öteki olarak anne", "ölüm" ve "tekinsizlik duygusu"nu birbirine bağlayan psikodinamikleri açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu minvalde, Poevari (Poesque) edebiyatın karakteristik özellikleri olan korku, gizem ve dehşet öğeleri de analize içkin kılınmaktadır. Ayrıca, Poevari edebiyata işlemiş olan, semantik boşluklar ve anlatıdaki kırılmalar da anlatıcının güvenilmezliğini kavrayabilmek için öncelenmektedir. "Morella"da, isimsiz erkek anlatıcı, eşi Morella ile evliliğinden kızının ölümüne dek olanlara dönük retrospektif bir anlatı sunar. "Güvenilmez anlatıcı", Morella ile "iç-içelik" (intrasubjectivity) kurarak, psikik bir geri çekilme yaşar. Bu bağlamda, Freudyen kavramsal çerçeveden hareketle, bu çalışmada, anlatıcının Morella ile kurduğu bu gizemli ve tekinsiz yakınlık tartışılmaktadır. Poe'nun kadın ve ölüm temsili üzerine çok yazılmış olsa da öykünün bu şekilde okunması, karakterlerin kurulmasında psikodinamik unsurların işlevselliğini gösterebilmek ve bu kavrayışın sunduğu söylemsel alanı genişletebilmek adına önemlidir. Çünkü karakterlerin inşasında psikodinamik öğelerin etkisi, Freudyen "tekinsizlik" kavramı çerçevesinde, psikanalitik çevreden yeteri kadar akademik ilgi görmemiştir.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the contribution of the sense of the uncanny to the intensification of mystery in Edgar Allan Poe's short story titled "Morella" using Freudian ideas as a backcloth. This paper aims to look at how Poe makes use of the psychodynamics of the characters at the intersection of the (m)other, death and the uncanny. In this sense, typical of Poesque literature is that his work is marked by tales of horror, mystery, the macabre, and morbid imagery; the sense of the uncanny is an indispensable part of a plotline which includes semantic loopholes and narrative ruptures. The unnamed male narrator of the story offers a retrospective account of his past memories from his marriage to Morella up to the death of his daughter, which reveals that this unreliable narrator suffers from a psychic regression by establishing intrasubjectivity with his wife. Using Freudian epistemology, this paper will also discuss the ways in which how the mysterious bond established between this couple generates its uncanny effect. Such a reading of the short story is especially useful because although much has been written on Poe's representation of women and death, this paper aims to open up a discursive space to discuss the operations of the psychodynamics of characters within the framework of the Freudian uncanny, which has not received adequate scholarly attention from psychoanalytic circles.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Amerikan gotik ve kara romantizm türünün öncü ismi Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), modern polisiye edebiyatının ilk örneklerini vermiştir. Özellikle; yalnızlık, delilik, yanılama, diri diri gömülme, ruhun başka bir vücuda geçmesi ve dirilme gibi temaları özgün bir biçimde işlemesi ve eserlerindeki tekrar eden unsurların ayırt ediciliği edebiyat çalışmalarında farklı bir alanı açmıştır. Zira bu alan, Poevari (Poesque) edebiyat olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Poe, öykülerindeki gizem ve korku öğelerini, gündelik hayatın tekinsiz doğası ile buluşturmuştur. Ölüm, Poe'nun öykülerinde bu tekinsiz doğanın kurucu korku öğelerinden biri olarak açığa çıkar. Bununla birlikte, yazarın, kadın “güzelliği” ile “ölüm” fikri arasında estetik bir bağ kurduğu anlaşılır (akt. Turhan, 2017, s. 38). Poe'nun birçok öyküsünde, ölen kadın sürreal bir boyuta evrilerek tezahür ederken, tekinsiz olanı da sembolize etmektedir. Arkaik arzuları ve korkuları doğuran “tekinsizlik”; sadelik ve normallik halini bozar. Yazarın öykülerindeki bu karanlık ve kasvetli kurgular, karakterlerin bilinçaltılarının yansıması olarak da okunabilmektedir. Bu minvalde, güvenilir bir anlatıcıya işaret eden öyküdeki kurgusal boşluklar ve kırılmalar, tekinsizlik evrenini büyütür. Nihayetinde, Poesque edebiyatı, bu evrenin içinde tüm kurgusal dinamiklerini yeniden inşa eder.

1835 yılında kaleme aldığı “Morella” adlı kısa öyküsünde de, anlatıcının arkaik arzu ve korkularının geri dönüşünü tetikleyen Morella, ölümünden sonra da kızının bedeninde geri dönen ruhuyla, anlatıcının duyduğu dehşet ve tekinsiz duygu alanını sürreal bir düzeyde genişletir. Poe'nun “Morella” adlı öyküsünde, isimsiz erkek anlatıcı eşi Morella'yla evliliğinden kızının ölümüne dek yaşananlar üzerine retrospektif bir anlatı sunar. Olay örgüsü, anlatıcının kendisini Morella'nın çevresinde buluşu ve onun tarifsiz büyüüne kapılmasını anlatışıyla başlar. Bu ne Eros'un oklarıyla filizlenen bir aşk ne de tutkudan kaynaklanmaktadır. Genç kadının derin bütünü bilgisine duyduğu sıra dışı büyülenme haliyle anlatıcı, duygularının doğasını tam olarak tanımlayamamaktadır. Tarif edemediği bu duygu, dile dökülemeyen (extralinguistic) bir alana düşmektedir. Başlangıçta, kadının varlığıyla bütünleşirken ve büyüleyici sesini sonsuz hayranlıkla dinlerken, zaman içerisinde bu duygular yerini dehşet ve nefrete bırakır. Bir zamanlar bıkıp usanmadan dinlediği kadın ve onun ezoterik bilgisi, anlatıcıda yabancılaşma duygusuyla birlikte nefret duygularını açığa çıkarmıştır. Buna paralel olarak, Morella belirsiz nedenlerle hastalanır ve uzun süre kıvrıldığı hasta yatağında bir kız bebek dünyaya getirerek ölür. Çocuk büyüdükçe, annesiyle olan sıra dışı benzerliği belirginleşmekte ve anlatıcının dehşeti büyümektedir. Çok uzun bir süre sonra anlatıcı, musallat olan uğursuz ruhları uzaklaştırmak için çocuğu vaftiz etmeye karar verir. Vaftiz esnasında, istem dışı ağzından Morella ismi çıkar ve bunun üzerine çocuk yere düşerek ölür. Öykünün sonunda ise anlatıcı, kızı Morella'yı gömmeye çalışırken anne Morella'yı mezarda bulamaz. Genç kadın, anlatıcı için psikişik bir alanı temsil etmektedir, anlatıcının gerekçelendiremediği büyülenme hali, psikanalitik terminolojide anne ile çocuk arasında ayrışmanın olmadığı imgeselde kurulan özned iç-içelik (intrasubjectivity) haline denk gelmektedir. Karısıyla imgesel boyutta kurduğu iç-içelik ilişkisi, ruhsal gelişimin geride kalmış evresi olan çocuksal mutluluk (infantile bliss) haline çekilmesine sebep olur. Böylece, Morella ile imgelele çekilerek kurduğu bu ilişki sayesinde “tamlik duygusu” (a sense of wholeness) yaşar. Öznelde iç-içelik, kastrasyon öncesi dönemde (pre-castration), henüz anne ve bebek arasındaki diyadik (dyadic) ilişki çözülmeden kurulur. Fakat bu ilişkinin zaman içerisinde nefret ve dehşete dönüşmesinden anlaşılan o ki, fallik anneyi temsil eden Morella, anlatıcının eril üstünlüğüne entelektüel bir tehdit teşkil etmektedir (Miquel-Baldellou, 2008, s. 184). Anlatıcı için, metaforik anlamda, hadım edilme (emasculation) tehlikesi oluşturan bu durum, Helen Cixous'nun mitolojik bir figür olan Medusa kavramsallaştırması perspektifinden de okunabilir. Kaotik bir şekilde hareket eden yılanlarla örülü saçları ile fallik güç sembolü olan Medusa mitinde, fallik güç erkeğe değil kadına bahşedilir. Medusa ile göz göze gelen erkeği taşa çeviren bu güç, bir çeşit hadım etme işlevi üstlenir ve ilk kastrasyon korkusu olarak da açıklanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, anlatıcının durumunda olduğu gibi, kastrasyon öncesi benliklerine dönerek psikişik bir gerileme yaşarlar.

Nihayetinde bu çalışma, Sigmund Freud tarafından kavramsallaştırılan “tekinsizlik” duygusunu merkezine almaktadır. Psikanalitik terminolojide, “tekinsiz”lik duygusu, bir zamanlar tanıdık olup bilinçdışı itilmiş psikişik materyalin yabancılaşarak geri dönüşüyle açığa çıkmaktadır. Bastırılmış bilinçdışı yapılar, bu çalışmada metnin çok katmanlı ve karmaşık kurgusunun nedeni olarak da belirmektedir ve bu da Freudyen yaklaşımı öykünün analizinde etkin kılar. Örneklem bağlamında ise bu kavramın sunduğu kuramsal izleği takip ederek, Edgar Allan Poe'nun “Morella” isimli kısa öyküsündeki örüntü gizemine odaklanılmaktadır. Amaçlanan, öyküdeki; “öteki olarak anne”, “ölüm” ve “tekinsizlik duygusu”nu birbirine bağlayan psikodinamikleri açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu minvalde, Poesque edebiyatın karakteristik özellikleri olan; korku, gizem ve dehşet öğeleri de analize içkin kılınmaktadır. Ayrıca, Poesque edebiyatına işlemiş olan, semantik boşluklar ve anlatıdaki kırılmalar da anlatıcının güvenilirliğini kavrayabilmek için öncelenmektedir. “Güvenilmez anlatıcı”, Morella ile “iç-içelik” (intrasubjectivity) kurarak, psikişik bir geri çekilme yaşar. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada anlatıcının Morella ile kurduğu bu gizemli ve tekinsiz yakınlık tartışılmaktadır. Poe'nun kadın ve ölüm temsili üzerine çok yazılmış olsa da öykünün bu şekilde okunması, karakterlerin kurulmasında psikodinamik unsurların işlevselliğini gösterebilmek ve bu kavrayışın sunduğu söylemsel alanı genişletebilmek adına önemlidir.

Introduction

Typically, in Edgar Allan Poe's stories, repetitive manifestations of horror, mystery, the macabre, haunting, death, resurrection, morbid imagery, metaphysical occurrences, semantic loopholes, and narrative ruptures are prevalent and it is because of this reason that these stories open themselves up for a psychoanalytical hermeneutic. Another theme that Poe visits and revisits is the uncanny nature of daily mundane reality, which exposes another dimension in his stories: the psychodynamics of his characters. "Morella" is one of these stories which is charged with the particular elements that enable the reader to read it from a psychoanalytical perspective. The unnamed male narrator whose credibility is suspected tells the story of his past memories from his marriage to Morella up to the death of his daughter. The story fictionalizes the narrator's psychic regression by means of establishing intrasubjectivity with his wife and overvaluation of his mental processes. While Morella's esoteric erudition and the gratifying symbiotic bond established between the couple initially allures the narrator, her existence later on leads him to psychic regression. He suffers from a strong sense of uncanny in her presence, which gradually transforms into a kind of devastating experience for him. This study aims to look at the intersection of the above given elements in the short story "Morella" and what Poe makes of the psychodynamics of his characters at the crossroads of the (m)Other, death and the uncanny. Using Freudian ideas as its backcloth, this paper will also explore the ways in which the mysterious bond established between this couple generates its uncanny effect.

"The death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (Poe, 1846, p. 165). So says the American writer and poet Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), who was considered the father of detective fiction and a major representative of American gothic and black romanticism, in his "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846) where he sets the agenda for the contribution of neatly-organized fictional elements to the intensification of effect in a literary work. Women and death appear as the recurring subject matter in Poe's fiction. Therefore, these categories deserve a detailed treatment in any study on Poe. Accordingly, much has been written on Poe's representation of women, particularly on his stories of "Dark Ladies," including Berenice, Ligeia, Madeline Usher ("The Fall of the House of Usher"), and Morella (Martens, 2013, p. 6). Like his other tales of 'Dark Ladies', characterized by morbid setting and eerie atmosphere, "Morella" (1835), whose eponymous character is a woman of intellectual pursuits and aspirations, is a story of "metempsychosis", meaning "the passage of the soul from one body to another" (Sova, 2007, p. 117).

The Uncanny as the Intrasubjectivity in the (m)Other

In Poe's "Morella," the unnamed male narrator offers a retrospective account of his past memories from his marriage to Morella up to the death of his daughter. The plotline begins with the narrator telling how he coincidentally finds himself in Morella's society. Then, he is attracted to her profound knowledge with such a morbid fascination that he cannot even exactly articulate or identify the nature of his feelings for her and they marry. In the very beginning, the narrator relishes being in the company of his wife and listening to her alluring voice without any single sign of boredom. In the course of time, however, the state of sheer joy gives way to horror and repulsion. Bizarrely, the narrator begins to develop strong feelings of disgust for his once beloved wife and feelings of dread and alienation for the subjects she studies. In parallel to the narrator's withdrawal of his love from Morella, she suddenly falls ill due to some curious reason. Her gradually deteriorating health results in her untimely death and the simultaneous birth of a baby girl.

To his dismay, the daughter bears an uncanny resemblance to her deceased mother. To avoid evil spirits, he decides to baptise his daughter after an exceptionally long period of time. At the very moment of christening, although the narrator thinks of other names for his daughter,

the name Morella comes out of his lips. As he utters this name, the girl suddenly falls to the ground and dies. The ending of the story is even more shocking because the narrator cannot find the mother Morella in the grave when he attempts to bury the daughter Morella. The ending of the story poses the reader a considerable hermeneutic challenge. The mystery is not resolved and the implications are there for the reader to engage with. It is because of such an ending that it is possible to read the story at many different levels and from many vantage points. Ours is just one of these readings and it does not exhaust all the hermeneutic possibilities generated by the story, either.

The opening sentence of the story sets the tone of an unidentifiable yet strong affinity of the narrator with the woman: “With a feeling of deep yet most singular affection I regarded my friend Morella” (Poe, 2006, p. 238). Under the paralyzing effect of her mystical sway, the narrator is so intensely attracted to Morella that they end up in a marriage which is neither out of love nor passion, but “erudition” (Poe, 2006, p. 238). Her mesmerizing influence on him was not out of “the fires of ... Eros” but of those his soul “had never before known” and he “could in no manner define their unusual meaning, or regulate their vague intensity” (Poe, 2006, p. 238). He cannot neatly clarify or define his feelings for Morella. The implication, here, is that she triggers some sort of weird reaction in the narrator who cannot make sense of it or she activates the elements of his psychodynamics in such a way that language does not contain them. That is, she moves him onto an extra-linguistic space of intrasubjectivity.

At the very beginning of his narrative, the narrator takes great delight in company of his knowledgeable wife. He is aware that he was allured by her fascinating language and wisdom, he

abandoned [himself] implicitly to the guidance of [his] wife, and entered with an unflinching heart into the intricacies of her studies. And then- then, when poring over forbidden pages, [he] felt a forbidden spirit enkindling within [him]- would Morella place her cold hand upon [his] own, and rake up from the ashes of a dead philosophy some low, singular words, whose strange meaning burned themselves in upon [his] memory. And then, hour after hour, would [he] linger by her side, and dwell upon the music of her voice... (Poe, 2006, p. 238).

In their marriage, a sort of tutor-pupil relationship rather than a traditional wife-husband bond is established. Seemingly, he is also drawn to the subjects of her study with a devoted mind and feels so strongly that he abandons himself to her guidance with an unquestioned obedience.

In a Freudian context, Morella here signifies a different psychic space with her strange mental powers for the narrator and in this space, he enjoys something he cannot articulate in the beginning. However, he is sure it is not ‘from Eros.’ Thus, he is aware that he feels not love but infatuation for the woman. The reason for his infatuation is unknown but much to his gratification, this peculiar bond offers a sort of a ‘sense of wholeness’. This unusual bond established between the narrator and his wife corresponds to intrasubjectivity in psychoanalytical terms. Intrasubjectivity is established in the pre-castration when the two-term or dyadic relationship between the infant and the mother is not yet dissolved and it belongs to a pre-cultural phase.¹ He yearns to go back to this symbiotic space experienced with the mother and rehome himself in the pre-castration psychic realm. So, Morella represents the intrasubjectivity he enjoys with the mother. Therefore, it is outside/pre-culture, he cannot articulate or identify the nature of this bond within his linguistic competence. That is, what he

¹ In Freudian psychoanalysis, the Oedipus complex has a central role as “it is the nucleus of desire, repression and sexual identity. It is the point at which we are produced and constituted as subjects” and get integrated into culture from a pre-cultural phase (Sarup, 1992, p.5). In this sense, Oedipal resolution marks “the beginnings of morality, conscience, law and all forms of authority ... The struggle to overcome the complex, however, is never quite resolved, and one of its residues is a life-long ambivalence towards the keeping and breaking of taboos and laws” (Sarup, 1992, p.5).

experiences is extra-linguistic; he cannot translate it into linguistic codes. This is the return of the repressed psychic material pushed to the recesses of his psyche, and this also poses a threat to the egotistical unity of the individual by creating ruptures in his/her consciousness. Anything that causes confrontation with her/his egotistical unity produces a sense of menace as it is both familiar and forgotten. This produces the uncanny effect in the story, something deeply buried in his psyche and something also integral and familiar to him.

In his “Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen” (1919), Freud revised the term uncanny that was initially introduced by Ernst Jentsch in 1906. Freudian conceptualization of the uncanny posits that without doubt the uncanny evokes dread and fear yet there is a peculiar quality that distinguishes the uncanny from anything frightening. In order to elucidate this distinction between the uncanny and fear, Freud looks up different dictionary definitions of the German word *heimlich* (homely). Studying its different connotations and latent implications, he comes to the conclusion that “heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich” (Freud, 2007, p. 518). In Freud’s words, “the uncanny [unheimlich] is something which is secretly familiar [heimlich-heimish], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfils this condition” (2007, p. 528). In Freudian conception of the uncanny, it has its roots in the unconscious, particularly in “repressed infantile complexes”, wishes or fears (Fuchs, 2019, p. 101). In other words, the uncanny is something intimately familiar but also forgotten because it is repressed into the recesses of the unconscious. It is illogically frightening as it has undergone repression and then returned from that repressed state; the residue of the repressed material, which is familiar but repressed, triggers a remembering process.

In the story, the uncanny haunts the relationship between the couple. So the way the narrator perceives his wife is quite important. The urge behind his obsessive enchantment with the woman seems to be the energy to return to this pre-conscious and blissful stage, previously experienced with the mother. For Freud, “we are precipitated into the Oedipal crisis by falling in love with the mother who has cast a spell over us through her care and love and all the touching, wiping, stroking and hugging this entails” (Minsky, 1998, p. 27). The narrator also uses the word “spell” for Morella’s influence on him (Poe, 2002, p. 239). At the beginning of the story, he also states that Morella “shunned society, and, attaching herself to [him] alone rendered [him] happy” (Poe, 2006, p. 248). Perhaps, this is the kind of attention (a closed circuit) the narrator fantasizes to receive from his wife. This relationship in all likelihood reactivates the residue of the repressed psychic material. It might be “a psychical return to the ‘oceanic feeling’ reminiscent of our once merged, bonded existence with the mother” (Minsky, 1998, p. 191). Thus, Morella triggers strange reactions in him that he cannot make sense of, leading to the uncanny effect.

Regarding the type of relationship established between the wife and the husband, which he himself cannot properly articulate (he cannot provide a neat explanation for the nature of his feelings for his wife), it might be helpful to consult Freud’s idea of four different types of love. In his “On Narcissism: An Introduction” (1914), Freud talks about four types of love in relation to the narcissistic type: “what he himself is,” “what he himself was”, “what he himself would like to be,” and “someone who was once part of himself” (Freud, 1989, pp. 555-6). Seemingly, Morella represents the second type, “what he himself was” as she represents the intrasubjectivity he enjoys with his mother. The uncanny elements originate from this intrasubjectivity established with his wife because, as Freud states, uncanny is “something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and ... has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (Freud, 2007, p. 526).

The uncanny psychic material injects a different kind of energy in him and Lacanian idea of *jouissance* might account for the imperatives of this energy. In Lacanian terminology,

it acts out as a source of *jouissance*, which is unconscious painful pleasure and is beyond pleasure (Lacan, 1978, p. 184). Lacan further states that “*jouissance* is forbidden to him who speaks” (Lacan, 1977, p. 319). Thus, the person enjoys unconscious pleasure and narcissistic omnipotence through the transgression of cognitive/egotistical boundaries. It might correspond to ‘the pleasure principle’ in Freud but there is a surplus element of pain attached to pleasure. In the Lacanian framework, Morella gives the narrator narcissistic gratification for a while, yet when *jouissance* lasts long, it loses its elusiveness and becomes just pleasure. In a similar vein, the repression of the pleasure principle by the reality principle is necessary to integrate into cultural and social order in Freudian context. Freud argues that “there exists in the mind a strong tendency towards the pleasure principle, but that tendency is opposed by certain other forces or circumstances, so that the final outcome cannot always be in harmony with the tendency towards pleasure” (Freud, 1961, p. 6). Therefore, this blissful state does not last long.

As the narration unravels, delight gives way to repulsion: Morella, once the source of spiritual and intellectual guidance for the narrator, now turns out to be the source of dread, with demonic attributions. The melody of Morella’s voice “was tainted with terror, and there fell a shadow upon [his] soul and [he] grew pale, and shuddered inwardly at those too unearthly tones. And thus, joy suddenly faded into horror, and the most beautiful became the most hideous, as Hinnon became Ge-Henna” (Poe, 2006, p. 238). The narrator “could no longer bear the touch of her wan fingers, nor the low tone of her musical language, nor the lustre of her melancholy eyes” (Poe, 2006, p. 239). The narrator’s withdrawal of his love from his wife – an attitude which is evident in his portrayal of her physical qualities, in not hesitating to show in graphic detail his contempt for his wife whose health is gradually deteriorating – vividly reveals his anxiety about her embodiment of fearful and diabolical implications in his mind. The disappearance of this blissful state results in the disintegration of their relationship. It might be the narrator’s urge to move to a safe, familiar and conscious zone.

Viewed in another perspective, Morella represents for the narrator what Freud calls the phallic mother, as suggested in his own words “a worm that *would* not die”, which is another phallic image (Poe, 2006, p. 241). Morella seems to pose an “intellectual threat to the narrator’s masculine superiority and leadership” (Miquel-Baldellou, 2008, p. 184). In the face of emasculation, he might tend to reassert his masculinity by using “the symbolic role of manhood” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 134). The source of narcissistic gratification turns into a sense of intimidation for him so the return of the repressed has to compromise with coordinates of the consciousness.

Helen Cixous’s conceptualization of the mythological figure Medusa possessing phallic significance offers interesting insights into the reading of this short story. As archetypal images,² snakes flying in a chaotic mode signal that phallic significance is attached to woman not to man in Medusa’s context. If a man makes eye contact with Medusa, he turns to stone, which is a symbolic form of emasculation. In other words, they are captured by their pre-castrated self and experience a kind of psychic regression; from the masculine space they move towards a neutral space where there is no gender dissociation. As Cixous argues, “[w]hen the ‘repressed’ of their culture and their society returns, it’s an explosive, *utterly* destructive, staggering return, with a force never yet unleashed and equal to the most forbidding of suppressions” (2010, p. 1952).

² Carl Gustav Jung describes the archetype as “pure, unvitiated nature, and it is nature that causes man to utter words and perform actions whose meaning is unconscious to him, so unconscious that he no longer gives it a thought” (1960, p. 273). Furthermore, “the archetypes and the instincts together form the “collective unconscious” which is inborn, inherited, and universal (Jung, 1960, p. 179). Thus, archetypal configurations are revealed in images and symbols familiar to all cultures.

In line with Cixous's assertion, it might be argued that the narrator's relationship with his wife is a version or manifestation of this kind. The underlying reason behind his negative perception of his wife could be attributed to his emasculated position. As Person argues, "Morella's strength of character, her individuality and learning, seems to inspire the narrator's hatred" (2001, p. 140). Her intellectual capacity might be intimidating to him and emasculates him in her presence. Morella could, then, in Freudian terms, be also considered to represent the narrator's fear of castration and the narrator's perception of his wife forefronts the idea of Freudian uncanny as something which "proceeds from something familiar which has been repressed" (Freud, 1958, p. 155). Before castration, there is a different kind of phallic significance. Mother is the phallic mother whose face promises oneness and wholeness. Here, this affiliation with his wife leads to psychic regression, and so this sense of uncanniness has to be overcome and the return of the repressed has to compromise with consciousness. Because for the preservation of the cultural order, it is a necessity, "to incorporate the deeper emotional strivings of the subject, pressing the pleasure principle into the service of the reality principle" (Elliott, 2002, p. 42).

In the course of the story, Morella suddenly falls ill for some curious reason. In parallel to his growing disgust for his wife, her health deteriorates. One day, she calls him to her bedside to say that she knows that he does not love her and despises her. She further continues, "I am dying, yet shall I live ... The days have never been when thou couldst love me but her whom in life thou didst abhor, in death thou shalt adore" (Poe, 2006, p. 240). Surprisingly, at her moment of death, Morella gives birth to a baby girl although this pregnancy has never been mentioned in the story. After Morella dies at childbirth, the narrator is a father and widower. The narrator states that he "loved [his daughter] with a love more than fervent than [he] had believed it possible to feel for any denizen of earth" (Poe, 2006, p. 240). He is, however, distraught, when the girl starts to frighteningly resemble her deceased mother:

her smile was like her mother's [he] could bear; but then [he] shuddered at its too perfect identity, that her eyes were like Morella's [he] could endure; but then they, too, often looked down into the depths of [his] soul with Morella's own intense and bewildering meaning. And in the contour of the high forehead, and in the ringlets of the silken hair, and in the wan fingers which buried themselves therein, and in the sad musical tones of her speech, and above all- oh, above all, in the phrases and expressions of the dead on the lips of the loved and the living, [he] found food for consuming thought and horror, for a worm that would not die. (Poe, 2006, p. 241)

The narrator seems to be revisited by the repressed due to Morella's studies on whether identity "is or is not lost for ever" at the moment of death; this issue is, for the narrator, "a consideration of intense interest; not more from the perplexing and exciting nature of its consequences, than from the marked and agitated manner in which Morella mentioned them" (Poe, 2006, p. 239). So, this over-resemblance of the daughter to her mother triggers uncanny psychic processes in the narrator. Her soul transcends her corporeal body, metamorphosing into a psychic reality. Daughter is the reincarnated Morella for the narrator in a sur/supra-realistic context.

At this point, it should be noted that this is an unreliable narrator.³ The confessional narrative grants the narrator full control and authority over the subject matter, indicating a conscious selectivity of what he writes and what he wishes to recall. The reliability of the narrator's account is questionable due to the loopholes and ruptures in the narrative, repetition of indecisive sentences ("if not forgotten," "if I not err"), and discrepancies (pregnancy information is provided to the reader at the last moment). This is his fictionalized account. The

³ An "unreliable narrator", which is a technical term in narrative techniques, refers to one whose rendition of the story and/or interpretation on it leads the reader to distrust the narrator's account (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p. 100). In her *Narrative Fiction* (1983), Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan describes the principal sources of unreliability of a narrator as follows: "the narrator's limited knowledge ... personal involvement, and ... problematic value-scheme" (p. 100).

focus is on how the narrator experienced or perceived things. This brings us to Freud's idea of 'omnipotence of thoughts' where he argues that neurotics "are only affected by what is thought with intensity and pictured with emotion, whereas agreement with external reality is a matter of no importance" (Freud, 1989, p. 108).

In the chapter titled "Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thoughts" in his *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Freud talks about the animistic conception of the universe in which people have unquestioned belief in their powers; he relates this mode of thinking to what he calls "omnipotence of thoughts" (1989, p. 112). The omnipotence of thoughts is

the idea that the world was peopled with the spirits of human beings; by the subject's narcissistic overvaluation of his own mental processes; by the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and the technique of magic based on that belief; by the attribution to various outside persons and things of carefully graded magical powers, or "*mana*"; as well as by all the other creations with the help of which man, in the unrestricted narcissism of that stage of development, strove to fend off the manifest prohibitions of reality. (Freud, 2007, pp. 525-6)

Thus, this over-estimation of mental processes reconstructs and modifies reality to achieve gratification. For him, "this animistic stage in primitive men" corresponds to the narcissistic phase which

none of us has passed through ... without preserving certain residues and traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves, and that everything which now strikes us as "uncanny" fulfils the condition of touching those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression. (Freud, 2007, p. 526)

Furthermore, Freud states that the blurring of the distinction between reality and imagination might create the uncanny effect because "the infantile element in this ... is the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with material reality – a feature closely allied to the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts" (Freud, 2007, p. 528). This is the collapse of the reality principle. In the story, in material reality his wife dies while giving birth to a baby. A rational view tells that perhaps all her declining health resulted from a problematic pregnancy. Naturally, a daughter might resemble her mother. However, the important thing here is how the narrator depicts/perceives that traumatic incident. These are his insights in accordance with his material reality or perception of reality. The uncanny elements originate from this over-accentuation of thoughts.

The narrator does not tell his daughter anything about her mother. The girl remains nameless for an unusually long time due to the narrator's fear regarding whether identity disappears when one dies. However, anxious about his daughter's uncanny resemblance to her deceased mother, the narrator decides to baptize his daughter after ten years. He is revisited by the symptom, the return of the repressed psychic material which poses a threat to his egotistical unity. Baptizing her daughter is an urge to be part of a culture and to move from the uncharted territory of the uncanny to the safe familiar space of culture. He tries to integrate her into his culture. Strangely, when the priest asks for a name, although he thinks about "many titles of the wise and beautiful, of old and modern times," the name Morella escapes from the narrator's mouth (Poe, 2006, p. 241). When his daughter is born, he is not ready to be 'the father' to acculturate her, thus she is left nameless. After baptism, when she is given a name and acknowledgement, she is culturally positioned. Therefore, the death of his daughter can be taken on two levels: literal and metaphorical. After being baptised, she is translocated to the father's space and dies to the motherly space.

As the belated christening of the daughter suggests, the name has a significant function in the story. Etymologically, Morella might be interpreted as a combination of two Latin meanings: it brings together *mort/mortis*, meaning death; and *elle*, the feminine suffix, "as in 'Mort/elle/à'" (Dayan, 1987, p. 162; Elmer, 1995, p. 102-8). Drawing upon this suggested link,

Niedziela and Kleparski argue that “not only does she die, but also she causes death, which leads to a more metaphorical interpretation, namely MORELLA IS DEATH and MORELLA CAUSES DEATH” (2014, p. 447). Due to her name’s implications and how she triggers inexplicable psychic processes in the narrator, she represents the archetypal figure of the devouring mother.⁴ These implications make a useful contribution to our understanding of the nature of the uncanny effect. Morella’s coming alive in the body of her daughter is suggestive of the return of the repressed but it also represents the narrator’s fear of castration or reflects the patriarchal mindset. All in all, just like the ending of the story which resists any interpretive closure, the name Morella incorporates multi-layered implications: death is the biggest castrating element and she represents different forms of death; repressed psychic wholeness experienced with the mother and dying to this sense of wholeness which is an attempt to get integrated into the cultural space.

The narrator’s emphasis on his infatuation with Morella which is not “from Eros” reminds us of Freudian ideas on life and death drives. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud states that “the aim of life is death” and divides the drives into two: the “life instinct” or the preserver of life, Eros, and the death instinct, the destructive force, Thanatos (1961, pp. 73/46). The latter is “a primordial tendency within the psychic economy to return to non-being, to the inorganic” (Elliott, 2002, p. 43). Surprenant states that

The task of the death drive is to ‘lead organic life back into inanimate state’, to ‘undo connections, and so to destroy things’ ..., while that of Eros is to ‘establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus ... to bind together’ ... One of these elements can overdevelop, or the ‘alloy’ between the two of which the sexual instinct is made can become undone. The death drive was related to the compulsion to repeat, which Freud posited as the most fundamental characteristic of all drives (which ‘never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction... which consists in the repetition of a primary experience’) (2008, p. 119).

On a metaphorical level, only through death are the characters relocated in the domain of culture from the pre-cultural psychic space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in Poe’s “Morella” the unnamed male narrator suffers from a sort of psychic regression by establishing intrasubjectivity with his wife. At the very beginning of the story, he is passionately attracted to his wife’s profound erudition and relishes being in the company of his wife and listening to her fascinating voice incessantly. As the story unravels, the wife comes to trigger some sort of weird reactions in the narrator and becomes a fictionalized version of *heimlich* (mapped, defined, and safely familiar) and *unheimlich* (unmapped, undefined, and uncanny) for him, resulting in his psychic regression. In other words, her existence initially appeals to and then appalls him. After the death of his wife, he still resists integrating into culture by keeping his daughter unnamed for many years. He cannot function as ‘the father’ who is supposed to acculturate the daughter. Discussing the ways in which the unnamed male narrator of the short story relates to his wife and later to his daughter, this paper has sought to explore how the narrator establishes intrasubjectivity with his wife and

⁴ Carl Gustav Jung puts that “like any other archetype, the mother archetype appears under an almost infinite variety of aspects” (1969, p. 81). Among these multiple aspects, the archetypal mother connotes both negative and positive ones. The positive attributes of the mother archetype are “sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility ... On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate” (Jung, 1969, p. 82). The danger comes from the devouring mother “because she absorbs the regressing libido and keeps it to herself, so that he who sought rebirth finds only death” (Jung, 1967, p. 545). In other words, “devouring mother” equals to death (Jung, 1967, p. 637).

aimed to provide a hermeneutic space for a discussion of the uncanny and its manifestations in a narrative space within the framework of Freudian epistemology.

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