

A Feminist Interpretation of *The Fall of the House of Usher*

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Abstract

The Fall of the House of Usher is a short story produced by Edgar Allan Poe, a famous writer who is known for short stories and poems. The story, featuring Gothic style, narrates the collapsing of an ancient noble family. Since it is an ancient and male-dominated family, it features feudalism and patriarchy. Under such circumstance, it is inevitable that Madeline, the only woman of this family, is oppressed by her male counterpart Roderick and her life is manipulated by him. Despite sufferings in the Usher family, Madeline the oppressed develops herself from a traditional woman who totally relies on her male counterpart and the family to a progressive one who finally fights for herself. Meanwhile, the feminist movement sweeps out the West and Madeline, as a progressive woman, can be regarded as a representative of the movement. This essay intends to, from the perspective of feminism, analyze Madeline's status in the Usher family, her subversion and her characteristics.

Keywords

The Fall of the House of Usher, Feminist Criticism, Edgar Allan Poe

1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the extraordinary writers and critics in the history of American literature. As he stresses the importance of the unity of effect in his story, he pursues astonishing effects on readers, which, in his words, can be achieved through the combination of death and beauty. The topic death and beauty becomes an eternal topic in his story. In this part, a brief literature review on previous studies which focused on female characters in Poe's work will be carried out.

Edgar Allan Poe is widely regarded as one of the most significant literary figures in America. One important feature in his short stories is "death of a beauty", which has attracted much attention and led to analysis of researchers. As

put by Poe himself, beauty is the core of a poem, which is the rule of art (Poe, 1846: p. 165). In *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* by Kevin J. Hayes, the author discussed the feminine ideal of Allan Poe and he argued that Poe repeated the theme that the utmost melancholy can only be achieved through the death of a beautiful woman again and again (Hayes, 2004: p. 148).

In *The Women of Poe's Poems and Tales* by Floyd Stovall, Poe's women are divided into four classes: "those of the minor poems, those of the stories who are not clearly individualized, the grotesque women, and the women who are mere mechanisms of the plot" (Stovall, 1925: p. 204). Therefore, Kevin J. Hayes pointed out that female characters lacked individual development in Poe's narration and they were just used to enlarge the experience of the narrator (Hayes, 2004: p. 148). In a book concerning the studies of Edgar Allan Poe, *The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe* by Scott Peeples, it indicated that those female characters were "never human" but male fantasies, which were pale, weak but tender and beautiful (Peeples, 2004: p. 108). As Zhang pointed out, women in Poe's story were just part of men, namely, part of narrators, who regarded women as a place to settle their mental disorder (Chang, 2019: p. 267).

As for the analysis of beauty in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Stovall classified Madeline Usher into the second class, who lacked voice, individuality and description (Stovall, 1925: p. 204). In other thesis, authors provided fresh feminist insights to the image of Madeline and female characters in Poe stories. According to *Poesian Feminism: Triumph or Tragedy* by Debra Johanyak, although Madeline was still a silenced and imprisoned woman who was always ignored and misused by her family and was described as horrible things rather than a victim, Madeline was still able to pose threat on the male-dominated sphere (Johanyak, 1995: p. 69). According to Li Xianwen and Liu Lihui, they found out unique identity of female characters in *Ligeia*, *The Oval Portrait* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Li and Liu pointed out that these characters are not only representatives of Poe's aesthetics, but also warriors who were brave enough to fight against the entrenched patriarchal system in the 19th century (Li & Liu, 2014: p. 80). Li and Liu believed that Madeline had subversive power and her resurrection contributed to the collapsing of the House of Usher, which, they indicate, was the embodiment of feudalism and patriarchy (Li & Liu, 2014: p. 79).

Feminist interpretation gives fresh insight into studies on Poe's poems and short stories. Compared to previous studies who focus on how the death of a beautiful woman creates terror Poe wants, and on stressing their marginalization, feminist interpretation gives a new image to women in these works: brave and subversive. Despite this development, in-depth exploration of how female characters break shackles lacks. As Madeline contributes to the collapse of the patriarchal family, the Usher, she can be regarded as an embodiment of subversive image. Therefore, this thesis is intended to discuss how Madeline is suppressed and how she struggles to fight with patriarchy in the 19th century. Through

the analysis, it is not only intended to show a new image of subversion of female characters in Poe's works, but also enriches feminist interpretation of these works, and offers different explanation of Poe's views on the female.

2. Madeline the Oppressed

A variety of female characters created by Edgar Allan Poe are quite similar to each other. In Dayan's view, almost all of them, with good looking, tragically die young and become awful ghosts (Dayan, 1994: p. 244). Yet these female characters still have their distinctive features. In *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Madeline, the only main female character in this short story, does not say a single word and constitutes a small portion of the whole story. Marginalized and de-voiced, Madeline is a victim of this patriarchal Usher family.

As it is argued above, the patrimony of this family can only be passed from sire to son, manifesting that women in the Usher family do not have right to inherit power and wealth from the family. However, the possession of these two things serves as a key factor for a family's nobility and a family member's status. Lacking both of them, women will be voiceless and be devoid of individual development. With this respect, female members in the Usher family can only be subject to the interests of the big family and be controlled and manipulated by those in power, namely, their male counterparts. It is greatly evidenced by the situation of Madeline Usher. As the only two descendants of the Usher family, Roderick and Madeline are forced to live in a prison-like house without any companion. Like her brother, Madeline is also imprisoned in the house for dozens of years, causing her lack of communication with the outside world as well as her inability to draw upon new ideas to fulfill herself and achieve self-development. Despite isolation, Madeline does not show any astonishment of the narrator's arrival. She only passes by like a ghost without paying any attention to him and Roderick when these two are talking about her disease and physical condition. And the narrator is also shocked by her existence, which shows that, despite the narrator's knowledge about the Usher family, he is not expected to see a woman. It indicates that, although she belongs to the direct lineage of the Usher family, Madeline does not receive equal attention as her brother does, thus making the guest lack knowledge about her presence here. Without status in a big family, a woman is dispensable and always ignored by other members, leading to her paralysis with being isolated and loneliness and making her less sensitive to the surroundings.

Although Madeline is deprived of the right to inherit patrimony and to develop herself, she still inherits the family disease and suffers a lot from it. According to the narrator, it is a disease that gradually makes Madeline's response to the outside world slower, causes her partially cataleptic and wastes away a person. All these sufferings and her forthcoming decease can be traced back to her patriarchal family which renders her nothing but long-term torture. She has no power, no patrimony and no status, but she also has to undergo the same or

more sufferings as her male counterpart does. The Usher family, a feudal and patriarchal one which does not treat male and female members equally, only allows men to determine and control the future of the family and marginalizes female counterparts.

Moreover, Roderick controls not only the destiny of the Usher family, but also the life of his sister Madeline. Although Poe is trying to depict Roderick as a good brother, he does not treat and care about her sister as considerably as he describes. As it is implicated in the story, Madeline's name "is unmentioned neither by Usher nor myself for several days ensuing" (Poe, 1840: p. 85). It is not until her death that Roderick and the narrator divert their attention to Madeline. At the night they bury her corpse, the narrator notices that there is "the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in the death." (Poe, 1840: p. 93). He notices the unusual face and smile which are not supposed to appear on a death's face. These subtle changes indicate that her so-called decease is not real death. The ironic smile is intended to satirize her dear brother for his remorseless behavior despite their mutual companion over the past decades and also to satirize herself who spends her whole life under his control and rejects to take initiative to determine her own destiny. It indicates that she may even still be alive, which sets suspense for the upcoming resurrection and her subversion. Additionally, it reveals the fact that Roderick does not pay much attention to his kin sister. Otherwise, he would have observed such unusual expression within a long period of time of two weeks. Hearing his sister's death, Roderick neither shows any sadness nor resorts to verify whether it is true. Instead, he immediately decides to preserve Madeline's corpse for a fortnight and conducts the interment after that. Roderick, who seems to be a good brother, concentrates on the family ritual but pays no attention to her sister's physical condition. The top priority, in Roderick's mind, is always given to the preservation of the family's dignity and nobility. In this respect, Roderick is willing to sacrifice his sister's life. Since he is the owner and no one would dare to defy him, Madeline's destiny is completely decided by her brother.

Therefore, what the narrator and Roderick have done can be regarded as a murder for they bury Madeline who may have died from their perspective but it is actually not the case. Roderick is thus an accomplice of this patriarchal family to suppress Madeline with superior power and status. Madeline, a marginalized and voiceless character in the family, can only tolerate these sufferings offered by her relative and the family. She has no right to choose and to lead a life as she wants but only to follow her brother's orders passively, thus becoming a victim of patriarchal family.

3. Madeline's Subversion

The so-called death is not the end of Madeline's life. She shows unique characteristics quite different from other female characters in other stories or poems by

Allan Poe. With this respect, Stovall observes in his essay, “Poe’s women are either extremely innocent and unsophisticated like Eleonora and Annabel Lee, or else abnormally intellectual, like Ligeia and Morella” (Stovall, 1925: p. 197). However, Madeline belongs to neither of these types. She is neither innocent since she has been tortured for dozens of years by the interest-oriented family nor abnormally intellectual because her prisoner-like life renders her no opportunity to pursue individual development. That being said, she still has similarities with them, namely, her extreme beauty and tragic death. Being distinctive from Poe’s traditional female characters, she is courageous enough to rise up to subversion and to take revenge. Actually, the author sets much suspense to indicate Madeline’s death and her later subversion. Firstly, at the very beginning of the story, the original text describes Madeline in this way, “Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed” (Poe, 1840: p. 85). Despite the sufferings offered by the incurable disease, Madeline still possesses powerful potential and courage to fight against it, showing her spirit of rebellion and unwillingness to resign herself to predestined fate. Secondly, her brother’s ignorance of the fact that she is alive is a determining factor in her choice of revenge.

The Usher family is small in terms of the number of its member. Therefore, Madeline and Roderick are sole companions for each other. However, knowing that his sister is going to pass away, Roderick does not show any sign of sadness for her loss of life or his loss of the sole companion. Instead, what conjures up first in his mind is the break with the direct line of the Usher family. He gives top priority to his family’s interests rather than those of himself, let alone those of Madeline. To follow the practice of preserving the death for a fortnight after one’s decease, he strictly complies with the principles of the preservation and ensures any external interruption in the two-week period, thus ignoring the real condition of Madeline and missing the fact that she is still alive. Later, he carries out the interment with the narrator and buries Madeline while she is still alive, which leads to a successful murder. It seems that Roderick knows nothing about Madeline’s real physical condition. But he is not innocent at all. At the end of the story, Roderick admits his awareness and deliberate ignorance of the fact that Madeline is alive. He says, “I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin, I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I dared not speak” (Poe, 1840: p. 101). Roderick feels the “first movement” of his sister “many, many days ago” (ibid.), but he does not even think of liberalizing her but just keeps this secret for a couple of days until her resurrection. Therefore, Roderick, from the bottom of his heart, intends to kill his sister. It is Madeline’s dear brother who brings her life to an end and chokes her in an oxygen-absent coffin.

Given the fact that Madeline’s death has direct linkage with her male counterpart, she is bound to resurrect and take revenge for herself. Since then, Roderick’s condition gets worse and worse, indicating that it is his turn to pay the price for his crime and to follow the path of his sister. Seven or eight days after the interment, Roderick’s condition worsens to a staggering degree and he even

suffers from insomnia. In order to placate Roderick, the narrator chooses a book entitled *Mad Trist* to read in hope of lifting him out of madness. Coincidentally or not, the plot of *Mad Trist* synchronizes with the steps took by resurrected Madeline. As the story goes to the point where And Ethelred pulls the door rudely and cracks, rips and tears it up into pieces, causing “the noise of the dry and hollow sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest” (Poe, 1840: p. 98). It reminds the narrator of the similar echo of the very cracking and ripping sound inside the mansion moment ago. Such coincidence repeats. When the hero in *Mad Trist* strikes upon the head of the dragon, causing dreadful noise of it, “a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound” (Poe, 1840: p. 99) appears and is heard by the narrator. All these well-designed coincidences actually describe Madeline’s resurrection and determination to take counterattack towards the murderer. It depicts how she accomplishes the revenge step by step. Firstly, her death drives her brother insane. His worse mental and physical condition, paler appearance and illogical words and sentences he speaks all show the adverse effects exerted on him after he sentences her sister to death. The second step she takes is to intrude into the territory which originally belongs to the male owner and ends his life at there. Johanyak puts, “...voiceless victims appear at dramatic moments, confronting their lovers at reading-room or library door, as though threatening entrance into a traditionally male sphere of intellectual advancement” (Johanyak, 1995: p. 69). Madeline, without endowed freedom to grasp her fate in her own hand, has no opportunity to choose the development path and to pursue self-improvement, especially in the male-dominated sphere. Where Roderick usually deals with family affairs and where he and the narrator meet each other is a place within his domain. It can account for that fact that the revenge taken by Madeline is accomplished at the threshold without even stepping in.

However, that she dares to confront her brother, the murderer, shows her readiness and courage to throw off the shackles and to free herself from the long-term control by her brother. That being said, a certain degree of love for her brother still lingers in her mind. Madeline, “with a low moaning cry” (Poe, 1840: p. 102), falls heavily inward upon her brother, violently shoves him down to the floor and frightens him to death. A low moaning cry betrays her and reveals her extreme sadness and disappointment towards the immoral deed of her brother. Tortured by her hostility towards Roderick as well as the remaining love for him, she still chooses to take counterattack against her brother for his long-term oppression and to do what he does to her. It may be the first time that Madeline challenges the entrenched power of the patriarchal representative and grasps the destiny firmly in her own hand. Therefore, Madeline’s subversion of her male counterpart, although it is far from a perfect one and is costly, shows her determination to be responsible for her life and to force her male counterpart to pay the price for the murder.

Madeline’s subversion is not only towards her male counterpart, but also towards the whole family. It is the patriarchal Usher family that endows Roderick

with power and status and ensures his supreme authority to take control over the whole family and to willfully manipulate his sister's life without receiving any rejection from others. Under such male-centered atmosphere, Roderick is not the first one to unconsciously oppress his female counterpart. As long as such patriarchal pattern or atmosphere persists, it serves as a fertile soil to produce Roderick-like male owners. Therefore, it is natural that Madeline, who is oppressed for a long term and has the spirit of rebellion, decides to subvert the Usher family.

Indeed, as Timmerman puts, the collapsing of the Usher family is repeatedly indicated throughout the story, and parallels the collapse of the House (Timmerman, 2003: p. 235). What the narrator sees immediately after he steps into the yard provides strong evidence for this point.

No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn (Poe, 1840: p. 79).

From the outward appearance of this Gothic architecture, few flaws can be found and it remains intact as if it has not undergone dozens of years of vicissitudes and can still stand for another decades. However, such flawlessness is discordant with the crumbling condition of every single stone outside. The members of the family narrowly prolong the lifespan of the building and the family by improving the outward beauty, but they are not aware of or just ignore the dysfunction and discordance of every single part, which may finally cause the collapsing of the whole building. Dougherty discusses such discrepancy in his essay and regards it as "...discrepancy between appearance and 'inner constitution', between what appears to be healthy and vigorous and what is in fact blighted with disease and ultimately doomed" (Dougherty, 2001: p. 12). The interior of the house is already corrupted. For one thing, the only two descendants of the Usher family suffer from the painful hereditary disease and near the edge of death without a heir qualified enough to be the master of the big family. For another, Roderick, who is blessed with extraordinary artistic abilities, is more interested in painting, composing music and reading poems rather than handling family affairs. He shows no talents to manage a big family well. His mental disorder also prevents him from leading the family to stride forward in a long run. Therefore, to hide inner corruption, they pretend that the family can long stand by prettifying the appearance and concealing the apparent disintegration of every part of the building and the family. As it is mentioned in the excerpt, there is already a fissure from the top to the foot of this building. It also emphasizes that, although the fissure exists, it is hard to be noticed and can only be seen through meticulous examination, indicating that a lot of work has been done to perfectly conceal those flaws. Despite this, the family members are still not

willing to make substantive improvement to the corrupted institution. However, although they can do whatever they want to keep the family's decency and pretend to perceive nothing, a long fissure indicates that the trend of the collapsing can not be reversed and it would break down sooner or later. In conclusion, the inconsistency between outward appearance and inward condition and the fissure on the wall predict its future falling. It is just a matter of who will trigger the collapsing.

It is a matter for Madeline. Taking a lead in the subversion of the patriarchal representative, Madeline is very likely to continue her revenge on the patriarchal family. Being aware of her own dignity, Madeline decides to revolt against the Usher family in her own way.

...for vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure... While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters...and silently over the fragments of the “House of Usher” (Poe, 1840: p. 103).

It is after Madeline's successful subversion of her brother that tragedy finds its way into the Usher family and the building. In the course of the collapsing, moon turns to an unusual colour and shines vividly. Blood, often related to life or death, implies the bloody revenge and successive decease of her brother Roderick and the Usher family. Moreover, such blood-red light indicates the oppression Madeline receives in this family and the unfair treatment which brings her life to a bloody end. Since it shines brightly, the scarlet moonlight intrudes into every corner of the surroundings, creating a gruesome atmosphere. It seems that a round of bloody and total revolution is going to break out. Indeed, the new round of revolution refers to the subversion of the male-dominated system and it is conducted by a woman alone. It is new because the woman has been deprived of freedom and initiative for a long time. However, she can rise up to power finally, be aware of her difficult situation and then firmly takes revenge. At the same time, the fissure, which shows up as a strong implication at the very beginning of the story, widens sharply all of a sudden, contributing to the final destruction of the Usher family. It can be attributable to Madeline's killing of her brother, who, although he is less qualified, serves as the pillar to support the crumbling family. The falling of the pillar represents “the failed transmission of the pure racial stock from one generation of Ushers to the next” (Dougherty, 2001: p. 16). The Usher family is heading towards the edge of extinction due to the death of its only male heir, the transmitter of the family's patrimony. The building ends up in fragments, which symbolizes the fate of the whole family. As a family which underscores the significance of the purity of its lineage and suffers the hereditary disease and internal disorder, the Usher family is bound to be destructed. The process of destruction is just accelerated by Madeline's powerful

revenge. It is out of question that Madeline, who shows no sign of compromising on the incurable disease, will not compromise to those who treat her unequally and thus takes firm action to subvert the source of the oppression, the male-dominated mansion.

4. Madeline in the 19th Century

As a woman living in the 19th century when few women were aware of the fact that they are independent beings, Madeline demonstrates some limitations. However, she is not merely a traditional woman but also shows progressive qualities. This part therefore intends to discuss both traditional and progressive qualities manifested by Madeline.

Living in the Usher family, which puts great emphasis on the transmission of wealth and power, Madeline is a typical traditional woman, who is far from a center or master of her home. Despite this, her life is still bound to be consistent with the fate of her male counterpart and the whole family. She, as the only relative of his male counterpart, serves as a companion to her brother Roderick and centers her life around him. Immediately after Roderick mentions her name, she shows up, indicating that she watches her brother closely. Like other traditional women who are far from knowledgeable and intellectual but are only confined to small space at home, Madeline is locked in the house and isolated from the external world, thus rendering her no opportunity to pursue advancement. Ligeia, a girl who is quite knowledgeable and intelligent, and Madeline, who receives little education but is brave enough to fight against the disease, are destroyed by Poe. It shows Poe's rejection to allow the progressive women to pursue independence and self-development. Therefore, Madeline seems to be considered as an object which belongs to her brother and can be willfully manipulated as well as a tool to advance the plot.

It is inevitable that Madeline, a woman affected by male-centered mentality, has some qualities of a traditional woman. Chang holds the view that women in Poe's stories lack individual development and die in silence (Chang, 2019: p. 259). Despite this, as a courageous warrior, she represents progressive spirit. With her own efforts, Madeline leads to the collapsing of the time-honored and longstanding feudal and patriarchal family. Frightened by the strange resurrection and madness of Madeline, the narrator flees away along the path where there is a wild light. However, at the very beginning, the building is surrounded by dark and depressing atmosphere. Such light shoots along the path only after Madeline's revenge and the falling of the Usher family, thus leaving two implications. For one thing, the old-fashioned and corrupted family and its embodiment, after total destruction, witness the first light that illuminates the surroundings long standing in the darkness. It may indicate that the darkness around the Usher family lies in its internal corruption and backwardness whose eradication leads to the reemerging of light of hope. It also symbolizes that the Usher family, which shakes off the outdated system, embraces a brand-new start and heads

towards a totally different future. For another, as for its implication about individuals, this light implies that death of Roderick emancipates him from sufferings of family disease and pressure he shoulders to keep the family on the right track. More importantly, it hints Madeline's power and advancement. She develops an awareness of independent woman who cannot be regarded as a belonging to any other person. Those who deliberately manipulate her life and even sentence her to death deserves her subversion. Madeline herself and her subversion is just like the beam of light, which powerfully intrudes into male-dominated territory and demonstrates Madeline's victory over the whole system and its products.

The production of the short story synchronizes with the first wave of feminist movement in the United States. It is not until the emerging of the revolution of science and technology and the industrial revolution that women are empowered to step out of the small house and to pursue financial independence. The advancement of science and technology lays a solid economic foundation for the outbreak of the first wave of feminist movement. Long been oppressed and treated unequally, progressive women in the 19th century begin to break the restrictions and limitation imposed on them bravely. However, although women have legal rights to take part in economic activities to make a living as men do, they are unable to eradicate the entrenched view about woman's social role and status in such male-dominated world. Therefore, during the first wave of feminist movement, feminists mainly focus on encouraging women to be independent and urging them to discard the mindset that men are superior to women and to be aware that they are born equal.

Madeline's experience indicates that she is aware of such notion. She is brave enough to reject the male owner of the large family by bringing him to death independently although the owner has long been in control of her life. But what matters most is not the fact that Madeline defeats her brother but the fact that she can regain the right to determine her own life and redefine her value as an autonomous being through the subversion. What feminist movement emphasizes most is not to regard men as enemies but to eliminate the notion that women are born inferior, to encourage gender equality and to preserve woman's dignity and achieve real independence. With this respect, Madeline indeed achieves these goals by carrying out the subversion, through which she gets rid of the restrictions imposed on her and the long-term control from her brother Roderick, revenges herself on the murderer and regains her own dignity as an autonomous woman and a human being. Although she does not say a single word during the whole process and still loses her life finally, her behaviour manifests the strong spirit of rebellion against the deep-rooted male-centered social system. Such rebellious spirit is of great significance to unleash an unprecedented revolution. Therefore, as a woman born in the new age who loudly voices opposition of the traditional patriarchal system, Madeline can be considered a model of progressive women of her times. In a word, Madeline is not only a traditional woman

who resigns herself to the manipulation of her male counterpart and patriarchal family but also, more importantly, a progressive woman who sacrifices her life for her own dignity, independence and freedom.

5. Conclusion

Although *The Fall of the House of Usher* is just a short story which the author Poe is good at, multiple meanings and problems can be revealed with just focusing on gender conflict in the family. It can be found that how Madeline, as a traditional woman, is devalued and suppressed in a patriarchal family. Moreover, it can also be found that how Madeline breaks shackles that trap her for her whole life. Through the deeper exploration into *The Fall of the House of Usher* from the perspective of feminism, the gender issue deeply rooted in a feudal family is revealed. The conflict between Madeline and Roderick and the Usher family provokes thinking on the gender issue among readers. Therefore, considering that Poe is keen on depicting the death of a beautiful woman in his short stories, a feminist interpretation of this story can somewhat explain Poe's gender perception. To enrich feminist interpretation of Poe's works, more attention can be paid to deep exploration of other female characters in his other works such as the devalued wife in *Black Cat* or an embodiment of pure angel Ligeia. Apart from focus on single work, diachronic and comparative analysis of female characters in Poe's works can also be carried out to probe into Poe's development of feminist views.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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