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**When Roger Corman Meets Edgar Allan Poe:
Gothicism in “The Masque of the Red Death”, from
the Book into the Screen**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
a Master's Degree in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Civilisation*

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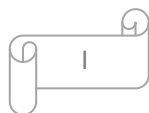
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dearest parents
Aboubaker and Karima Mebrek for their
support.

I thank my sister and her little family, as well
as my brother and my little sister and all my
friends.



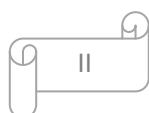
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Abstract

This research work deals with “The Masque of the Red Death” (1842) written by Edgar Allan Poe and its film adaptation (1964) directed by Roger Corman. It highlights the main differences and similarities between them focusing on several hints of Gothic features in an attempt to see how Roger Corman succeeded in creating the gothic mood. In order to conduct such a research, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter will shed light on the American Gothic literature in the nineteenth century. Then, it will revolve around the link between literature and film adaptation. Besides, it will tackle the issue of fidelity and adaptation. The second chapter is concerned with analyzing the gothic characteristics in both short story and its movie adaptation with a comparison between the two. Besides, it will provide an evaluation about the movie speaking about the factors behind the success of the film adaptation.

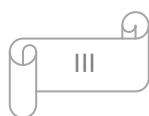


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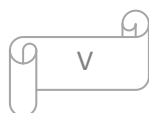
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General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature is a vast ocean and a broad term that reflects the cultural events and provides pleasure to the readers. In the modern age particularly, the nineteenth century America witnessed a new kind of literature which is called Gothicism. This latter is characterized by mysterious, scary, terrifying and gloomy events. This genre also gave the opportunity to writers to expand their faculty of imagination and created suspense to attract the reader's attention.

Gothicism is adapted by many great authors, among them Edgar Allan Poe who is considered as the best mysterious American author in the nineteenth century, and he is also known as the father of the detective story.

In this era particularly, literature had a close relationship with many fields among them cinema. The action of transforming a literary source (novel, short story, novella and so on) to a movie is called adaptation. The process of adaptation is a derivative act that has a big number of fans nowadays.

This research work is about the transition of "The Masque of the Red Death"; the 1842 short story to the movie that was made in 1964. The short story is an American tale written by Edgar Allan Poe and adapted by the American producer Roger Corman. This story is a classic horror story that speaks about a common theme which is the plague and Satan-worshippers.

The main question of this research work is: to what extent does Roger Corman succeed in preserving the Gothic atmosphere of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" through his camera?

Besides the main question, this extended essay targets other issues and attempts at answering the following questions:

General Introduction

- What are the major differences and similarities between literature and movie adaptations?
- What are the main gothic characteristics used by Roger in creating the dark atmosphere in the movie as compared to the original story?

In order to give a credible answer to those questions, this research work is a comparative study based on critical analysis.

This research work is divided into two chapters; the first chapter provides an overview about the American Gothic literature including some characteristics of this genre of literature. Besides, it will supply a broad vision about the concept of adaptation and the main differences and similarities between literature and film adaptations relying on some scholars.

The second chapter stands on the practical part of this research work. It begins with the short story overview with a broad description about the movie including the main persons who participated in the film in order to provide a clear vision about them. Furthermore, this chapter examines the gothic features in “The Masque of the Red Death” short story and its adaptation that play a great role in creating the dark mood. Moreover, it studies the comparison between short story and movie in order to notice if Roger Corman succeeded through his work in preserving the gothic mood.

Chapter one
An Overview of
Gothic Literature and
Film Adaptation

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1.1. Introduction

Cinematic adaptation has been studied for many years by manifold scholars. It has been debated that literature impacted on movie industry by transferring texts into the visual art. Besides, adaptation gives a new shape for the original text by transferring page to stage. There are various genres of cinematic adaptations, among them Gothicism. This genre of films is connected directly to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This chapter will give a broad vision about nineteenth century American literature. Then, it will tackle American gothic literature with some hints of its features. It will also shed light on movie adaptation; mainly the issue of fidelity.

1.2. Nineteenth Century American Literature

Literature is a concept that may be explained in various ways. The word literature derived from Latin “Litteratura”. According to Oxford English Dictionary, literature “is the written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit”. Therefore it may refer to a collection of written works. It also can refer to the readings made concerning previous researches. The latter can be also considered as a composition that tells a story, expresses emotions and advocates ideas. Literature addresses topics which are interesting for people such as love, beauty, freedom, hope, and many others.

Generally speaking, literature includes spoken and written material which is most of the time the result of imagination. This means that literature can be divided into three categories which are poetry, prose and drama. These literary genres are classified into two types or categories that are called fiction (imagination) and nonfiction (reality). Ernest Hemingway (1933) stated that “All books are alike in that

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they are truer than if they had really happened and after you finished reading one you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you” (Hemingway, 1933, cited in Harold Bloom, 2005, p.75). Thus, the written works are similar on the ground that they bring a combination of imagination and reality for the purpose of affecting the reader and impressing him.

Literature is meant to be read since it is a branch of knowledge. It can have different purposes including information, instruction and entertainment. It can inform people about what happens in the world, the new discoveries and the culture of the other people, also it may be used to educate the reader by teaching him/her about the moral values. Finally, it can entertain the readers and give them pleasure through different types of stories.

American literature, delivered in the English language in the US American writing, like other national literary works, was formed by the historical backdrop of the nation that created it.

It began with Native American oral tradition. It was in the form of diaries, journals and autobiographies. These writings were produced by English settlers such as John Smith (General History of Virginia 1624), and William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation (1856). American literature attempted to unify diverse Americans to call for independence and establish human race. Therefore, it focuses on patriotic writings and race problems.

In the nineteenth century, America accomplished nationhood after a long prehistory of religious and political defiance that started with Puritanism and finished in revolution. In this time America was seeking after both post-frontier freedom and,

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under its own particular banner, provincial extension by victory, allotment and purchase. With the work of Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, American writing discovered its own particular subjects before it discovered its own structures; however the European legacy of Romanticism was given an affirmed American incline by the Transcendentalists, prominently in Emerson's freethinking papers and Thoreau's test collection of memoirs. At mid-century, American visitors to Britain were shocked by the imbalances of class they experienced; British guests to "America were equally appalled by the persistence of slavery in the South".¹ The issue of subjugation and the Abolitionist cause drew in numerous American authors, involving Harriet Beecher Stowe and creators of slave stories, notably, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs.

"The Civil War was the culmination both of these arguments and broader political tensions within America's national society" (ibid). The period of expanding "commercialisation" and realism that took after is analysed in the books of famous realists such as William Dean Howells, Henry James and Edith Wharton. Eminently, "the reformist energies of ex-Abolitionists" loaned new energy to contentions about the status of ladies in America (however such contentions keep running all through the period, from Margaret Fuller to Kate Chopin). Some authors reacted to the 'Overlaid Age' by thinking back to the Old South (Mark Twain) or, later, to the major "farmers of the mid-west (Willa Cather)". Others went up against contemporary social substances more straight: "the often-oppressive conditions of life" in the recently "great cities of New York and Chicago" gave material for the authors, for example, "Theodore Dreiser and Frank Norris", whose points of view focalize "with the

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deterministic” and Social Darwinist thoughts connected with “European Naturalism” (ibid).¹

1.3 American Gothic Literature

The dawn of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave birth to a new literary wave in both Europe and America known as the Gothic.

Gothic cannot be replied in short. It is an art, way of life and a sensibility. “Gothic” can be characterized in three particular ways. Firstly, it is “a building, for example, a church or cathedral that has a style of construction modelling that is recognized by all pillars, high vaulted ceiling and pointed arches”. Secondly, “Gothic is utilized to portray stories in which interesting, hopeless and mysterious circumstances happen in dark and some secluded or isolated places, for example, the vestiges of a mansion”. Lastly, the Gothic is “a style of printing or writing in which the letters are very highly decorated” (Cited in Vandana, 2013, p. 36).

Speaking about Gothic literature, some scholars said that it was really born in 1764. It kept progressing since the eighteenth century when it was first originated, then continued to thrive from the nineteenth century up to this very moment. The setting of Gothicism is extremely effective. It does not only point out the atmosphere of ghastliness and fear, it also captures the weakening of its reality. Effaced and obliterated view shows that at one time the abbey, palace, or landscape was something much appreciated and loved. Now, all that lasts are the remnants of that precious element of literature. (ibid, p. 38)

¹ <https://www.york.ac.uk/english/undergraduate/courses/modules/module-catalogue/period-modules/nineteenth-century-american/>

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Gothic literature is not only about, neither, demons and arcane states of mind, nor only a phenomenon of only medievalism and romanticism, modernism and perversion, death and destruction which are the result from political and social aberrations; the fantasy is also a central part of the Gothic (ibid, p. 37). According to Coale, “Gothicism, whatever it is, is not a literary tradition so much as a fairly realistic assessment of modern life” (2015, p. 163).

One of the essential focuses in Gothicism is the way to go that something is either to a great degree twisted to the point of being terrible or that the thought so broadly unaccepted that it is broadcasted as a wrongdoing against either humankind or the congregation. This statement isolates man and God and shows the fallen condition of man. The dark Gothic style encompasses demise. Once in a while, the Gothic is anti-human or anti-social. Finally, Gothic literature, a development that concentrated on ruin, rot demise, dread, and mayhem, and privileged irrationality and passion over rationality and reason, developed in response to sociological, mental, historical and political settings.²

The term Gothic fiction is a European Romantic literary genre. It is characterized by such elements of gloom, death, fear and horror. According to Elizabeth MacAndrew (1979):

Gothic fiction is a literature of nightmare. Among its conventions are found dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination. Its fictional form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn

² <http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3279300020/gothic-literature.html>

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from the author's own subconscious mind and some the stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance (Mac Andrew, 1979, p. 3).

Consequently, gothic writing reflects the eldritch horror trapped in the mind of the writers because of the tragedies they suffered from.

Both the American and the British fiction go hand in hand; the former as history shows was influenced by the latter.

The gothic has thrived in the USA from the onset of a distinctive American writing. In any case, its social part was completely confusing on the grounds that scholars of the hopeful nation established upon the illumination standards of distress. In fact, the Gothic exemplifies and offers voice to the dull bad dream that is the underside of the American dream. The fantasy and the bad dream are in resistance and connect with one another.³

The scholars of the new country were profoundly impacted by the story circumstances, clashes, settings, and thought processes that made British Gothic so well-known on both sides of the Atlantic. Early American writing contained some particular elements of the Gothic, for example, climatic misery, the inevitability of viciousness, the spooky house, the jail, and the tomb. However, the Americans were capable to get few plots and circumstances as well as to advance it by method for adjustment to the situation in the New World (ibid).

American Gothicism was an inventive and exploratory writing that showed up in the remarkable social and political conditions after the transformation and perfectibility of people in a majority rules system (ibid)

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The pressure between the inexpressible and reality, from one viewpoint, and a bizarre printed surface, on the other, constitute this trial diversion played by American Gothic Literature (ibid).

Gothic writings come back to the individual, to the familial and to the national pasts to confound as opposed to clear up them. The feeling of past that plagues Gothic literature doesn't urge the writer to clarify sources; despite what might be expected, history decides the author (ibid).³

1.4 Features of Gothic Literature

The notion of Gothic literature generally alludes to stories that gather components from Romanticism and horror. Gothic stories got to be basic around two centuries back, and have stayed common from that point onward. Gothic stories and motion pictures are continually managing with ghosts and horror and they frequently encompass those features:

1.4.1 Setting in a Castle

The setting is considered as one of the main elements of Gothic Fiction. It takes place in and around an old mansion that is characterized by a gloomy atmosphere full of horrifying scenes and dark rooms.

The castles are haunted by “zombies”, “vampires”, ghosts, and sprites. These mansions often contain secret passages, trap doors, secret rooms, dark or hidden staircases, and possibly ruined sections. When people talk of Gothic castles, they

³ <http://www.americangothic.narod.ru/america.htm>

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directly think of the architectural style such as an atmosphere of spooky, fearful and desolate places (Harris, 2015).

In Gothic Fiction, the setting does more than simply enhance the story's mood; it creates the ambiance, and the expectation of terror.

“The goal of the dark and mysterious setting is to create a sense of unease and foreboding, contributing toward the atmospheric element of fear and dread” (Harris, 2015).

1.4.2 Supernatural

Supernatural is a key defining component in Gothic literature. The supernatural has dependably been an issue of regard, however, there are particular historical moments when debate erupts and new principles are instituted. Many gothic stories included horrific supernatural. According to the Oxford Dictionaries, the word “supernatural” is defined as: Manifestations or events considered to be of supernatural origin, such as ghosts.⁴

Supernatural implied many things in the nineteenth century. It is difficult to define what is exactly meant by the term “supernatural”, the fact that made it so attractive. In addition to that, many individuals use that word in supporting the various tricks that promoted unexplained phenomena. The element of supernatural is the conviction that the dead can speak with the living; it was one of the common heresies throughout Europe and America in the 1850s. Because of its indescribable nature, diverse interpretations of the supernatural could permit spiritualists to trust on the presence of ghosts and zombies to clarify the marvels as mental. Supernatural

⁴ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/supernatural>

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events such as the hidden doors, the presence of vampires were understood as new types of nature which had already been disregarded.⁵

1.4.3 Madness

It is considered as the central element of Gothic Fiction, though; seemingly this is not a gothic creation. Madness is a change of character's mode or behaviour, which is affected by evil thought, offense, and superstitious belief and so on.

In Gothic literature, characters are subject to an invasion of sensational and grotesque occasions. The Gothic authors also appear to delight in their portrayals of the mood's limit. In addition to that, Gothic stories include what is coming to them of lesser sorts of mental trouble, in spite of the fact that they are not termed all things considered. The hero of the Gothic story is frequently so troubled with the separation of his heroine that he falls into gloom and sorrow.⁶

Gothic investigations of mental illness are predictable with the dangerous way of gothic significance, in that some characters are seen with sensitivity, while others, such as the frantic scientists, are seen as particular kind of villain (ibid)

Through the span of the improvement of the Gothic, the opinions concerning the reasons and nature of madness became to change. At the onset of the Gothic literature in the late eighteenth century, researchers or scholars were considering new thoughts regarding human instinct that considered an individual in terms from his/her separation from the 'typical individual', and utilized the term 'madness' flexibly to show an individual's fluctuating degrees of take-off from the "normal" figure exists,

⁵ <https://civitashumana.wordpress.com/2014/11/02/philosophically-defining-the-supernatural/>

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this meaning of madness effectively move the whole mad-people into the other class, which the Gothic so regularly employs to make evil, threatening scenes (ibid)⁶

1.4.4 Fear

Fear is perceived as the most prominent topic within the Gothic which investigates the more ominous realms of literature. The “oldest” and “strongest” feeling of “mankind is fear” and the “oldest” and powerful sort of fear is “fear from the unknown” (Lovecraft, 2015, p. 1).

Fear is an idea that is displayed perpetually in almost every available Gothic work. It has turned into a distinctive characteristic of Gothic work, and is also transferred by the writers over an assortment of scholarly methods. How far these writers are effective relies on the author’s art and the reader’s responsiveness.⁷

The notion of fear is a distinctive feature of Gothic fiction, thus, the Gothic authors are always using the sense of fear and pain in their works by employing a variety of literary techniques; these incorporate an emphasis on moral transgression from what is satisfactory to what is illicit, and additionally different methods in which the story is described or narrated. In this regard, Ann B. Tracy (1981) stated: “The Gothic world is quintessentially the fallen world, the vision of fallen man, living in fear and alienation, haunted by images of his mythic expulsion, by its repercussions, and by an awareness of his unavoidable wretchedness”(3). Thus, fear is considered as a source of exhilarating thrill and perhaps anger.

⁶ http://epublications.marquette.edu/gothic_madness/

⁷ <http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2005/2005/10/8/131320/529/#gsc.tab=0>

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1.5 The Issue of Adaptation

Through creative procedures, the issue of adaptation has constantly held a vague position, got between an original work of art and its subjective reshaping in another, occasionally vividly different form (Kemlo, 2008, p. 13-14).

The idea of adaptation is the process of transferring a written work, in order for it to fit a new medium. According to Julie Sanders(2006) defines adaptation as: “A specific process involving the transition from one genre to another novel into films; dramatization of prose narratives and prose fiction, or the inverse movement of making dramatization into prose narrative”(19). Thus, we can say that adaptation is the fact of deriving a movie from a novel or vice versa.

In other words, the concept of adaptation is the process by which an art work in one medium is transferred into another medium. In this vein Konigsberg (1998) argues that adaptation is “a work in one medium that derives its impulse as well as varying number of its elements from a work in different medium” (6). In short, literary adaptation is the reworking of a written or verbal text or another artefact for a new audience in a different sort or media.

1.5.1 Movie Adaptations Defined

Literature and cinema are disciplines that use diverse methods for transmission. The first one relies on the written form whereas the second depends on the visual mode. So far, both arts work hand in hand to create a brand new art that is film adaptation.

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Film adaptation is the act of transferring a written text into movie. It is perceived as a sort of subordinate work. Whether adhering strictly to the source material or interpreting concepts derived from the original work, adaptations are necessarily extensions or interpretations of the original story.

In movies, adaptation is seen as the act of adapting a play or a literary text onto screen, by using the written work as the basis of a feature film. In other words, a movie adaptation is a kind of derivative work depicting the transposition of a novel, short story, a play or other literary sources. In this regard, Dewitt Bodeen (1962) stated that “adapting literary works to film is, without any doubt, a creative undertaking, but the task requires a kind of selective interpretation, along with the ability to recreate and sustain an established mood”(Cited in McFarlane, 1996,p. 7).

The cinematic transfer is the most popular use of literary adaptation. The link between story fiction and film was constantly attractive to movie makers. In this vein Belton (2003) states that movie adaptation “offers an opportunity for filmmakers to reread a narrative from another age through the lens of their own time and to project onto that narrative their own sense of the world”(195). Substantially, film adaptation includes the interpretation of the literary work from the written mode to screen with the essential innate changes that are implicit by the procedure. In addition to that, movie adaptation shares a close relationship with written stories and differs in some other aspects.

1.5.1 Comparison between Film Adaptation and Written Stories

The technological achievements and inventions of the last two centuries paved the way for further creations. As a matter of fact, Cinema as a narrative art was an

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obvious outcome. In fact, it took the art of narration to a different mode; from written form to audio visual one. Moreover, it generated multiple sub genres such as film adaptation that has become a hot spot of controversy.

Debatably, several literary critics viewed film adaptation differently for having remarkable differences, whereas in the other hand, others have advocated the similarities between novels or short stories and their adapted version. Therefore, a detailed comparison would be vital to draw a holistic conclusion.⁸

1.5.2.1 Main Differences between Adaptation and literature

It has been defensively agreed that literature and cinema are expressive arts that share some few common points but are still ocean apart. The major difference that occurs between movie adaptation and the written texts comes to language: the first one is visual and the other one is literary. In connection to movie work, the grips are regularly easier, obvious and simple, however for literature there should be participation of the creative ability of the per-user.

It is noticeable that silver screen and literature contact differently and make little sense to find precise parallels between the two mediums at the sphere of denotative contact. The movie picture is not like a word, more like a sentence or series of sentences. The extension of the activity or the action is important to the movie; the text likewise extends the action, through the character's experience and the description of the events, while, "the audio experience has improved fluidity and immediacy than fiction, is more varied and alive" (Lawson&Gualda, 2010, p. 211).

⁸ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/learningresources/fic_adaptation.html

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Time and space differ in the literary discourse and film discourse, though both mediums of expression don't need to reveal chronologically. The recollections can be described and narrated in unarranged tables that are connected by associations or even evidences, inside of the mind of a specific character and, consequently, can bring about visual pictures.

Films may follow a sequence of jumps or lags one time to another or otherwise avail themselves of the literary techniques of flashback or flash-forward, but will need some effect on the screen (change colour - usually the memories appear to spectator in black and white or pale, aged - speed takes, no action or even speeches etc.) while in literature these changes can easily be represented using a time counter - adverb or tense (Linda Catrina Gualda: 2010, p.201)

The cinema does not count with this signs, given that the taking of a kid dropping, a woman crying, for instance, is immortal. In movie work, "the notion of time can only be created through the context of the relationship between the outlet and the rest of the film, or through verbal" (Diniz, 1986:99-100). Keep in mind that another illustration of temporal manipulation is the capacity of the movie in showing concurrent actions or by splitting the screen...etc.

In literary discourse, time is semantically "encoded"; the movie is given pictures of "concrete actions". The movie's time is recognized "as similar to real time in which we noted the action and not time". The space controls the movie, while, "time dominates" the book. "The conceptual space" is the book; however, "the time" is communicated strongly since the progression of the scenes (cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 212).

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Without a doubt, the sound of the film could significantly enhance the audience's comprehension. The movie audiences could get the data from both pictures and sounds, while the book readers only from the text. In movies, the sound can be categorized into three sorts, namely, speech, music and noise. In some cases, even any of them could recount the story. Though as precise as the book cannot accomplish, the sound in the movie could make the environment in which the audiences could feel the character's feeling. The enchantment of the sound in movies is that it could duplicate the real sounds of life, and together with pictures, it produces and shows the true life to the audiences instantly and in straight way. In contrast, literary texts could just portray things by using words. The movie director could demonstrate "a successful ball" with incredible music, joyful laughter, energized discussion and a wide range of commotion; however what the book author could do is utilizing quit words. In this manner, it is reasonable to infer that the multi-layered movie is much more powerful than literature. In contrast, from another perspective, the weak point of written stories can be an incredible point of interest. It is only the noiseless or the silent and arbitrary nature of the indications in the book gave unlimited space to the per-user. Consequently, every reader could make the most amazing and creative "film" in their mind (cited in Bao Bo, 2008, p. 59).

1.5.2.2 Main Similarities between Adaptation and Literature

Academics have stated some similarities between the two mediums. Actually, according to Martinez (2005), literature and film are "narrative arts, and consequently, a pretext to tell stories from the first oral transmissions" (cited in Rahmoun, 2013, p. 38). From this perspective, both verbal and visual arts are realizations of comparable

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communication techniques, for each is inspired by the desire to tell stories and create pictures. From one hand, the verbal art composes linguistic tools (phonemes and semantic shadings) to make images and meaning. On the other hand, the film adaptation utilizes “cinematic tools” to transfer meaning and picture to the screen.

Entertainment is another factor that links movies to literature; both are seen as a means of entertaining the reader or the viewer. In this vein, Boyum (1985) notes that “people” “watch movies and “read” books for the same purpose, i.e. to have “ the opportunity to identify with other human beings for a while and vicariously participate in their lives”(cited in Rahmoun, 2013, p. 38). Consequently, adaptation and literature come to offer their audiences the shot to open their minds to the outside worlds yet expressing and presenting their own culture.

1.6 Fidelity and Adaptation

For many years, fidelity in adaptation has been the centre of attention for an abundance of scholars. Fidelity to the original, the source text, is another highly employed issue when adaptation is being analyzed. Such issue has primarily been a measure of analysis of these interpretations during the last decades. For adaptation studies, the tradition of fidelity cannot be without precedence, as John Desmond and Peter Hawkes note:

The field has been preoccupied with the fidelity issue. The main question asked about adaptations by reviews and critics alike has been to what degree the film is faithful to the text. The practitioners of this approach tend to judge a film’s merit based on whether the adaptation realizes successfully the essential narrative elements and core meanings of the printed text. [...] How is it possible to identify

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the core meanings of a text when we know literary texts are capable of supporting an indefinite number of interpretations? (Cited in Știrbețiu, p. 492)

Since literature departments begun to study the film adaptation rather than in the fields of film or media studies which developed much later, the focus upon fidelity to an original reflected the prioritization of the high cultural literary text over the popular film text. Though adaptation studies focused on other aspects of the relationship between literature and film, the fidelity model stays much more close to this area of study.

The trope of fidelity, from an adaptation view, “is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text” (Dudley, 1984, p. 100). The film from such perspective dismisses the task of bringing the source material to life in a way that it does not abridge, extend or depart from the original.

Pertaining to Most fidelity-based evaluations and to their exclusive focus upon fidelity to the original work, fidelity is the only goal of adaptation. Eventually, a filmic adaptation should attempt to reproduce the literary original as faithfully as possible, adaptation scholars did not recognize the ways that “film and literature’s basic interest in how stories travel from medium to medium might have allowed the field to anticipate contemporary theory’s linked concerns with narrative, intertextuality and ideology” (Ray,2001, p. 124).

Theorists of literary adaptation have criticized and attacked fidelity as a standard for evaluating adaptations, doubting its usefulness as a perspective and even

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the possibility of its attainment when moving from the written word to the motion picture.

Moreover, it was never a peaceful activity to deal with the issue of adapting a novel. The writers see the lack of fidelity to the original and argue the distance between the two languages semiotics. For the part of moviegoers, they argue that any creative work must include and show freedom, because; “the reading of literary forces us to an exercise of fidelity and respect the freedom of interpretation, because they propose a speech with many reading plans and put us in the ambiguities of language and life” (Eco cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 213).

As a matter of fact, "there is no other viable criterion, but the know-how far the outcome different or similar to the original, traitor or submissive, dependent or independent, has quality" (Brito, Cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 214). First of all, the argument is the secret of the success of the film. Off and on, adaptations and innovations were the great works of cinema. It was hard, if not impossible, for the writers to discover hundreds of new situations annually, so the masterpieces of literature or to books about success were their final resort. The quality and the loyalty of the frequency to adapt literary works to the screen adjustments resulted in controversies which are undue and undeveloped most of the time. Therefore, doubts hither and thither lead to many questions: Should a movie be faithful to the novel adapted or can it afford to betray it? As far as the (in) fidelity would be something desirable, there would be rules to adapt a novel.⁹

The opinion is sporadic, a very considerable number of critics support adaptations. Philippe Durand (cited Brito, 2006) argues that the process of adaptation

⁹ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/learningresources/fic_adaptation.html

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is highly advisable, as novel and film have the same vocation. Andre Bazin (1987) comes up with two arguments of a historical, social and practical adaptation: the cinema grew as a popular art reaching all social strata and, it provides greater access to the classics in order to adapt the great works.

Yet, other critics see no correspondence between the visual and literary work, they are inclined to believe that any attempt at reconciliation remains impossible. Thinking about it, the adapter is faithful to the work of beginning, he quells certain episodes in a way to enlarge others that seem much more interesting to his purposes, since fidelity is prevented by a variety of means of expression of the novel and movie; "some passages, outlined only by the writer, provide it, through its expansion, the visual equivalent of certain comments or descriptions that cinema cannot be transplanted" (Sadoul, cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 214). Significantly, adaptation is a process based on the fact that "change is inevitable when it abandons the language environment and applies to the visual" (Bluestone Cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 215).

For this reason, the impossibility of translating messages aesthetic is evident. This let some theorists such as Haroldo de Campos to offer "the theory of translation as recreation; aesthetics, autonomous information, but both are linked together by a relation of isomorphism: while language will be different, but as the bodies isomorphous crystallize will be within the same system" (cited in Gualda, 2010,p.215). Thus, besides being an act of recreation, the translation stays a sort of critical reading of the original work, because "to perform a re-creative translation, the translator must first submerge critically on work to be translated" (ibid). Significantly, the adaptation process intersemiotic can be seen as "shape of transmutation, rebirth and, indeed, critical-reading artistic production of original work, revitalizing it and

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creating another information aesthetics, autonomous" (Martins, cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 215).

Creative claims get lost from the adaptations when the writer emphasizes on faithfulness. From that perspective, an adaptation cannot be equal or even better than its source. Lester Asheim spoke about the film's frequent alteration of the source and says that such manipulation is dishonest to some extent: "The audience that knows only the film and not the book is presented with a 'falsified' interpretation which leaves no clues that would permit it to reconstruct the original truth (Griffith, 1997, p. 24).

Moreover, the film adaptation is considered as a failed form. Even Mitry, who is known as an arch opponent of fidelity, could not overlook at the adaptations: If one wants to replace an entire infrastructure, it is hardly necessary to study the old one. No one can tend to avoid speaking of comparisons between the film and the source material and the judgments that follow but at the end it is superfluous. Thus, Desmond and Hawkes note that fidelity is not an obligatory norm, and there is no standard measure by which text and film. From this one can sum this up saying that fidelity is really overvalued. Linda Hutcheon refers to fidelity as an aspect included in adaptation studies, which has to be left aside while other criteria are priority. Fidelity may render service by informing the elements of cinema and the screenplay, but interpretations are to serve the creation of a filmed narrative. Furthermore, Desmond and Hawkes note that:

For the transition to be successful, it is important that the adapter understands the story as well as the means of expression of both discourses. Another way of saying this is that the adapter needs to

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be aware of the conventions of the literary story as well as of cinema itself... If the adapter doesn't take into account the conventions of each form, the conventions of the antecedent form will stubbornly cling to the adaptation and make it seem uncinematic(Cited in Știrbețiu, p. 492).

In the language of fidelity, literature and films are never equal; texts, compared to other art forms are never judged, and adaptation is the only one that can be insincere. Moreover, this language of fidelity reveals a certain hierarchy where the source is the literary text and the film is nothing but a copy. Desmond and Hawkes spoke about an aspect in their book; they said that “an adaptation is not a better film because it is a close interpretation as opposed to an intermediate or loose one. In fact, some people argue that fidelity to a text is a sure-fire way to make a bad film” (2006, p. 42).

Film adaptation is not an exact mirror that reflects the original text. However, it can be an art that transform a written discourse into a new medium, by including different literary devices such as the camera. It is better for a director or a moviemaker to add some details to the original story, but it is important to save the main theme of the book.

1.7 Conclusion

The film adaptation has a close relationship with literature; this is why it becomes a matter of interest by many scholars. This chapter was debated the theoretical part of this research work. It began with an overview about nineteenth century American literature which witnessed a new genre in literature, Gothicism. Besides, this chapter gave an explicit observation about the Gothic Fiction including

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some hints of the Gothic literature features. Moreover, it highlighted the issue of adaptation mainly the relationship between literature and movie adaptation including some critical perspectives concerning the link and the confrontation between the two arts.

After dealing with the theoretical part of this research work, analyzing “*The Masque of the Red Death*” will be the concern of the practical part of the present work.

Chapter two

**“The Masque of the Red
Death”, an Analogy between
Short story and the
adaptation**

Chapter Two: “The Masque of the Red Death”, An Analogy between the Short Story and the Adaptation

2.1 Introduction

A portion of the best movies ever in a wide assortment of literary genres have been adapted from short tales. In particular, when we look to the classical horror movies adapted from books; it seems that there is a remarkable number of fictitious films that were based on short stories.

In order to get a successful adaptation, the filmmaker has to add some cinematic techniques while maintaining the basic theme of the original story. This chapter is a study of one of the classical short stories written by Edgar Allan Poe “The Masque of the Red Death” and its adaptation directed by the American producer Roger Corman.

The chapter starts by an overview of the short story and the film adaptation, concerning the main theme, characters... and so on; so that the reader recognizes what the story is about. The main goal of this chapter is to analyse “the Masque of the Red Death” focusing on the Gothic mood that exists in the short story and the adaptation. Besides, this chapter is the examination of some hints of Gothic features that are available in the movie and its original text. Afterwards, it will debate the main common and different elements between the movie and the short story. In addition, this chapter will provide a synthesis about the movie as a proof for the success of the adaptation.

2.2 The Short Story Overview

“The Masque of the Red Death” is a classic short story written by the American author Edgar Allan Poe in 1842. The short story is about a plague which spreads rapidly over the country; named “the Red Death”.

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In an unspecified year a nameless area is surrounded by the Red Death, a plague which spans and murders quickly. Casualties are rapidly influenced by sharp agonies and pains, trailed by hemorrhagic from the pores. The Red Death is named for the blood stains on the body and particularly, the face. The casualties pass away within 30 minutes of the primary effects.

When the area is covered in panic and terror, the Prince Prospero is resolved not to be a victim of this disease. He collects a group of his loyal companions and together they order themselves in one of his monasteries. The palace is secured with the goal that none may enter quit. Shielded from exposure to sickness, they stay there for a while.

Ultimately, Prince Prospero holds a sublime masquerade ball for his squires. The dance is held in an intricately embellished wing of seven rooms which stream into each other. Every chamber is decorated in single colour. The first room is dyed in blue, with blue glass windows. The following room is purple, with the same colour in windows. The chambers proceed with westbound, as indicated by this design, in the next colour configuration: green, orange, white, and violet. The seventh room is dark, with red windows. Likewise in this chamber stands an attractive ebony clock. At the point when the clock rings every hour, its sound is so uproarious and distracting that everybody quits talking and stops music. While the clock is not resonating, the rooms are so excellent that they appear to be loaded with dreams. The final chamber was the most feared by everyone, its atmosphere gives Goosebumps and throws terror in the hearts of the fearless. It was simply the nightmare of them all.

At midnight, another visitor shows up, his veil or mask resembles the substance of a dead body, and his face uncovers spots of blood recommending that he is a casualty of the Red Death. Prospero gets mad from that stranger and that somebody with so little vivacity

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would join his gathering. However, the other guests are perplexed of this covered man that they neglect to keep him from strolling through every room. Eventually, the prince Prospero gets up to speed to the stranger guest in the seventh room. When he defies the figure, Prospero dies. Immediately, when the other attendees enter the dark chamber to assault the masquerade, they find that there is no one underneath the ensemble. Everybody then dies, for the Red Death has invaded the abbey. “Darkness and Decay and the Red Death” have finally triumphed.

2.3 “The Masque of the Red Death”; the Movie

During the era of 60’s Roger Corman made many movie adaptations on Edgar Allan Poe’s stories. One of them was “the Masque of the Red Death”.

Roger Corman was mostly known as an exploitation producer. He adapted the short story “The Masque of the Red Death” in 1964. It is a British-American movie; the screenplay was developed by Charles Beaumont and R. Wright Campbell which is based on the two original short stories by Edgar Allan Poe “The Masque of the Red Death” and “Hop-Frog”.

For the casting, and unlike the original story, the producer settled on naming the characters and it was like the following: Vincent Price (Prince Prospero), Jane Asher (Francesca), Hazel Court (Juliana), Patrick Magee (Alfredo), David Weston (Gino), Nigel Green (Ludovico) and Skip Martin (Hop Toad).

Many critics consider “The Masque of the Red Death” as the most successful work of Roger Corman that was inspired from Edgar Allan Poe’s story. In this vein, Ron Backer (2015) claims that: “The Masque of the Red Death has a reputation as the best of the Poe adaptations by Roger Corman, a reputation that is well-deserved” (Backer, 2015, p. 298).

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“The Masque of the Red Death” film adaptation is very crafty in the gothic movies by using mysterious, gloomy and horror scenes. It is considered as “one of the signature horror films of its time. It harkens back to the gothic feel of its black and white forbears while diving headfirst into the color-soaked riot of its British and Italian contemporaries” (Ambler, 2014).

Ambler seems to glorify the success of “The Masque of the Red Death” where its adaptation is escalating it kept on its core and its gothic features as a horror movie.

2.4 The Gothic Features in “The Masque of the Red Death”

When analysing “The Masque of the Red Death”, we may notice that Edgar Allan Poe used a large portion of the afore-mentioned components (see pages 11-12-13-14) to make a genuine gothic work. In addition to that, Roger Corman the director of the adaptation also endeavoured to “spot light” on the gothic atmosphere.

2.4.1 Setting in a Castle

When we consider the gothic atmosphere in “the Masque of the Red Death”, the first element that comes to mind is setting. In Poe’s short story, the tale takes place in an unknown country, with no fixed date or geographical situation.

When we think about the film adaptation, deducing from the tarot card used by the man in red, it is safe to say the country is Europe taking into account the names, clothing and even some gothic architecture in background. This is reflective of Dante divine comedy it is possible that the setting is in Italy.

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The action takes location in the recently built “castellated abbey” of Prince Prospero. The main events of the story occur in a particular in the suite’s abbey of seven colored rooms, where the Prince Prospero established the masked ball. That suite contains seven rooms that hold in a line from east to west. As the storyteller tells us, the chamber’s arrangement is entirely unpredictable, so that from any given room you can just see into one other room. Each chamber has one window on either of it.

The most prominent point of the suite is the seventh room; the furthest room to the west which is special. It was painted by the black colour; however its windows are in red. Generally, the red colour symbolizes blood and in this story, it can refer to the “Red Death” plague. As it is narrated in the story: “the seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue” (Poe, 2008, p. 11). In addition to that, there is a colossal, menacing clock in it, which shockingly tools each hour and makes everybody’s hair stand on its end. It makes us think about this dark room as the horrifying room of death whenever the clock’s tone and the colour scheme are put together.

The colour frame of the suite has a specific meaning. In particular way, the dark chamber shouts death. For instance when Prospero says to Francesca: “no, that room is not open for you, not yet what’s there? You look as though. Is there something to fear in that room?”(Says Francesca). Prospero replies: “for the uninvited there is much to fear”(00:14:37-00:14:54). It is possible to say that the divergence of the room’s colour indicates the human life, moving from birth (the first chamber; in blue colour) to death (the last chamber, the black room).

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2.4.2 Supernatural

“The Masque of the Red death” is a peculiar movie, the characters were awesome. Vincent Price acted in many horror movies; he was always intended to be the horror face, due to his scary eyes and his successful presence on screen.

The supernatural element appears in the first scene of the movie when an old woman advances over a clearly studio-bound backwoods set, and comes over a man sitting under a tree, who is costumed a red garb, and covering his face by a cap. He does a magic ploy or trick with a white flower and turning it to a red one and saying: “grandmother, come closer, take this to your village and tell the people the day of their deliverance is at hand” (00:00:53- 00:01:18). In this scene, it is worth noticing that the old woman, unexpectedly, does not run away from the stranger when she saw the red flower, and instead she takes the flower to her country. Hence, we can presume she condemns all of her people to a hurting and shouting death.

The second apparent scene which symbolizes the supernatural aspect is spotted in by the end of the movie. The red death appears in the middle of the closed castle to take the life of those corrupt nobles in closed room. That scene is presented in a persuasive fashion, in which an avatar attacks the castle, and the virus spans among the wealthy that protected themselves at the expense of the poor people enduring the atrocities of the plague in the other side of the castle walls. This scene is mentioned in the book in the words of Edgar Allan Poe who assures: “and the rumour of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise-then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of

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disgust”(Poe, 2008, p. 15). The simple fact that the “Red Death” appears in the middle of a closed castle without any aid portrays verily the supernatural component at hand.

Another scene of supernatural manifests onto the screen when the “Red Death” removes the mask and the Prince Prospero was chocked by the fact that the “Red Death” is a precise mirror image of his face. This is presented in the end of the story as follows: “and the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all” (ibid, p.18). This shows the duality of the divine and the evil. While Prospero tortured the people and kept the richness for himself, death on other hand shows mercy for the people and delivered them from their suffering and showed fairness by taking the life of Prospero and his nobles. That’s why Prospero and the Red Death have the same face in the movie.

Similarly, the scene is stated in the short story as the following:

He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay (Poe, 2008, p. 18).

From this perspective, the clock is another evident image of death, that time is passing which brings death nearer every moment.

2.4.3 Madness

Generally speaking, Edgar Allan Poe was influenced by the Gothic mood; this is why we find the majority of his stories based on the Gothic fiction. In this short story, the main theme is that there is no way to flee from death, and this thing is out of our control.

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Mostly, “The Masque of the Red Death” clarifies the life of a man who is scared of his destiny.

“The masque of the Red Death” adaptation, sees Prince Prospero as the devilish, a harsh aristocrat who has fun when torturing people who live close to his fortress. The Red Death haunts the area, yet the prince is satisfied it cannot touch him. The Prince Prospero is maniac with driving everything to the maximum, joyously insulting the gathering visitors who run to his party. Moreover, his craziness appears in the scenery where Prospero says to Francesca: “My father imprisoned a friend of his in this room for three years when he was released he could never again bear to look at the sun or even a daffodil” (00:13:20- 00:13:30).

Undoubtedly, “*The Masque of Red Death*” may be perused on a psychological scale simply as interior monologue, the preposterous nightmare of a madman. The storyteller proposed in few times that there might be cause to believe Prospero is mentally ill, and that the whole story is his mad dream. If so, then the storyteller of the tale might be Prospero himself, portraying his own distraught vision. This would clarify why the author separates himself from the expression that the Prince Prospero might be “mad” by proposing that it is just the supposition of “some” people, for he states: “there are some who would have thought him mad”. While, Edgar Allan Poe (2008) “just as quickly” reject this evaluation by calling to the assessment of his “followers”, who, “felt that he was not” (p. 16). Besides, the storyteller particularly alludes to Prospero’s companions or “followers” as precisely “dreams”, as “To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams”. The visitors are later alluded to as “an assembly of phantasms”. In addition to that, the odd figures which occupy the masquerade ball may purely created by his crazy mind, that those guests could be just repercussion of Prospero’s

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mind in his words: “ And these- the dreams-writhed in and about taking hue from the rooms”(p. 14). Thus, the visitors at the party are considered as “dreams” taking their “hue” from the glass’s reflection in each apartment.

From another perspective, when we think about Prospero as a madman, we can say that the ringing of the clock is the consequence of the intrusive moments of Prospero, for, every time the clock rings, the “dreams are stiff-frozen” (ibid, p. 14). At a strict level, the clock’s ringing is certainly the sound used in awakening people from the fantasy case. However, when the clock has stopped, “the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever” (ibid). In the movie, we can suppose that the nobles are mad because they locked themselves in the castle with the Prince Prospero to escape from death.

Ultimately, the insanity of Prospero is anticipated onto the “phantasms” that occupy his thinking; the “dream” visitors are alluded to as “mad revellers”, demonstrating that they might be expectations of the prince Prospero’s own distraught personality. In addition to that, the veiled visage of death which shows up in the party even takes on the feature of insanity, as his “mad assumptions” have the impact of bringing “awe” in alternate visitors. The insanity of Prospero himself once more rises responding to the bravery of the Red Death, as the Prince Prospero “maddening with rage”, seeks after it to the seventh apartment.

In an analytical perusing, the battle between the Red Death and Prospero could be explained as the interior psychical conflict between a man’s feeling of reality and his mad imagination. Consequently, when the Red Death is uncovered to have no corporeal shape, it is on the grounds that it occurs just as fictional “phantasm” with no physical presence in the actuality. For this situation, the victory of the Red Death over Prospero symbolizes a

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victory of madness and insanity over rationality; the “death” of the prince and his “dreams” could indicate death of the self when it is assumed control by its own madness.

2.4.4 Fear

From the beginning of the story, Poe tries to evoke the sense of fear in his readers. This is just about a frightening delineation of death. He uses the gothic words “terror” and “hideous” in the first paragraph in saying:

No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its avatar and its seal- the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim, where the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the progress and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour (2008, p.9).

From this quotation we can deduce that the revellers are so frightened of the Red Death they will not sympathize or assist with each other. This scene is well performed in the movie where Prospero meets the ill woman that is why he orders his minions to burn the town. When analysing the scene it seems that Prospero is scared from death that he can kill anyone related to death.

In the whole story we find that Poe indicates the term fear as a prospective impulse for the retreat of the Prince Prospero and his companions. For example in the second paragraph we find:

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But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys (ibid).

So far, it appears like their profound purpose behind their fear is that they are afraid of death. In the movie, this scene appears when the Prince Prospero gathers the nobles and worshipers, then, closes the castle in order to be protected from the plague; this indicates the fear of death.

The anxiety of the attendances around the dark chamber is significant when the narrator says:

But in the western or black chamber the effect of the fire-light that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes, was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered, that were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all (ibid, p. 11-12).

This appears to suppose a specific restlessness towards everything that reminds them of death and plague. In the movie, the final room does exist where Prospero meet his end.

Fear is apparent when the author utters the following: “and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation”(ibid, p. 12). Thus, the scary tolls of the huge dark clock seem to be another indication of death. They

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show that time is advanced. In addition to that, it makes the attendances apprehensive; especially the ones who are nearest to death, as it is previously mentioned in the quotation “the aged and sedate”. This scene does not exist in a proper manner because you can only hear the sound of the clock which adds more to fear.

In another context, when the midnight hour approaches the apprehension of the attendances increments; while previously there were few willing to go to the dark apartment, now there are none who want to get closer to that chamber, and this statement is stated in the short story in saying: “but to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away” (ibid, p. 14). In the film, Prospero found the last chamber closed from the outside, this is similar to the book because none of the maskers went near it except Prospero and the “Red Death” (see 00:14:38).

The new guest makes everyone uneasy, particularly when he shows up at the stroke of midnight (when they are previously nervously ceased at the clock’s sound). When observed how their response changes from one of absolute surprise or dissatisfaction to actual fear. Gloomy terror raised in the author’s words, Poe states : “and the rumour of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise-then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust”(ibid, p. 15). It is clear that the “Red Death” disturbs all the attendances in the party. Accordingly, the feeling of fear keeps on developing and the events began to be more scared and terrifying.

The first response of Prospero is more obscure than of the other revellers. It can be revulsion, but it can also be fear. In this vein, the writer plumes his words:

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When the eyes of the Prince Prospero fell upon his spectral image (which, with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its role, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste (ibid, p.16).

It seems that he is amazed and scared by the masquerade “The Red Death”, his scare builds up in a clear way, from a tense unease to an indescribable panic at the peak.

In another scene, the bleak moments are clear when the author states the following:

But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the prince’s person; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first (ibid, p.17).

From this perspective, it seems clear that the throng is too scared of “the mummer” to carry out prince Prospero’s orders. They all shrink far from it. Prospero himself is not a special case.

After the previous scene, the Prince Prospero’s wrath gives him the daring. He is the only one of the revellers to defeat his terror and make a move. The others are in the grasps of a “deadly terror” as it is reported in the short story: “it was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him an account

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of a deadly terror that had seized upon all” (ibid, p.17). Consequently, it is clear that the sense of horror keeps on rising.

The last expression that indicates fear is stated in the penultimate paragraph in the short story. The scene occurred at the point when Prospero falls; finally the crowd of the attendances beat their apprehension and assault the visitor who has killed their prince. They find out that the person under the costume is the Red Death itself. These bleak moments are in the author’s words in saying:

“then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable terror at finding the grave-cerements and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form” (ibid, p. 18).

From this quotation, we deduce that the fear has now achieved its peak. This scene exists in the movie in another fashion when Prospero given up of surviving and start scurrying among the attendances (see 00:01:03 -01:02:00).

2.5 Comparison between the Short Story and the Movie Adaptation

Film adaptation came up as a revival to give a second breath to literary masterpieces, and that is for sharing countless similarities. At first, for being a narrative expressive art for storytelling. And second for achieving the same goals regarding the process of entertaining the readers or the viewers and transmitting the messages. However, as similar as they might appear, adaptation and literature are two narrative arts that draw a significant contrast.

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2.5.1 Differences between the movie and the short story

Many critics agreed that movies are typically different to the original books and “The Masque of the Red Death” is no exception. Moreover, we know that in the written discourse the storyteller makes the sense of what we read via his perspective. However, in the movie the writer of the original text vanishes, the director must depend on alternate apparatuses of the movie to replicate what was felt, reflected and depicted on the book. In adapting “The Masque of the Red Death” from page to stage, Roger Corman added several factors pertaining , for instance, romance and some Satanism scenes. In the story at hand, since the original story is very short Roger Corman had much to include.

The first difference between the short story and the movie is concerning characters. In most of the time we found that the story is more descriptive than the movie adaptation. However, in the case of “The Masque of the Red Death”, we found that the movie is more detailed. For instance, in the short story Poe gives the names only for the main characters: the “Prince Prospero”, “the Red Death” but he does not give proper names for the other characters (revellers). In contrast, in the movie, Roger Corman creates names for the characters, so the viewer can identify them as humans. From another perspective, he uses Italian names such as “Juliana”, “Gino”, and “Alfredo” in order to give to the viewers more hints about the setting that is probably Italy.

The setting is another difference. Poe does not mention the date of the story or the place. However, in Corman’s adaptation, we can deduce the place of the story from the choice of the character’s names, the tarot, the clothes and the architecture. In addition to that, there is the scene when Gino makes a battle with one of the guards and Francesca says: “stop them”(00:24:17) and Prospero replies: “he learns rather fast it is a true fact that

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the greatest swordsman in Italy would not fear the worst for that one would be incredible” (00:24:19-00:24:37).

The Chronotope is another element that provides a great area for the cinematographer and the producer to hire their imagination. Stories are written to be read, to be discovered and to be created in the reader’s mind. The story’s events make the soul of the reader go hand in hand with emotions, imagination and creativity in which one story can be interpreted in different manners, and this is the key point in literature; one word can create a multiple meanings. In “The Masque of the Red Death” Roger finds space to use his imagination unlike the short story is too short that makes Poe’s imagination limited.

In the short story, Poe goes directly into action, however, the movie builds up to it. For instance, the scene of the grandmother then it goes directly to the castle and ball, in contrast, in the movie is built up by introducing important actions one by one until the ball which is the end of the story.

The difference also appears in the description of the main character Prospero. In the book, Poe devotes nearly one page in describing the Prince: “Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious” (p.1), however, in the masterpiece movie, Roger Corman depicts Prospero in the whole film; in each scene we discover him as Satan-worshiper, terrible ruler in the second scene, the strong prince (when the man begs him for his life) (00:22:22), then the weakest person in the last scene when he faces “the Red Death” (01:00:54-01:03:11).

One final difference is how the gothic atmosphere is portrayed in the movie versus the short story. It is true that Poe incorporates many gothic elements into his story, for instance, the setting (the haunting abbey) and the dark room with gothic windows, then, the

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“phantasm” of the ambiguous figure. The whole story has a desolate and peculiar general impact. The particular word choice and depictions add to the general gothic and strange tone and state of mind. Poe includes those instances in order to personify the American Gothic Literature. In the movie, Roger Corman specifies a great area to create the gothic atmosphere. He expands the storyline, for instance, he makes Prospero as a Satan-worshiper, sadist and a cruel ruler in the scene of kidnapping Francesca (Jane Asher), her father (Ludovico) and Gino (David Weston). In addition to that, he creates a creepy ambiance by showing violence from Prospero against the villagers. This is shown in the second scene of the movie when the Prince commands his servants to burn the village fearing from the spread of the plague (00:04:48).

Aside from this, Roger Corman succeeded in the selection of the actors. Undoubtedly, Vincent Price plays a great role in the movie; he was in his shilling best with this role. Price gives the ideal vessel to express an extremely human trepidation in an unreal world. He deserves our riveted consideration, and his personality on stage mirrors this ambivalence of presenting in both real and unreal. His charisma, his voice, facial expressions and his stature, all show up in some measure, extraordinary. He sets up his cruel role or character in the first scene, when he constrains Francesca to choose either to rescue her father or the man she loves, in saying: “How innocent you are. However, I am disposed to temper justice with mercy. So I will leave it up to you, Francesca. One must die which one?”(00:03:09-00:03:25). It seems that Vincent Price acted this scenery in a great way with his charming accent and noisy vision.

His great role appears in the scene when he orders his revellers to behave as animals for his own amusement when Prospero commands:

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Senor Veronese, you do little but eat and swill and dream of other things. How like a pig you are. Be one. You Senor Lampredi you laugh at this poor pig while you are insignificant no more than a worm. Can you be a worm, Lampredi? Senorita Escobar, do you hear how she laughs? It is like nothing so much as a braying jackass. Be one. You Senor Rimini, ride that jackass to market. As for the rest of you, use your imaginations, show me the lives and loves of the animals (00:11:23-00:13:00).

In this scenery, he promotes his strength by instructing sanctification from all and denying the resort for people in need. We can deduce that with all the recent actors' of nowadays wonderful experiences and their great performances, they could not even have the ability of to act like Vincent Price. He was one of the greatest actors ever, due to his outstanding performance and his experience as theatrical Poe actor. Moreover, we cannot forget Hazel Court's outstanding performance which was crucial to the great success of the movie adaptation especially in the scene when she worships Satan in order to secure her hold on Prospero when she says:

“Lord Satan, he who is known as Belial by the ancients demon lover, of all those who wish to live in your eternal night here in your hour of deepest dark in your temple and before you altar I twice bind myself to thee: As your handmaiden and your betrothed. And with this symbol of your lasting victory I inscribe the final mark and offer myself to thee. Oh Lord Satan, send me a demon so I be your wife (00:26:40- 00:27:34).

This scenery is well performed by Hazel, her looking to the camera and she expresses the pain in a good way. It is a canonical scene which reminds us of mythical

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stories of people pledging allegiance to Satan. She seems desperate to have Satan’s affection.

Moreover, the photographer Nicholas Roeg greatly contributed in the success of the movie as he created a gothic mood that probably made the film become interesting and thrilling. In this vein, the actress Hazel Court stated

Much more money was spent on the film than the previous Poe films as it was a more opulent production. It was a big production, lots of customs and a wonderful cameraman, Nicholas Roeg, who photographed me beautifully in that. I think I was like two or three months pregnant when I was doing the film (cited in Joel Eisner, 2013, p. 161).

Nicholas skilfully managed to picture the scenes and made the movie more vibrant where he took into consideration all details and managed to sketch from different angles.

2.4.2 Main Similarities

Reading a book or a short story and watching a movie have a great impact on the reader or viewer’s mind. When analysing the story and the adaptation, we found some similarities.

As far as language is concerned, in the movie the language is kept. Both Poe and Corman use the British language. For Poe the use of British language is the way he creates the Gothic atmosphere in his written stories. Likewise, as we see in the movie most of the characters are originated from Britain such as Jane Asher and Hazel Court this is why the movie’s language is British.

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In addition to that, the main theme is similar between the two Medias that no one can escape from death; this is why we find the word death in the whole story. In the beginning of the story, we find the word “Red Death” till the end of the story when he talks about death’s “dominion”. In addition to that, the story is concluded by the death of the characters that have a thought that they can escape from death when death crashes their masquerade ball. Likewise, Roger Corman opened the film by a scene that indicates death, then, he finishes the movie by a scene that indicates the same theme when the Red Death attacks the castle and crashes their party.

Moreover, the term fear is the main aim for both Corman and Poe in “The Masque of the Red Death”. They wanted to create a gothic atmosphere, and the sense of dread. The book is full of the sense of fear, for instance, when Poe states: “but to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away” (Poe, 2008, p.14). From the other side, the film is also filled with the scared scenes due to the architecture, the presence of the characters and so on. For example, in the scene where Prospero meet the ill woman (see 00:04:25). The presence of the ill character increased the scary scene in the film which vanishes in the short story. Furthermore, as far as architecture is concerned, this gothic aspect gave an attractive picture for the viewers that cannot appear in the written discourse.

The depiction of Prospero as a main character is another similar factor between the book and adaptation. In the short story, Poe exposes the Prince Prospero as a character that displays more of the emotions as opposed to actions, he is characterised by cruelty since he was “happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court ”(Poe, 2008,p.9). This quotation is a proof that Prospero

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enjoyed his life, while, his people were leaving in devastation. Likewise, in the adaptation Roger Corman depicts the Prince Prospero as a terrible ruler; he tortures the people that he governed for his entertainment. As it appears in the first scenes of the film when he orders his guards to burn the village in saying: “burn the village to the ground” (00:04:48).

Another similar element between the short story and its adaptation is how the seven rooms are described. According to the short story, Poe makes each room with a specific colour. The blue chamber, which is uttermost toward the east, indicates life or hope. The colour refers to the “unknown” from which a human comes into the life. The next chamber is purple, a blend of the red colour (intensity) and the blue (life), it can probably mean the beginnings of evolution. The following colour is green which recommends freshness and youth, then the orange room which may refer to the summer and harvest time of life. White is the next colour, which may probably indicate the white hair. Violet, the blend of purple and grey (gloomy colours) can denote darkness and obscurity. And the black apartment, clearly, is announcing death.

In similar fashion, Roger Corman depicted the seven rooms; he maintains the order of the chambers in terms of colours. Besides, this order is translated to the screen when the Red Death strolls from the blue chamber to the black chamber, it strolls the course of life, driving from birth to death. The Prince Prospero walks behind that path when he pursuits the Red Death: he keeps running from the blue apartment to the black one, where he passed away (see 00:55:55-00:56:36).

2.6 Synthesis

“The Masque of the Red Death” adaptation directed by Roger Corman in 1964 is reckoned by a plethora of many critics as a masterpiece and a reference when it comes to

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analyse and further scrutinize the short story. He perfectly shows us that there can be such fragile beauty and purity located in darkness and sorrow which are at the central point of Gothic Romanticism. And as the viewer goes through the film he/she feels the solitude of suffering, due to the way darkness haunts this lonely kingdom (intense and terrible). Words become powerless to express their pain what others hear from their acting is so distant and different from reality.

At the focal point of the movie’s success is the choice of Vincent Price as the hero. His voice only makes any film he acts in, valuable. For instance, in the scene where he says to Francesca “I will take you by hand and lead you through the cruel light into the velvet darkness” (00:26:33 -00:26:39). Significantly, he contributed to the success of the film, thanks to his long experience in the field of horror movies. He brings charisma to his terrifying movies with his piercing voice and charming accent. No one can play vile arrogance as Vincent Price did; he is at his best performance in this movie, increasing a strong movie role with an unusual demeanour of depression that refers to the Prince Prospero’s hidden profundities.

Furthermore, the film is very stylish due to the decoration, the cloths and architecture. Roger Corman depicted the seven rooms in an attractive and beautiful way. He gave the gothic aspect a much more prominent sense in so many different levels. The events of the story were converted to striking and graphic scenes that conveyed the gothic mood of the story more explicitly.

“The Masque of the Red Death” 1964 is a matter of interest for everyone who looks for horrific movies. This film draws on two outstanding stories written by Poe, Roger Corman built up a terrible atmosphere from the primary moments and the strain keeps

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going throughout the entire movie. He probably makes the movie among the top horror movies which are adapted onto screen.

2.7 Conclusion

“The Masque of the Red Death” includes many gothic aspects regarding gloomy events, darkness, death and fear that gave an attractive gothic mood. This chapter tackled the examination of the gothic atmosphere from the short story and the movie followed by a comparison between the adaptation and the short story in order to spotlight the main similarities and differences to know what was kept and added in the movie. The last part of this chapter dealt with a self-evaluation about the movie for the purpose to show how Roger Corman shoots the film in a creative way.

Roger Corman has a special style and a creative imagination and that what has been shown in creating such gothic mood and of course behind the use of scary scenes. Those aspects helped Roger in creating a fictional world which still attracts many scholars and viewers.

General conclusion

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The Target behind this dissertation was to shed light on the link between “The Masque of the Red Death” short story and its film adaptation, focusing on the gothic aspects that were behind the film’s adaptation success.

Literature has a close relation with cinema; through transforming the written text into screen. The creative reciprocity between literature and cinema started in the nineteenth century. Besides, movies were most linked with photography (camera).

Producers were thrilled by the idea of adapting gothic texts that many of them worked on the genre that it almost became a fashion. They were attracted to the gothic with its spooky settings and horror motifs. Furthermore, this genre permits the moviemakers to hold a mirror up to their age and it reveals the real life. The thing about gothic adapted to the silver screen is the idea that gives room for imagination to be used to the utmost, to try to recreate the gloomy and enthralling mood in their movies.

As we have seen in the first chapter, literature and cinema shared many similarities concerning entertainment, words replicating life and so one. On the other hand, the two arts differ in some aspects including the availability of some techniques in the film that vanish in literature such as movements, actions, sounds and space...etc.

In the second chapter focused on the analytical approach; it seems that the producer, to a certain extent, was faithful to the literary work in the way he kept some of the gothic characteristics included in the story. However, in order to make the movie much better, he establishes a new gothic atmosphere by using imagination, supernatural events in addition to the gloomy and dark environment. Moreover, we should not forget the significant role done by the photographer in making the film

General Conclusion

scary and beautiful at the same time. He skillfully succeeds in shooting the actors of the movie. Indeed, through his marvelous photograph, the spectators are becoming familiar with the characters' role.

After a deep investigation, it is possible to conclude that the story was a creative reflection by Corman where he used his imagination, and believes in visualizing an image and makes it vivid in the viewer's mind. He symbolizes faith and terror throughout scenes which represent the dark atmosphere of the story.

What makes the movie interesting is the wisdom behind which should be observed and discovered. The beauty of "the Masque of the Red Death" relies on the remarkable use of imagination that the producer wants the reader to conceive. The story rotates around having faith; be it confidence in God or the Devil. "The Masque of the Red Death" proclaims that each man makes his own particular end, and the way that it is exhibited on screen is sublime.

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