



Universidad de Chile
Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades
Departamento de Lingüística

Informe final de Seminario de Grado para optar al grado de Licenciado en Lengua
y Literatura Inglesas

The pariah in Edgar Allan Poe's stories: a new perspective of the modern city

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Santiago-Chile

Año 2013

Agradecimientos

Quiero agradecer a todos quienes han sido partícipes de este proceso, a quienes partieron junto a mí y a quienes se unieron en el camino. Agradecer a mi familia, sobre todo a mis padres y hermanos por apoyarme desde el comienzo de esta aventura, por enseñarme a no bajar los brazos y por entregarme siempre la fuerza que necesité para seguir. Quiero agradecer a mis amigos, compañeros y profesores, gracias a sus historias, opiniones y sabiduría he aprendido a ver el mundo desde diferentes perspectivas. Agradezco el apoyo de todos quienes siempre han estado, a los que estuvieron y los que hoy están; son innumerables las personas que han aportado en la construcción del ser humano que soy el día de hoy. Finalmente, agradezco a mi profesor guía, Andrés Ferrada, por su comprensión, paciencia y sobre todo compromiso con quienes fuimos sus alumnos de seminario.

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I. Introduction

During the year in seminar we have been discussing the modern and postmodern city presented in literature. Amongst many things, we have discovered that the main character in the urban landscape is the “anti-hero”, mainly subjects from middle-class and petit bourgeois. This anti-hero had the ability to make readers recognize themselves with this character that possessed human frailties, unlike the archetypes of the noble warrior as an example. The anti-hero was part of the urban landscape, present in every-day situations, wandering through the streets and observing the crowd in which he was absorbed. In this modern and postmodern literature we are no longer concerned with the noble or divine character, the quotidian acquires relevance and becomes exposed in literature through the ordinary man.

In this work I will study a particular urban subject present in every society, I will investigate the urban subject of the criminal illustrated in an Edgar Allan Poe’s selection of seven tales. In this case I have decided to rename the criminal as “pariah”. I use this term because I consider that it fits perfectly when defining a person that is “undesirable” and “rejected” by society. The choice of this term is also supported by David Reynolds’s work *Beneath the American Renaissance* in which he refers to the “asocial” subjects of the urban city as a “pariah”. I have lent this term because I consider that it is suitable to describe the subject being studied. It is also relevant to add that Charles Baudelaire refers to Poe as a “—drunkard pauper, oppressed pariah” (58). The use of the term pariah to refer to Edgar Allan Poe’s protagonists is just a coincidence with Baudelaire’s use of the term.

This pariah that we see in Poe’s tales is isolated from the community, we observe this figure encapsulated in his own thoughts, he is not active and has no personal relations to other human beings. There is a case in the stories that were studied in which the outlaw does not fit with the term “pariah”, I refer to the character presented in “The Purloined Letter” where the man who breaks the law is immerse in society and active part of it, he is a minister. We are not going to call him “pariah” but “thief” instead. The inclusion of the lawbreaker that belongs to the upper class of society, illustrates how Edgar Allan Poe wanted to expose all the corrupted characters in the city, that is to say, different perspectives of the asocial character from dissimilar social classes.

We can talk about the pariah as the typical “lawless” and “antisocial” character present in every community. Most of the times these pariahs act in a clever way, they find the

circumstances in which their acts will result in their favor. We will see how the egocentrism of the miscreants will end up in their destruction; an important factor is the first-person narrator that constructs a certain complicity between the protagonist and the reader. What we feel when reading Poe's stories, is that we are being witness of a confession. Poe presents his asocial characters in an aura of mystery, we are not only gazing the pariah's environment, we are also guests in their troubled minds.

In Poe's tales it is possible to spot how the author includes the character of the pariah in literature, how he presents the struggle in the inner state of mind of each character; furthermore we see the way in which the city reflects the thoughts and intentions of the asocial individuals, by means of projecting the inner state of the subjects in the dark landscapes in which they dwell. We see the character that Poe presents similar to Walter Benjamin's flâneur. Pariahs are described as silent night walkers in the middle of the crowd, comparable to the nature of the flâneur that prowls the streets for pleasure. It is necessary to mention how narrators in the stories blame the isolation, anger and unfavorable circumstances as the responsible for the criminal behavior of these characters. To Poe the "perverseness" was present in every human heart, and when the circumstances were suited, the characters could no longer hold the demons inside them. We see this situation in the irrational act of certain individuals, when they confess that they were breaking the law just because for the amusement of knowing that they were doing something wrong.

Edgar Allan Poe saw in the character of the lawbreaker, human impulses worth of representation and exhibition, just in the moment when society was mostly mechanical and lacked humanity. The pariah only wants to satisfy his own necessities. Acting by natural impulses they commit acts of criminality, this impulsiveness that these rejected persons showed, was a feeling repressed by the mass of lower class people. They saw in this character a representation of their anger, as a consequence, they accepted the inclusion of this figure in literature and receive him as one of them.

The first of these subjects that we dealt with in the seminar, was the character of Moll Flanders, which was a moral criminal. The next suspicious character that we dealt with was the one presented in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd". In this short story the narrator follows an extravagant subject on the street, through the description of the narrator we find

ourselves in the middle of the modern metropolis. This was our first encounter with the city and the pariah. The narrator follows this mysterious man and wonders numerous questions about his life, leaving in our minds traces of detective's stories and the mysterious urban subject that will be exposed in this research. What Poe first exposes in this story is the idea of secrecy presented in every human heart. We may live and share innumerable situations with these characters, we see them but we have no idea about their secrets... "There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told" (Poe 229).

It is relevant to study this asocial subject because it emerges from a mechanic and broken society and at the same time has a bad impact on it. The pariah is not only not working and living by the rules of the community, he also possesses the human traits and impulses that modern society lacks. One of the reasons this subject emerges in literature was the sympathy that these lawless characters generated in the masses, mainly because some characters were able to picture emotions and frustrations that the crowd may have felt. From the artistic point of view, Poe was presenting the character of the miscreant, for the first time, to the higher social classes. It was, certainly, something new for the elite to explore. This new figure reveals to them the internal and external world of someone that they might have never known, despite of the fact that these criminal characters dwelled in the same society that they did. Noble classes found themselves walking through outlying places of their own city, guided by the eyes of the asocial and supported by the powerful words of Poe.

I pretend to study the decision made by Edgar Allan Poe to include this pariah urban subject in his narratives, in particular the birth of this figure as a consequence of the fragmented and mechanical society, the circumstances, the anger and hate that generated in these persons the necessity of following their impulses and commit crimes. The mystery that Poe included in his character's inner state of mind, the anonymity and individuality characteristic in big cities that gave shelter to this asocial person as well. This urban subject will be studied based in some of Edgar Allan Poe's short tales in which the character of the pariah is introduced. In the big cities of the modernity, streets are crowded and the quotidian takes place in literature hand by hand with the character of the anti-hero. Poe saw in the crowd the miscreant as the perfect representation of the decaying hero.

Benjamin states in “Paris-Capital of the Nineteenth Century” when he refers to the criminals presented in Edgar Allan Poe’s tales that: “The criminals of the first detective novels were neither gentlemen nor apaches, but middle-class private citizen” (84) . And this is reflected in most of his characters, we have for example a Minister in “The Purloined letter” , a working-class man in “The black cat”, a servant in “The Tell-tale heart” and so on.

In order to provide evidence to my hypothesis, I will work with a selection of Edgar Allan Poe’s seven tales about subjects that recognize to have committed a felony. In these stories we are witness of each character’s struggle and how they seek for asylum in the crowd. The primary sources will be: “Berenice” (1835), “The man of the crowd” (1840), “The black cat” (1843), “The tell-tale heart” (1843), “The purloined letter” (1845) , “The cask of Amontillado” (1846), and “The imp of the perverse” (1850).

All these tales illustrate the pariah presented in urban landscapes, at their homes as well as in crowded cities . In the tales selected we find characters that have isolated themselves from the community, we also find individuals that never show a specific place in which they live, they are always marauding in the town. These tales full of mystery are accompanied by dark urban landscapes in an attempt to reflect the period of modernity, poverty and overcrowding are described as the main features of the metropolis. Among all the short stories that Edgar Allan Poe wrote, the ones that describe the best those dark desires and inner thoughts of each character were chosen. These stories narrate –mostly- in first person, each of the protagonist’s lawless conduct and savage acts, trying to justify their behavior by blaming their conduct on their lonely childhood, on the alcohol or in the demons and “perverseness” that are presented in each human soul. Readers can clearly picture themselves as part of the scene, as a detective or an observant. While reading we are making our own conclusions about the cases, trying to figure out the manner in which the landscape has affected the urban subject and how, at the same time, the inner state of mind of the pariah is reflected in the urban scenery (for example, as in the case of the short story “The fall of the house of Usher” where the house in ruins represents the mental decadence of the characters that dwelt on it).

To complete the analysis I will deconstruct using the theory by Jacques Derrida presented in *Of grammatology* and *Literary theory, an introduction* by Terry Eagleton. I will proceed the analysis of the urban subject of the pariah by establishing binary oppositions within the tales and

between them. *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses* by Terence Whalen, will be used to establish a relationship between the success that Poe's Tales had in the market and to state Poe's intention to describe the criminal from an artistic point of view. I will also use Harold Bloom's critical views on Edgar Allan Poe to find similarities between the tales that could help me to deconstruct the character of the pariah.

The objectives of the work will be to establish a relationship between the urban landscape, the loss of communion and the birth of the pariah subject in Poe's narrative, as a consequence of the social differences in big cities, the lack of humanity and the anger in lower social classes. The purpose of the work, will be to illustrate a new perspective of the modern city by the eyes of the asocial and marginal character of the pariah, presented in Edgar Allan Poe's fiction. I will deconstruct the urban subject of the miscreant that Edgar Allan Poe introduced in his tales, connecting the anger present in his characters to the modern society and the circumstances in which he is placed. I will also relate the criminal presented in Poe's short stories to a flâneur, because the author blurs the limits between flâneur and pariah. And finally, I will try to clarify Poe's decision to include these subjects in literature, his main reasons to make his works asylum of the lawless character from a literary point of view and the finality of the representation of the pariah.

II. Theoretical framework

In order to study the subject of the “pariah” that is presented in Edgar Allan Poe’s short tales, we should first study the crowded city in which this subject is presented.

First, we need to check the notion of “modernity”. What is modernity? Modernity is the historical period that took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the period was marked by the industrial revolution and the industrial societies, generating the brisk growth of population in cities. Esther Díaz indicates that modernism hoped to:

“El proyecto de la modernidad apostaba al progreso. Se creía que la ciencia avanzaba hacia la verdad, que el progreso se expandiría como forma de vida total y que la ética encontraría en la universalidad a partir de normas fundamentadas racionalmente. No obstante, las conmociones sociales y culturales de los últimos decenios parecen contradecir los ideales modernos. La modernidad, preñada de utopías, se dirigía hacia un mañana mejor. Nuestra época –desencantada- se embaraza de las utopías, reafirma el presente, rescata fragmentos del pasado y no se hace demasiadas ilusiones respecto al futuro” (20).

The concept of modernity defined by Díaz presents the modernity as the importance of growth, future and technology. Through Poe’s stories we see the importance of production and wealth reflected in the relations that humans had with one another; Poe without being too explicit contributes to the creation of a picture of the modern city based in progress, by narrating the lack of humanity, the crimes that occurred in the city and the addition of the pariah to literature.

I will work with Edgar Allan Poe, an author that was from the modern period. We will notice in the analysis of the short tales, that there are several features of the modern life that will be presented among the selection of tales; however to complete a deep investigation of the urban subject of the “pariah”, and how this subject connects with the urban landscape, I will use a deconstructive method, which is one of the theories for examination used mainly by post structuralism. I am completely aware of the use of a postmodern literary theory to fulfill an inspection to an author that was plainly modern.

Related to postmodernism I will only use the literary theory of deconstruction proposed in the period principally by Jacques Derrida. One of the ways in which deconstruction can be

described is as binary oppositions, this will be presented later during the development of the work itself.

The city presented in modern and postmodern literature shows crowded streets, which are symbolic of the period when the industrial revolution played an important role in the increase of wealth of countries as England and United States. This revolution caused the rapid growth of cities, the main reason was that industries needed labor. The importance of economy was reflected, among other things, in the way people relate to each other. Walter Benjamin mentions this situation when he describes the way in which people related to each other using economic terms: “ People knew one another as debtors and creditors, salesmen and customers, employers and employees, and above all as competitors” (39) . This idea is also very similar to the idea of the relations in the metropolis that Simmel exposes, in which he states that the relations in the big cities are concerned with money and economy:

“Money is concerned only with what is common to all, i.e. with the exchange value which reduces all quality and individuality to a purely quantitative level. All emotional relationships between persons rest on their individuality, whereas intellectual relationships deal with persons as with numbers, that is, as with elements which, themselves, are indifferent, but which are of interest only in so far as they offer something objectively perceivable” (Simmel).

This society focused in progress and wealth is excluding those unconventional subjects that lived following their impulses and human traits, subjects out of the schematic form of urban society. This is the point in which we can introduce the “pariah” as one of these impulsive characters that go against the rational and intellectual life in big cities. I propose the idea that because of the fragmentation of this society, we are able to find the pariah subject in Edgar Allan Poe’s narrative. We find the lawless urban subject almost encapsulated in his own world, this individual is egocentric and has isolated himself from the community; as a consequence of this isolation these urban subjects are individualized, sometimes present in the urban landscape as an ordinary flâneur, in many cases invisible to the eyes of others. I consider the anonymity and the overcrowded cities as a factor that helped to give shelter to the urban outlaws. These characters were not recognizable when they were sunk in the multitude.

We can associate this concept of a crowded city where the society was mostly interested in money, to some authors of the period that we studied at the beginning of our seminar, authors as Daniel Defoe, Charles Baudelaire and William Blake.

Literature then begins to illustrate all aspects of city life, this is the moment in which the ordinary appears in literature. As De Certeau enunciates:

“ Pero cuando la cultura elitista utiliza al locutor ‘vulgar’ como disfraz de un metalenguaje sobre sí misma, deja surgir igualmente lo que la despoja de su privilegio y la absorbe furiosamente: el Otro que ya no es Dios ni la Musa, sino lo anónimo. El extravío de la escritura fuera de su propio lugar está trazado por este hombre ordinario, metáfora y desviación de la duda que la atormenta verdadero fantasma de su ‘vanidad’, figura enigmática de la relación que mantiene con todo el mundo, con la pérdida de su exención y con su muerte” (6).

Is in this the stage where the anti-hero becomes protagonist of his own every-day life situations reflected in literature “El hombre sin atributos anunciaba esta erosión e irrisión de lo singular o de lo extraordinario” (De Certeau 5) .The big cities were crowded by the ordinary people because they were the labor and at the same time, they were the masses that contributed to the enrichment of cities. These subjects, immerse in a society full of strangers do not see themselves as part of the crowd, instead, they see themselves walking through populous streets but separated from the mob, no one considers himself as one of the masses. As Glen proposes it : “... the sense throughout is of an anonymous and freely observing stranger, rather than of a member of a society who sees himself as shaped by it and interacting with others within it.” (147). I believe that individuality in modern society was present in every human being, each person considered themselves as not part of the crowd, it was hard from them to consider the notion of being part of the work force. Although they consider themselves as individuals, they were part of a group, which gave them a sense of belonging.

Walter Benjamin also points out the indifference that existed in big cities between subjects, he refers to the way in which the interpersonal relations were based in observing; he supports this idea by exemplifying the use of public transportation: “Before the development of buses, railroads, and trams in the nineteenth century, people had never been in a position of having to

look at one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one another.” (38). The indifference presented in the metropolis increased the sense of mystery in big cities and crowded spaces.

We can think of a crowded street as a thoroughfare filled with wanderers as witness, each wanderer was playing an important role in the mob by observing different situations that could facilitate the recognition of some miscreant. We can relate the figure of the antihero with the pariah, both are subjects that can be found in the crowd, they represent human weakness, in the case of the pariah, we see humans that act more from his intellect than from emotion, they are totally unattached to other person's feelings, they represent the lack of humanity in the mob; the sane and at the same time insane character of the pariah contrasts with the heroes decided to do good. Under what circumstances the city brings up the figure of the “pariah”? In which places is common to find these urban subjects? How does the urban subject of the “pariah” affect the community in which he is immersed? In which way the urban landscape is related to the birth of these characters? Are these urban subjects the result of capitalism and lack of emotional characteristics in the metropolis? How did Edgar Allan Poe picture these subjects? Why did Edgar Allan Poe decide to explore these subjects? These questions can result from studying the subject, I propose that the “pariah” appears in Poe's tales to illustrate a condition of the modernism, a certain criticism to capitalism and culture

It is important to study this subject because he reveals against the mechanic society in which he cannot find a place. At the same time the society rejects him, he does not seem to fit, he does not work and he certainly breaks the rules of the community. One of the reasons this subject emerges in literature was the empathy that these lawless characters generated in the masses, some characters were able to picture emotions and frustration that the crowd may have felt. And from other point of view, the asocial character was presenting himself to the higher social classes for the first time. It was, certainly something new for the elite to explore the internal and external world of someone that they might have never known, despite the fact that these criminal characters dwelled in the same society that they did.

Simmel refers to the indifference in metropolis, but he uses the expression “blasé”, he says: “There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook. It is at first the consequence of those rapidly shifting stimulations of the nerves

which are thrown together in all their contrasts and from which it seems to us the intensification of metropolitan intellectuality seems to be derived” (14). We can think of a city where every citizen was considered a stranger, no perceptible emotions and no feelings of empathy towards one another. Mystery and secrets was all that the mob inspired to the eyes of the quiet observer; “The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest, becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space” (Benjamin 58). This indifference is fundamental in the pariah that Edgar Allan Poe included in his tales, in most of the cases; the criminal did not possess any regret or human attribute that could show ethics in them, they were cold, narcissistic and indifferent about the others but him, “the popularization of the cool criminal, the detached and manipulative murder...” (Reynolds 232).

If we think about individuality, we notice then that at this point community was broken, we cannot denominate this kind of relation based in anonymity as a “community”. The growth of population, the division of labor, the blasé attitude and each subject’s idea that they were not part of the mob contributed to the fragmentation of communities. A basic feature of modernism is this dissolution of the community based in the dominance of intellectual life in comparison to small towns where emotional relations were fundamental, Simmel explains this idea saying : “... the essentially intellectualistic character of the mental life of the metropolis becomes intelligible as over against that of the small town which rests more on feelings and emotional relationships” (12). The rational mind of the metropolis is illustrated in the rational way in which the pariahs acted when committing their crimes; they demonstrate brilliance of mind and no attachment to emotions when killing their victims. We cannot see traces of pity and regret until the felony is done, when the asocial character is reaching the point in which the fear of getting discovered is present they show regret and guilt, these feelings are the ones that finally betray them.

Nancy refers to the fragmentation of society as a “testimony” of modern world : “The gravest and most painful testimony of the modern world, the one that possibly involves all other testimonies to which this epoch must answer (by virtue of some unknown decree or necessity, for we bear witness also to the exhaustion of thinking through History), is the testimony of the dissolution, the dislocation, or the conflagration of community” (1).

Most of the relations to one another in big cities are related to economy and mercantilism; we can say that in this fragmented community based in market, intellectual relations are

predominant; the loss of emotionality is reflected in the lack of interest to know about each other. As Simmel expresses in "Metropolis and mental life" when he compares the situation in big cities and in small towns. He refers to the notion that a subject in a big city is able to maintain intellectual relations with "persons with whom he is thrown into obligatory association" (12). While the emotional relations are reserved to a smaller circle in which "the inevitable knowledge of individual characteristics produces, with an equal inevitability, an emotional tone in conduct, a sphere which is beyond the mere objective weighting of tasks performed and payments made" (12). In the case of Poe's tales the relations are also hierarchical, the bourgeoisie and the proletarian, the servant and the master, the pariah and the victim, the pariah and the detective, and of course the outlaw and the police. The relations between them are based on the function that they carry out in the society, but never about emotional bounds.

We can say then, that every subject in big cities has two types of relations with others, one of them is the intellectual one related to work (which I think is what society and the mob sees), and the second one is the emotional relations that the subject maintains with his or her inner circle, relations in which the subject expresses feelings and emotions, this second type of relations is, of course, unknown by the mob. This can direct us to the mystery that inspires crowded streets, the intellectual role of subjects may be easy to understand, but as stated in *The Flâneur* "... every person, the best as well as the most wretched, carries around a secret which would make him hateful to all others if it became known" (38). For example, in the story "The Man of the Crowd" the author describes the mob according to what he sees and describes the functions of each person in society, he also mentions how it is impossible for him to describe certain characters that inspire him mystery. Then, it is not difficult to understand the origin of detective tales, we can picture ourselves wandering in the crowd doubting about each stranger's life. The relations that we find in Poe's tales are the relations between the pariah and the victim, and the pariah with the rest of the society. In most of the cases, pariahs and their victims had emotional relations, The woman from "Berenice" was murdered by her husband, in "The black cat" the pariah kills his loved pet and his wife, in "The Cask of Amontillado" Montresor kills his friend Fortunato, in "The Tell-Tale Heart" the pariah kills his employer. They all had good relations with their victims, and they also fulfill the role of employees or employer, in the case of "Berenice", "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Purloined letter" the outlaws are employers and we only know about this

relation because the narrators mentioned their servants, we do not see them having any significant interaction with them.

When the metropolis appeared to be constituted by masses and the city was struggling with modernism, differences and extravagances seemed to be the only way in which an individual could identify himself “The mutual reserve and indifference, and the intellectual conditions of life in large social units are never more sharply appreciated in their significance for the independence of the individual than in the dense crowds of the metropolis, because the bodily closeness and lack of space make intellectual distance really perceivable for the first time” (Simmel 16). Although Simmel pictures the crowd as a place full of individuals expressing freely their own differences, he also remarks the fact that “one never feels as lonely and as deserted as in this metropolitan crush of persons” (16) . The loneliness that accompanies urban subjects in the crowd is relevant in the analysis of my object of study, the crowd moves and function as a machine, but sometimes there are subject separated from this crowd, observers that appear to go in a different direction. It gave me the impression that these subjects “isolated” from the mob are in a way emotional subjects incapable of controlling their impulses. Simmel refers to this situation describing how intellectual mental life is “conductive to the exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign human traits and impulses which originally seek to determine the form of life from within instead of receiving it from the outside” (13). What comes to my mind with this description is the idea of an “adventurer”, someone who is brave enough to trespass the routine of every-day life by following his or her impulses for a while to complete the “dreamlike” status that Simmel talks about ... “The more ‘adventurous’ an adventure that is, the more fully it realizes its idea, the more ‘dreamlike’ it becomes in our memory” (Simmel).

Each adventurer cracks the routine according to personal interests and individuality. This concept of the adventurer it is relevant in the study that I will develop; I do not consider pariahs or asocial individuals as adventurers, but I relate the impulsiveness of their actions to the one that the adventurers possess.

From the idea of crowded cities we moved to the notion of a society based in capital in which the division of labor caused the fragmentation of communities; in this fragmentation we are able to notice the ordinary man in literature; these populated streets in which he was wandering shows us the notion of individuality that is presented by observing the mob,

indifferent subject with individual extravagances in order to be differentiated from the multitude. Is in this attempt to escape from routine in which we find the adventurer, in a way excluded from the society. And right here is where I introduce the subject of the criminal or “pariah”, a “victim” in a certain way of modernization and the fragmentation of the city, the asocial subject as the result of fragmentation.

There is something very important if we talk about Poe’s tales and a community. Many of Poe’s works were published in the papers of the period, which were called the “Penny press” that were cheap newspapers produced in the United States during the mid-19th Century. His publications had a great impact on the community, the stories about murders, crimes and mystery caught the attention of the masses and in a way, he took advantage of this situation by giving the community more of these fictional stories that assemble to metropolis’s everyday possible situations, increasing the morbidity of the crowd. Reynolds referring to the press states in one of his articles:

“Poe once wrote that the rise of the sensational penny newspaper in the early 1830s had an influence upon American life and letters that was ‘probably beyond all calculation’. He was right: it is impossible to measure precisely the effects of a journalistic revolution that had a lasting impact upon all aspects of America’s cultural life, including its major literature. The least that can be said is that the antebellum public was fed an increasingly spicy diet of horror, gore, and perversity in both the penny papers and in the closely allied genres of trial pamphlets and criminal biographies” (171).

This means that the inclusion of the character of the pariah in Poe’s narrative not only increased the amount of readers, it also helped to the emergence of a new style of narrative based in the mystery that cities inspired. Mass readers were interested in the penny press because they saw something familiar in the urban landscapes where this stories of crimes were placed. With Poe’s stories published in the newspapers, a revolution based on information and fiction began.

III. Analysis

1. The birth of the pariah in the context of a modern city.

Most of Edgar Allan Poe's short tales are placed in the context of a modern city; this modern city is the refuge of an immense diversity of human characters going thru and fro in the crowded streets of the populated metropolis. The reason of the enormous amount of people living in cities was basically the need of industrial production, which resulted in migration from countryside to the big cities in order to look for a better way of life. This moment was ideal for literature to explore cities.

First, to analyze and understand the city we need to establish the relations of hierarchy in which the society is based. The first opposition that we need to take into account is the relation between bourgeoisie and the proletarian, in the selection of the seven tales that I chose, I have found that four of these stories present the character of the "pariah" as a member of the work force, while in the three other cases one of the outlaws is a respectable member of society (a Minister in "The purloined letter") and the other two are ordinary men from the petit bourgeoisie ("The Cask of Amontillado" and "Berenice"). It is important to mention the differences between both social classes in literature and the distinction that authors made in literature referring to both social groups.

In Poe's tales, we are able to note both social classes presented in his literature by detailed description of objects and places; In "Berenice" the narrator describes the luxury in which he has been surrounded since he was a child, he described with details the possession of objects that would place him in a higher position in society : "Our line has been called a race of visionaries and in many striking particulars – in the character of the family mansion—in the frescos of the chief saloon—in the tapestries of the dormitory--..." (Poe 97). The luxury in which the central character of the tale "Berenice" is in possession, contrasts with the vision of poverty that is presented by the narrator in "The Man of the Crowd": " It was the most noisome quarter of London, where everything wore the worst impress of the most deplorable poverty, and of the most desperate crime" (236). In the case of "The Tell-Tale Heart" the pariah is a servant in the old man's house, he does not possess big capital and he is part of the proletariat.

Poe was aware of the kind of public that used to read his publications, he distinguished between elite and common readers¹; this opposition between both types of audience made him include both social classes into his tales in order to satisfy these types of consumers, as Poe himself states in “The philosophy of composition” : “ ...the necessity ...of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste” (743).

If we think of a city composed by two (or even more) social classes then the idea of a community is lost. Human beings are now described as labor “... human beings defined as producers (one might even add: human beings defined at all), and fundamentally as the producers of their own essence in the form of their labor or their work” (Nancy 2). This dissolution of the community as a result of a society based in economy and wealth gives us the idea that these two concepts are complementary; they are opposite but one needs the other. Without the dissolution of community, we are not able to understand the division between social classes, hence, we will not find the different urban subjects present in the cities and between these subjects we will not find the pariahs which Edgar Allan Poe decided to include in his tales. We would not find the figure of the pariah if there is no oppression against him by the yoke of capitalism. The pariah in “The Tell-Tale Heart” would not have killed the old man if he would not have been under this man’s orders, this asocial was a servant, lower than the old man in the social scale, there was a relation based on work and in hierarchy. These elements (bourgeoisie and proletariat) are complementary in society in the same way in which the evil and good are opposite but complementary in Poe’s tales. We find in his stories the relation that pariahs establish when referring to the crimes that they have committed. They talk about how good is imposed and how evil and perverseness inside them fight against the moral promulgated. Pariahs explain how they feel the desire of doing wrong for the wrong’s sake, they make us think about how the perverseness is generated as an opposition by what is imposed by society. In this case we do not know if the “good behavior” imposed by society causes the “bad behavior” of the pariahs, or if it is the perverseness of the human heart that made society introduce the moral and good behavior.

When we talk about a community that has been broken and that is divided into segments, in which the differentiation is mostly by means of each person’s income, we can also mention the

¹ Terence Whalen in *‘Edgar Allan Poe and the masses. The political economy of literature in Antebellum America’* refers to the low class readers as ‘common readers’, making the distinction between them and the elite readers.

importance of the individuality. Individuality and the disintegration of community to Nancy is the destiny of the modern world, he states that each men separated from community cannot be complete and “sooner or later it would shatter to pieces” (5).

The notion of a man broken in his own loneliness and individuality that Nancy exposes as a consequence of the fragmentation, can be appreciated with certain clarity in Poe’s tales; his criminal characters are individualistic and solitary, we barely see them sharing with others, they are mostly isolated from the productive community and from others; in “Berenice” the murder has “...loitered away my boyhood in books, and dissipated my youth in reverie...”(98) . The pariah from “The Black Cat” mentions his lonely walks through the city, always alone; the man from “The Imp of the Perverse” walks alone immerse in the mass wondering about the murder that he has committed, never talking to anyone; the servant in “The Tell-Tale Heart” is in the companion of the old man but still alone corrupted by his own thoughts; the strange man in “The Man of the Crowd” is the perfect example of isolation, he is always following people but without interaction, immerse in the crowd but still invisible to others; the murder from “The Cask of Amontillado” has a relationship with his friend “Fortunato” but it seems that this criminal has spent many time thinking of revenge and has isolated himself from the rest of the people; in the case of “The Purloined letter” the outlaw who has stolen a document is not as lonely and isolated as the rest of the subjects studied, indeed he is active part of the society, this character demonstrates the opposition that Poe made between a criminal from the elite and one from a lower class, as well as the distinction between those criminals totally isolated from society (as murders) and the ones that are immerse on it (as a corrupt politician).

Mostly, these characters go against the rhythm of production established by the society, they are a contrast between production and individuality, they are alone although they are part of the crowd that prowl the streets. We can assert then, that community is related to individuality and in this reign of production and technology, the concept which has more importance and value is the one of community over individuality, that is to say that human beings in groups will produce, meanwhile a human being isolated from the community will not be productive at all and consequently will become the pariah that the bourgeoisie rejects and that Poe noted worthy of artistic representation.

The loss of communion referred by Nancy has a gentle feeling of nostalgia that can be associated to Simmel's idea of the lack of emotion of the metropolis in comparison to the sentimental small towns (12). People living in big cities lacked the humanity existing in people living in small towns; the opposition between rational and emotional is remarkable in the metropolis. The society based in economy and money² isolates the irrational and sentimental beings that act mostly as a reaction of their own impulsiveness³. These irrational subjects exposed by Poe act according to "the impulses of the human heart" (Poe 194) represent the excluded individuals, the misfits that led by pure human nature.

However there is certain "inhumanity" in the pariah which led them to commit crimes, and this "inhumanity" is necessary to fit in the society. Isn't then contradictory to think that an industrialized society needs human beings capable of exclude their instinctive traits in order to produce, but at the same time these 'inhuman' subjects are excluded and punished? Here we face the opposition presented in the struggle of Poe's characters against the human impulses of committing a crime; when this impulses are not controlled and they give rise to felony, these pariahs are accused of being "inhuman". Society then wanted to erase human traits, but accuse of "inhuman" to those cold human beings that feel no empathy for their victims. This is what Eagleton describes as "It is a crisis of human relationships, and of the human personality, as well as a social convulsion" (131).

As we further continue the idea of a fragmented society, following Nancy's idea of what a community is, we can place Poe's pariahs as misfits in the modern society. According to Nancy "Community necessarily takes place in what Blanchot has called 'unworking', referring to that which, before of beyond the work, withdraws from the work, and which, no longer having to do either with production or with completion, encounters interruption, fragmentation, suspension." (31). Taking this statement into account, then in order to form a community it is necessary to create bounds with others from the work and 'beyond the work', how is it possible for the pariah to belong to a community if they are isolated and workless? In Poe's tales most of the pariahs spend a lot of time alone, struggling with the inner state of their minds and without significant

² This concept comes from Georg Simmel's 'The Metropolis and mental life' referring to the way in which people relate to each other in the metropolis.

³ The idea of the human that follow his impulses comes from Georg Simmel's 'The adventurer'.

relations to other human beings. Egaeus, the criminal from the tale “Berenice” never mentions his job or if he is part of the productive society, the same happens in “The Black Cat”, “The Cask of Amontillado”, “The Imp of the Perverse” and “The Man of the Crowd” while in “The purloined letter” and “The Tell-tale heart” one character performs ministerial works and the other is a servant respectively.

We can infer then, that the base of the community is the relation between the self and the other. But what happens when the relation between these are of indifference? In Poe’s tales the pariahs never felt empathy for their victims, neither did the society feel like they should help and understand these asocial subjects, we can see in the case of “The Tell-Tale Heart” the cold blood of the murderer when he kills the old man and he describes : “ I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done” (190). These links between subjects can also be between the bourgeoisie and the proletarian, in this case both are necessary to exist; these bounds are also reflected in the connection between the bourgeois and the pariah (when they both exclude each other and one is the product of the other), the association between the criminal and the victim (one becomes the victim by the effect of the pariah) and the bond between the criminal and the detective (the detective starts to investigate by observation and by the need to solve a crime that the pariah has caused).

The capitalistic society is totally opposed to criminal subjects, capitalism is based on work and production. To protestant communities, the workers that fabrics needed were the ones with protestant values, disciplined persons, punctual and adaptable to production. They expected to have workers interested in the accumulation of wealth for investment. This protestant idea of a subject suitable for production can be described as a family man, investor, self-disciplined and moving through two spaces, work and home, as a consequence, the protestant ethic rejected those workers who spent the day wasting their money in taverns. This conception of the perfect worker contrasts with Poe’s characters. The miscreants illustrated by Poe break the order imposed by the elite, they do not follow the rules imposed by society and tend to act by their own ideas and impulses, completely opposed to the mass and the labor that seem to react by a reflect-action instead of by their own means. The pariah appears as an opposition to the industrial society, but then we face the dilemma of which is the generator of the other. On the one hand, it seems that the urban subject of the pariah appeared as an opposition to the capitalistic society, a sort of revel

trying to live his life in a city where he is a misfit; on the other hand the capitalism was basically imposed by the elite, so if the origin of capitalism was the bourgeoisie and the capitalism gave birth to these misfits ... Is the pariah disturbing the normal function of life in the city or the changes in the city are the ones which most affect the pariah? Which is affecting the other? Which came first, the pariah or the capitalistic economy? I assert that the pariah appeared as a consequence of the capitalism, poverty, anxiety, anger, overcrowd and lack of humanity, this circumstances created the perfect environment for this subject to emerge. Isolated or immerse in the society, the subject of the pariah was unknown to the elites until Edgar Allan Poe decided to expose him in his tales.

The urban landscape in which we find our pariah is basically covered in asphalt, smoky streets and crowded places. Poe describes the urban landscape in which the pariahs are presented in a way in which the reader can feel the mystery of these dark and crowded places. In the case of the tale "Berenice" the narrator does not elucidate the city, but the place in which he has been living from years, he evokes with traces of dullness the walls in which he had committed the felony: "...my gloomy, gray, hereditary halls" (Poe 97) . In the other tales the relation of the criminal with the city is the one of almost necessity and recreation, and by this I refer to the notion that each criminal dedicated time to walk through the streets, as a way to calm down the inner state of mind that confused each character. The pariah from "The Black Cat" relates how he returned home intoxicated from his "haunts about town" (Poe 193). The same occurs with the narrator of "The Imp of the Perverse" who describes how he was "sauntering along the streets" (Poe 206) hiding "through the crowded thoroughfares" (207) trying to conceal the murder that he had committed by searching for shelter in the crowd. And "The Man of the Crowd" which represents one of the most delicate true pictures⁴ of modern cities; in this tale by the gaze of the narrator we are able to recognize the two faces of the urban landscape. On the one hand, luxury shops, coffees, theaters, hotels and crowded streets; while on the other hand we arrive to different places that have been hidden from the eyes of the elite, outlying places of London full of misery, poverty and crime; besides, the detailed description of the urban population allows us to have a notion of the diversity o human characters and their social strata.

⁴ I comment on the story "The Man of the Crowd" using the term that Charles Baudelaire applied to refer to the same tale in "The painter of Modern life".

American writers saw in the urban city, the perfect and dangerous place in which the asocial characters could appear, Reynolds states that: “The two most intriguing settings for the American writer were the frontier, with its wild landscape, often savage inhabitants and the city with its dark slums, horrid plagues, and criminal cases” (191). He refers to the city not only as a dangerous place, but also as an unpleasant place to observe.

The opposition presented in the pariah’s environment is noticeable, when Poe did not describe the city and public space in which his subject appeared; he was dedicated to describe their individual and personal spaces (that can be called home), in both cases the narrator presents a gloomy landscape that increases the mystery for the reader. Reynolds refers to “The Man of the Crowd” and the intentions that Poe had with this tale as : “The two-day journey through the gaslight streets, the slums, the saloon districts is like the popular writer’s plunge into the seamy urban underworld – except that Poe is interested not so much in dark cities “mysteries” as in how these outer mysteries reflect the even darker soul of the criminal” (234). Poe was interested not only in how the city was the indicated place to the pariahs to exist, but mostly in the way in which this fragmented city reflects the impulsiveness and inhumanity of the pariah.

The mystery that surrounds the city is also reflected in each person’s individuality. Benjamin mentions the idea of the secrets that each person carries through the public spaces, hundreds of anonymous sharing common places in the city and all of them hiding a secret that could leave traces on their faces but cannot be told, as Poe describes it “- It does not permit itself to be read” (229). This idea of being unknown to others is also a result of the fragmentation of the urban society, no one was able to recognize the criminals among the crowd because no one knew one another, this presents the idea of the crowd as the shelter of the pariah. The mob on the streets could be divided according to their strata, but if we talk about crowded streets, pariahs and criminals are not recognizable while they are immersed in the crowd. This is what caught Poe’s attention, I dare to say that he was intrigued by the mob and their faces, so he decided just as in the “Man of the Crowd” to follow and investigate subjects as a detective; he wanted to figure out this “culture of surfaces that can be read by detectives” (Whalen 18). The dangerous characteristic of the city, together with the concept of individuality and anonymity increase the mystery surrounding the masses; the inclusion of the character of the pariah seemed to have great future.

This literature not only described the types of human beings in the city and their functions in society, but also the mystery that crowded places inspired ... “Here the masses appeared the asylum that shields an asocial person from his persecutors. Of all the menacing aspects of the masses, this one became apparent at first. It is the origin of the detective story.” (Benjamin 40). Poe is to many the father of the detective stories; he succeeded in the addition of this new character in literature, the pariah and the citizen who is able to find the traces of an unsolved crime, the detective.

In most of the cases of Poe’s stories we follow the pariah through darkness, but when mentioning the dim atmosphere that surrounded this character, we are not only referring to the dusky streets at night that were the recurrent landscape to the asocial individual. We are also going along with the subject through the metaphorical dullness of his mind. This absence of light represents the protagonist’s intentions and how these evil deeds could lead him to destruction. We can relate the opposition between good and evil in Poe’s humans by the shadow and light present in their environments. The pariah is found mostly under gaslights, which means that the darkness is the perverseness present in each human, while the small amount of light that covers these individuals represents the moral that makes them struggle in their minds, the good and evil, perverseness and moral represented by light and shadow. This is why Poe decided to place the outlaws in sombre buildings, these elements are the symbolic representation of a haunted and diseased mind. The narrator in “The Man of the Crowd” mentions how the city becomes darker and the amount of people in the streets seems to increase “But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door” (229). Gaslight helped the emergence of the night walkers, giving the city a ghostly appearance, the lamps increased the feeling of security on the streets, for this reason many citizens decided to take walks in the middle of the night, this was the adequate moment in which any criminal could commit a felony, credulous prowlers walking by night alone without precautions were the perfect victims.

It seems that the population living in big cities had to adapt themselves to the new style of life based on production and leave their human nature behind. One of the consequences of this change was the feeling of indifference between humans crowded in the same places. To Baudelaire, the crowd represented the reality of an era, “the depths of the world” (61). The

modern city is a landscape in which survival was important, not all the citizens could survive to the struggle between the loss of community and the age of production. In the crowd we can find the hero hidden in the “sea of human heads” (Poe 229) (and by hero I refer to the urban subject that represented the common inhabitants and not elite) .

Poe was one of the first authors that decided to work with the misfit character or the pariah, Reynolds refers to the incorporation of this subject in American subversive literature as the necessity of authors to expose oppressed groups such as :

“Native Americans, maltreated throughout American history; the urban working class, increasingly poor and turbulent in a period of rapid industrialization; women, cut off from meaningful employment and political power; and criminals, often the product of unfavorable circumstances” (199).

The working class in its poverty and the rapid industrialization helped to create the “unfavorable” circumstances in which the pariah was born; it seems that to Poe, the anger and anxiety caused by those circumstances released the ‘perverseness’ and demons from the soul. This pariah is the one who Reynolds denominates “the justified or likeable criminal” (200), the subject that was born in the worst circumstances of the city and now sneaks around in the civilized life, becoming the center of attention for writers who transform him into the new subject of literature.

In other words we can state that the pariah presented in Poe is in a certain way the son of a broken society based in wealth, as Eagleton exposes it :

“ The callous disciplines of early industrial capitalism uproot communities convert human life into wage-slavery, enforce an alienating labor-process on the newly formed working class and understand nothing which cannot be transformed into a commodity on the open market” (17).

Human kind was seen as slaves of the industrial revolution where wealth and production were basic in society; the character of the pariah does not fit in the rapid growth of cities. Asocial characters find themselves as misfits in their own societies, political and

economic causes⁵ give rise to these urban subjects and Poe decided to illustrate them in his works. The strangeness of this figure can be traced to the economic causes that made him a misfit.

2. The pariah's inner state of mind

To analyze the figure of the pariah that Poe presents in his tales, we have to pay close attention to every single detail of the descriptions made by the narrator.

When reading Poe's tales we first face the dilemma of good and evil present in each of the characters. Most of the tales begin in a style that makes us think about a confession, the guilt present in the words pronounced by the pariahs lead us to the idea that, despite of the fact that these characters are mentally unstable, they are capable of recognizing their acts of criminality. Outlaws recognize the distinction between good and evil, what is moral and immoral, accepted and rejected in society. This distinction between good and evil is what produces in the pariah the feeling of regret, and is this emotion which produces a narration in a style of a confession.

In the tale "Berenice" the narrator begins the story describing what seems to be an internal struggle by the opposition of good and evil, he utters : " ... How is it that from beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness? --- From the covenant of peace, a simile of sorrow? But as, in ethics, evil is a consequence of good, so in fact, out of joy is sorrow born" (Poe 97).

What is outstanding about this fragment is that the pariah from the story "Berenice" tries to figure out his regret and guilty by making binary oppositions between wrong and right , as well as sorrow and happiness. He appears to be more thoughtful and unable to understand his acts than other of Poe's pariahs that were studied. For example in "The Black Cat" the narrator observes : " Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad I am not--- and very surely do I not dream" (Poe 192). The pariah provides us the notion that he acted in a way that deserves punishment and that might be considered as mad by his irrational acting. In "The Tell-Tale Heart" the narrator describes his guilt mixed with his nervousness, again relating his acts to madness and expecting penance. This clearly illustrates the unstable mind of the pariah and a perfect artistic way to introduce a confession:

⁵ The notion of the political and economic causes that shaped the character of the pariah was taken from Terence Whalen's '*Edgar Allan Poe and the masses. The political economy of literature in Antebellum America*'.

“ TRUE!—nervous--- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed--- not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! And observe how healthily--- how calmly I can tell you the whole story” (Poe 187).

Related to the conception of how pariahs act in irrational ways that might end up in punishment, we find in this case an individual who does not show regret or desires of punishment as in the other cases, in “The Cask of Amontillado” the narrator starts by giving the reasons of his acts, he does not show regret, he confess that he was acting by revenge when he says : “I must not only punish, but punish with impunity” (Poe 208).

When we talk about outlaws subjects and the circumstances which gave birth to them, we think about the background of the characters, which is mostly related to the way in which these rejects interact with the city. We find different circumstances in which these characters were raised, but it is a common factor to find a description of loneliness and demonic impulses present in the characters. The miscreant from “Berenice” speaks of a lonely childhood and boyhood, he refers to how he spent the days reading and meditating. The main character of “The Black Cat” refers to the “tenderness of heart” (Poe 192) as one of his qualities since he was an infant, and later he describes that the crime that he committed was forced by “the spirit of PERVERSENESS” (Poe 194), in this case we have the opposition between good and evil and at the same time the binary opposition is made to illustrate the childhood and adulthood of the character, his tenderness was displaced by the spirit of evil that possessed him.

The lawbreaker in Poe’s short stories dwells in two different spaces, the personal space and the city. In the case of “Berenice” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” the individuals are encapsulated in their own personal spaces (Egaeus’s house and the old man’s house respectively), we do not see them having interaction with others, not even going outside; they are totally consumed by their thoughts and their world is reduced to the walls in which they are confined. We also see characters moving through the two spaces, the city and their houses; as in the case of “The Black Cat” where the pariah used to walk around the city in what seems an attempt to clarify his confused mind : “... among the vile haunts which I now habitually frequented...” (196) we also

find him in a den, the place in which he found the second black cat. In “The Imp of the Perverse” the transgressor exposes how he saunters along the streets trying to find an escape to his afflicted mind. He walks and runs through the crowd trying to keep his mind clear and his secret safe. “The Cask of Amontillado” presents the opposition between the pariah and the society with the notion of a carnival. While Montresor (the asocial character of the story) is planning his revenge, the whole village is celebrating a festival and the pariah in this case finds himself in the middle of the festivity but immersed in his desires of revenge. Besides, the change of environment that we as readers perceive while reading this story, makes us understand the contrast between the city and the miscreant’s mind. In this case we move from the festivity of a carnival to a dark and silent crypt. And in “The Purloined Letter” the thief moves around the city and he fills out his personal deeds as a public character. In other of Poe’s tale we witness the pariah that is present only in the city, we do not know the personal space of the character of “The Man of The Crowd” he is a complete mystery and we only see him marauding the crowd, he belongs to open spaces full of people, as the narrator of the tale pronounces: “He refuses to be alone. *He is the man of the crowd*” (Poe 237).

We observe in Poe’s felons a movement into the self; these isolated characters have no contact with others, they have no jobs and in some cases they do not have a family. The only subjects that I studied whom have a wife are the pariahs from the stories “The Black Cat” and “Berenice”, both of them end up murdering their wives. In the movement into the inner state of mind of these pariahs, we find a mixture between the psychological and physical space of these individuals. These characters are always surrounded by blackness (taking into account the obscure urban landscapes and the wicked confused minds of the characters), Poe creates gloomy spaces in which these persons reside not only to increase the mystery in the reader, but also to demonstrate how far the demons of what he calls “perverseness” can spoil the human soul. The sickness of the subjects is then trespassing the world in which they dwell. In the cases where the pariah is not present in his own spaciousness, they seek the darkness provided by the streets at night; as in the case of the men presented in “The Imp of the perverse” and “The Man of the Crowd”. These characters do not present his intimacy, but they seek the crowds at night, they are found in obscure places where the landscape matches their inner thoughts.

Why do pariahs commit acts of criminality? We can associate these acts as an attempt to escape from the anger produced by the circumstances in which these characters are absorbed, the rapid growth of cities, the economic conditions and monotony of the metropolis put urban subjects under pressure and when they cannot handle it, they fail. Just as an adventurer⁶ they want to break out from convention; pariahs are mostly bored or obsessed, and these acts of criminality release a certain feelings of freedom. In the stories “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “Berenice” both subjects are obsessed with the victim’s body parts. The man from “Berenice” recognizes suffering from monomania; he talks about his obsession referring to the inner state of his mind, he declares : “ ... feelings with me, *had never been* of the heart, and my passions always were from the mind.” (Poe 101). He had a state of mind obsessed with the contemplation and meditation, when Berenice appears to him “not as the living and breathing Berenice, but as the Berenice of a dream; not as being of the earth, earthy, but as the abstraction of such a being; not as a thing to admire, but no analyze...” (101). His obsession falls into the subject of a beautiful woman dying, exposing Poe’s notion that the most poetical topic in the world is the death of beauty, specifically the death of a beautiful woman⁷. When he sees this figure of the phantasmal woman he decides to marry her. He describes the obsession that he had with Berenice’s teeth by clarifying: “... the teeth of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. Would to God that had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!” (102). He states how his obsession became mortal and how he regrets of reaching the point of murder.

The subject from “The Black Cat” is obsessed with animals; what was at first a passion, became his destruction. His favorite pet was the black cat named “Pluto”, the relationship between animal and master was the one of loyalty and love, but it suddenly changed to fear and anger. The man was obsessed with the caresses of the cat, he started to feel hate and the situation lost control ending up in the cruelty of murder of the animal. While in “The Cask of Amontillado” the individual was obsessed with revenge, he wanted to punish his friend Fortunato so eagerly that he never cared about the festivity in his city. “The Imp of the Perverse” reflects the obsession of the man with murder itself : “For weeks, for months, I pondered upon the means of the murder”(Poe 206). “The Man of the Crowd” gives us the impression of the pariah being dominated by the desire of being close to people and to the crowd. Finally in “The Purloined

⁶ Concept taken from Georg Simmel in ‘The adventurer’ .

⁷ Poe’s concept of beauty is illustrated in his work ‘The philosophy of composition’.

Letter” the thief does not appear to be obsessed by his acts of criminality, instead, he proceeded by a rational way always taking care of his interests, in this tale the brilliance of the detective Dupin is central.

When reading the horror stories of Poe we notice how pariahs consider themselves superior to the rest of the people, making the distinction between the self and the rest based on their intelligence, their arrogance and selfishness is evident in the tales. In “The Tell-Tale Heart” the subject demonstrates his egocentric personality : “You should have seen how wisely I proceeded!—with what caution--- with what foresight- with what dissimulation I went to work!” (Poe 187). In “The Imp of the Perverse” the same arrogant characteristic is found: “I had left no shadow of a clue by which it would be possible to convict, or even to suspect me of the crime. It is inconceivable how rich a sentiment of satisfaction arose in my bosom as I reflected upon my absolute security” (Poe 206). None of the pariahs thought that they could ever get discovered, they were confident enough to think that the police would not find them.

We find in Poe’s characters the opposition between reality and mind, the arrogance, anger, anxiety and obsession construct in the pariahs the profile of a dreamer; sunken in their thoughts, demons, and “perverseness” . They are not part of the active society and they encapsulate themselves in their own reality. In their obsessions they do not have notions of time and space; to them, reality is what happens in their minds, they are in a way unconscious of the real world. In the narrations it seems to be a struggle between the inner state of mind of the pariahs and reality.

Regarding this aspect, we can determine that pariahs are consumed by the desires of committing a felony; but there is always something that brings them back to reality and breaks the status of meditation in which they are consumed. In the case of “Berenice” there is a cry, “At length there broke upon my dreams a cry of horror and dismay; and thereunto, after a pause, succeeded the sound of troubled voices intermingled with many low moanings of sorrow or of pain” (Poe 103). In “The Cask of Amontillado” the sound of the chains by which Fortunato was seized and the jingle of the bells of his dress, disturb the thoughts of Montresor. The subject from “The Imp of the Perverse” is interrupted from his security after committing the crime, by the sound of his voice murmuring “I am safe” , this is enough to make the subject confess the misdeed. The pariah present in “The Tell-Tale Heart” observes every night at midnight his victim. The old man sleeps in his bed while he watches him cautiously, the element that interfere

in his monotonous observation is the sound of a clock “... night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall” (Poe 188) . The din of the clock is what finally drives him crazy. The sound of the clock represents the sound of the heartbeat of the old man “...there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man’s heart” (Poe 189). The clock strikes and breaks the mental state of the pariah, giving him a slight notion of reality “When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o’clock--... ”(190) . These elements, along with break upon the dreamlike state of the pariahs, make readers think of a narration not totally fictional by adding these ordinary elements of real life to the stories, as Gilfillan states to Poe’s fiction related to reality: “He tells fiction so minutely. And with such apparent simplicity and sincerity, that you almost believe it true; and he so combines and so recounts such incidents as you meet with every day in the newspaper, that you feel truth to be stranger than fiction” (61).

The egocentric quality of the pariah ends up in some kind of self-destruction. The arrogance of these characters makes them feel the necessity to confess their crimes, they would never be considered a genius if their crimes would not have been discovered. The subjects carry themselves to the devastation, the damage that they have done to the other results in a tremendous guilt that they cannot bear, and it does not matter for how long they hide their crimes, we always find a form of regret that finally betrays them. In “The Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” both miscreants thought that they could hide the crime from the police; indeed the police was fooled by the serene expression of each man, the murders had the courage to lead the officers to the crime scene, they even brag about how normal the situation was at home. The outlaw subject from “The Black Cat” accompanies the police to the cellar in which he has walled up the corpse of his wife :

“At length, for the third or fourth time, they descend into the cellar. I quivered not in a muscle. My heart beat calmly as that of one who slumbers in innocence. I walked the cellar from end to end. I folded my arms upon my bosom, and roamed easily to and fro. The police were thoroughly satisfied and prepared to depart. The glee at my heart was too strong to be restrained” (200).

The man from “The Tell-Tale Heart” is confident enough of his superiority that fools the police, in fact they sit and chat in the scene of the crime :

“ I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim” (190).

What ruins the perfect crime and the egocentric attitude of the individuals? When these lawless persons had committed their crimes, they are absorbed in their own thoughts of victory, silently they rejoice for what they have just done, but suddenly there appears something that cracks his serenity and brings them back to reality, their thoughts are dispersed and then the auto-destruction begins. The factors that denote the collapse of the pariah are sounds. In “Berenice” the sound comes from the door that one of the servants opens to enter the room, this sound disturbs the pariah of his dreamlike state; but what finally destroys the pariah and puts in evidence the cruelty of his acts, is the sound of the breathing body of Berenice “...yet still breathing--- still palpitating--- *still alive!*” (104). In “The Black Cat” it is the cry of the cat that makes the pariah collapse : “... answered by a voice from within the tomb!--- by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud and continuous scream...” (200) . In “The Cask of Amontillado” the final jingling of the bells makes the character doubtful “There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick--..” (214). As I said before in “The Imp of the Perverse” the pariah talks about how he was haunted by his own thoughts, relating the situation of having a song in mind with the constant repetition “in a low undertone, the phrase, “I am safe” (207) . In “The Tell-Tale Heart” is the sound of the heartbeat “ It grew louder--- louder--- louder!” (189). Sounds are what disturb the pariahs and their peace, their victory is replaced by defeat produced by their own thoughts, hallucinations and ego, after hearing the sounds and breaking their status and bringing them back to reality, the pariah collapses into auto-destruction. We can relate these sounds to the inner state of mind of the protagonists, specifically to their consciousness. When each of them committed their crimes we observe by the description of the narrator traces of madness in the constant stream of thoughts of the characters, we see how the madness is present and contributes to the disintegration of the personality of the pariah. From the moment in which the deed was done, they began to wander, to fear, they start to think of all the possible cases in which they may be discovered, it is his consciousness constantly talking to them and making them paranoid about

the world around them. What finally happens is that the constant fluid of thoughts along with their blasting minds collapse by the sound produced in the real world, sound that brings them back to reality and shows how all the struggle of their inner voices is increased by a simple sound of reality. This is the moment in which the inner voice that fights against the guilt and moral, finds its way out and reveals the crime, induced by a sound in reality.

The self-destruction and the self-preservation are closely related in the cases of Poe's pariahs. On the one hand they committed the acts by following their human, natural impulses, what can be called an act of survival or preservation; as for example in the tale "Berenice" when the man talks about how the possession of Berenice's teeth would give him the peace that he needs: "I felt that their possession could alone ever restore me to my peace, in giving me back to reason" (103).

The rapid changes in society have been stepping aside human impulses, in order to fit to the new changes pariahs acted irrationally following their instincts. On the other hand these acts of criminality that occurred as an act of self-preservation culminated in the self-destruction of the pariah, but if we put in mind the act of murdering and the scene of the crime, we find that hiding the evidence and cleaning with special detail the location is an act of self-preservation in itself because what the pariah does is postpone the oncoming self-destruction, caused by his acts.

In this context we find the binary opposition of victory versus defeat. It is common to find in Poe's pariahs the notion of self-destruction produced by the super ego. In Poe's tales we witness the victorious moment in which the pariah finds himself at the peak of his brilliance, as the moment in which he is defeated by his own pomposity. The arrogance of the individuals and the necessity of showing how well the work has been done, to trick the police and enjoy the victory of being so meticulous at proceeding with the murder that finally makes them feel that they deserve a punishment and finally are defeated by their own confessions. And at the same time this is the moment in which the police defeats the crime and becomes victorious. The victory of the officers represents the triumph of the law, the bourgeoisie, and the society over the asocial that disturbs the normal function of the city. The pariah from being victorious changes to be defeated and then becomes the symbol of victory and justice for the modern society.

Poe not only created the asocial character, he also inserted in literature the antagonist (or protagonist in some cases) that will fight against this subject, the detective. To many, Poe was the father of the detective stories, the inclusion of the literate urban subject that represents the bourgeoisie and seeks for justice contrasts to the marginal character of the pariah, not only by the different social classes that both represent, but also by the rational way of thinking and acting present in Dupin (the fictional detective created by Poe) that diverges from the chaotic and impulsive mind of the outlaw. Dupin was an aristocrat, a subject from superior birth who decides to enter the mob in order to restore the justice. The detective Dupin then, represents the natural social hierarchy presented in cities, the detective is the hunter and the pariah is the hunted. Detectives appear in order to purge society from the criminals and to impose his superiority over the mob and lower classes. In spite of the creation of both characters to satisfy both kinds of readers, justice is always done and the criminal is always caught. Nobility always triumph and the separation between both is evident. We do not know if the reintegration of the asocial characters is possible, but we certainly know how they are punished by their own narrations. An example of the power of Dupin representing a member of the elite is shown in the story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) where the murder results to be an orangutan, and his master is the one being charged by the crime. Dupin intercedes in front of the police and informs his solution, the man is not guilty by the murder of the woman and he should be released. In this case the mystery was solved, justice was done and at the same time the superiority of Dupin and his power as a member of the aristocracy was proved.

We find in some of the short stories a binary opposition between a figure of happiness and a figure of darkness. For example, in "Berenice" the protagonist of the story is a pariah named Egeus, an obscure, almost lifeless character, while the antagonist is Berenice, she contrasts with the pariah

"...I ill of health, and buried in gloom--- she, agile, graceful, and overflowing with energy, hers the ramble on the hill side--- mine the studies of the cloister, I living within my own heart, and addicted body and soul, to the most intense and painful meditation---she, roaming carelessly through life, with no thought of the shadows in her path, or the silent flight of the raven-winged hours. Berenice!" (98).

This is not the only case in which we find an opposition between the protagonist and antagonist, or pariah and victim related to the difference suggested in the happiness that symbolizes the victim and the wickedness of the pariah. It seems that the cheeriness of the victims irritates the pariahs which consumed by their anger proceed to damage this source of happiness that surrounds them.

If we take into account the circumstances in which the pariahs are encircled, the industrial revolution, the bad conditions and the overpopulation; they had their reasons for being in an emotional state of sadness and anxiety. The gloomy landscape in which they dwell was a projection of their inner state, but there were figures of happiness presented in their lives. The question is: pariahs end up destroying this figures of joy because they disturbed the darkness that surrounded them ? did they kill these representations of fulfillment because they seemed to be out of their own environment? Or were they overwhelmed with these figure's happiness and their bliss only helped to increase the anger inside of the miscreants? In the case of "The Black Cat" the pariah gets irritable with the caresses of the cat, the more the cat looks for his companion, the more the hate that grows inside of the man:

"Whenever I sat, it would crouch beneath my chair, or spring upon my knees, covering me with its loathsome caresses. If I arose to walk, it would get between my feet and thus nearly throw me down, or, fastening its long and sharp claws in my dress, clamber, in its manner, to my breast. At such times, although I longed to destroyed it with a blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of my former crime, but chiefly---let me confess it at once--- by absolute dread of the beast" (Poe 197).

In the case of "The Cask of Amontillado" the pariah was surrounded by happiness, there was a carnival in his town, however this cheerfulness contrasts with the inner state of the subject, he is sunken in his desires of revenge. Montresor walks through the middle of the celebration, finds his friend Fortunato and convinces him of sampling a cask of amontillado. Edgar Allan Poe makes evident in this scene the figure of happiness that Fortunato represents, the man is found the middle of a celebration, wearing a jester costume and has been drinking, so he is more joyful than usual :

“It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand” (Poe 208).

This image of happiness that Fortunato represents is the one that the pariah destroys by walling-up the victim in a dark crypt, giving us the impression that the only way in which he can return to his calmness is by destroying this figure keeping in mind his vowed revenge.

In these cases the figure of the victim contrasts with the one of the pariah, we have a clear opposition between happiness and wickedness. The figures representing joy exasperate the pariah to commit acts of murder with its excessive joviality. The pariah is a character classified as “inhuman”, they act following their human nature and are classified as “inhuman”, but in Poe’s pariahs we notice the struggle in which these characters passed when they were acting by their impulses, there is an opposition between the instinct and morality that can be associated with good and evil, joy and despair, which gave origin to the whole situation in which these characters are involved.

The miscreant present in “Berenice” gets obsessed with the vision of her teeth, then he tried to repress his impulses, because he is aware that he will damage the girl if he grows consumed with her, he is presenting the inner dispute between impulses and morality: “ Then came the full fury of my monomania, and I struggled in vain against its strange and irresistible influence. In the multiplied objects of the external world I had no thoughts but for the teeth” (Poe 102).

In “The Black Cat” the pariah suffers from this regret when killing the cat, but when he kills his wife the only thing that he was worried about was to clean the murder scene, the man describes how difficult it was for him to kill the animal that had loved him :

“One morning in cold blood, I slipped a noose about his neck and hung it to the limb of a tree; --- hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart; --- hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and

because I felt it had given no reason of offence;--- hung it *because* I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin...” (Poe 194).

In “The Cask of Amontillado” when Montresor is walling up the entrance of the niche in which Fortunato is chained, he thinks for a second of turning back with his desires of revenge : “ A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated--- I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess: but the thought of an instant reassured me” (Poe 213). The narrator from “The Imp of the Perverse” refers to the opposition between impulses of the pariah and the notion morality as : “We tremble with violence of the conflict within us, --- of the definite with the indefinite--- of the substance within the shadow. But, if we contest have proceeded thus far, it is the shadow which prevails, --- we struggle in vain” (Poe 204).

The struggle against instincts is in vain, it does not matter how they fight, they will end in satisfying their inner desires, even when they know they are doing something amoral that will deserve a punishment, they do not stop until it is done. So we can say that in the opposition between human nature or impulses against morality, the victorious will be the nature of the human soul, we can also add that morality was imposed when the impulses of humans appeared offensive to some conservative persons.

3. Artistic inclusion of the pariah in Poe’s narrative.

Why did Poe decide to expose the character of the pariah in his short tales? Terrence Whalen states that Poe noted the necessity of satisfying two kinds of readers : “ ... the panic made Poe painfully aware of the need to satisfy both elite and common readers with a single text” (24) .The first story published by Poe in the penny press was “Berenice”, which generated controversy by its cruelty, but it was well received by the audience as well.

“Common readers” as Poe defined the mass of readers felt sympathy with the figure of the pariah because it presented the asocial character unable to fit in society, the character that struggles against the constant movement in the city in what seemed to be a never-ending state of progression, and of course the inner state of mind of these characters enchanted the mob who felt

that they were being represented. This new hero in literature captivated mass audience and readers from the elite, with his representation of a deteriorated reality and confused mental state that showed the mystery and wrestle between good and evil, according to Gates: “Poe’s heroes anticipate the heroes of modern decadence in feeling the delicate artistic challenge of sin and of evil: they hardly reach the audacities of French Diabolism and Sadism but at least they have the whim of doing or fancying moral evil that aesthetic good may come” (159).

The popularity of Poe’s works illustrated the increase in the sales of the papers in which his stories were published. This success is documented in John Ingram ‘s first biography of Poe. He shows us that Edgar Allan Poe perform his intention of arriving to all classes of readers in the city:

“Within little more than a twelve-month from Poe’s appointment... as sole editor , the circulation increased from seven hundred to nearly five thousand—an increase quite unparalleled at the time in the history of time magazines. The success was, of course, due to the originality and fascination of Poe’s stories, and the fearlessness of his trenchant critiques” (59).

The favorable outcome that Edgar Allan Poe had with his short tales, was also due to the artistic function that the figure of the pariah showed in the literature of the period. He did not just create a new character more real or more closer to the masses, he gave birth to the detective tales as well. The creation of the character of the pariah goes hand in hand with the apparition of the detective. The hero in literature was no longer from the upper classes of society, in this moment we have the character or the asocial which represents lower classes in society and the intellectual detective expressing his curiosity for solving mysteries. The new recognizable figures that Poe included in his tales, caught the attention of the masses and of the nobility , this is exactly what Poe wanted, to be accepted by the mass of readers and to gain recognition: “Initially, Poe imagined that he could slip his economic burdens by invoking the pure pleasure of art, but he soon realized that it was necessary to please the Capital Reader⁸ first in order to survive as a commercial writer” (Whalen 76).

⁸ The capital reader as Terrence Whalen defines it in ‘Edgar Allan Poe and the masses’, is the editor that checks the works before publishing them.

The literature of the period had strong elements of the criminal and the demonic. Penny press helped the spread of Poe's criminal stories. Common readers empathize with Poe's pariahs and also with the urban landscapes in which they were placed, they were not reading stories about noble men or upper class characters, they were now being represented by Poe's fiction : "The sympathetic treatment of criminals would become a central theme of much American crime literature and would feed directly into the resonant ambiguities of major works of Poe and Hawthorne" (Reynolds 176). The impact that this figure had in the masses was based in the representation of the mob's anger through the character of the pariah. Poe saw in the tales, specially the detective stories "a literary form which could succeed in the mass market while containing the more dangerous tendencies of the mob" (Whalen 272).

The addition of the asocial fellow in Edgar Allan Poe's tales showing the nature of the human soul the perverseness and all the impulses of the heart, made readers feel closer to literature. The main reason for doing so was the artistic function that the pariah presents. On the one hand Poe wants to give information to the mob. According to Terrence Whalen Poe hopes the "manipulation of the mass audience"(72). He was mostly concerned with the diffusion of knowledge in lower classes, in his tales he was criticizing society, indirectly he illustrated the conditions of humanity, the lack of interest in others human beings and cases of corruption that happened in the upper classes of society ; as in the tale "The Purloined letter" where the thief is not a pariah since he has a role in society and fulfills a role as a minister. This character breaks the law by stealing an official document, in this case the crime had the purpose of letting him maintain his charge in his department: "The theft of the letter threatens the stability of the state, but unlike the crimes of earlier tales it does not stimulate the formation of a potentially violent urban mob. Strangely it is Dupin himself who conjures the mob into existence" (Whalen 243). On the other hand Poe was giving information to the elite but with another aim, he was divulging through description realities that were unknown to the upper classes. Poe's outlaws and the detailed description of their territories showed to the higher social class another perspective of the sunken city, that at this point was unknown to their eyes.

Through the figure of the miscreant then, the nobility readers are able to learn about their own city and their inhabitants. Any member of the bourgeoisie was able to "visit" different places of the periphery of his city by reading Poe's tales. The pariahs are surrounded by those dark

places where any member of the upper class would not dare to walk in. What Poe did was mostly to open the eyes of the privileged class and to show them the reality that was happening outside their walls, a kind of critique made by the eyes of the felon and the artistic representation of its world.

How does the transgressor represent his reality? The lawless character presents the city throughout his own perception of reality. Poe's narrators are mostly in first person, by doing this, he accomplishes two functions. Essential is the first person narrator that increases the mystery and produces an effect of anxiety (generally) in the reader, as Joris-Karl Huysmans expresses : "With awful fascination he dwelt on the effects of terror, on the failures of will-power, and discuss them with clinical objectivity, making the reader's flesh creep, his throat contract, his mouth go dry at the recital of these mechanically devised nightmares of a fevered brain." (78) . Besides, we are able to visualize the story, landscape and inner thoughts of the pariah by his own prospect, we see the narration through the eyes of the monster.

I dare to say that when reading Poe's tales we are accomplices with the narrator and we feel closer to the asocial character. As if we were in his skin, we do the same acts that he is narrating, we are following with all our senses through each of the steps of the characters, we see him struggling, we are witness of his madness, in a certain way we are connected to him and we try to justify his behave. We are seduced by the invitation that this character makes to enter his world, to dig in his mind, elite and mass readers fell under the spell of the pariah, as Gilfillan states:

"Everyone at first, like the wedding guest, is disposed to shrink and beat his breast; but he holds you with his glittering eye, he forces you to follow him into his own enchanted region, and once there, you forget everything, your home, your friends, your creed, your very personal identity, and become swallowed up like a straw in the maelstrom of his story, and forget to breathe till it is ended, and the mysterious tale-teller is gone" (61).

When we follow the pariah, we also accompany him during his walks around the city. In the tale "The Man of the Crowd" we can exemplify this idea. The narrator is sitting by a window in a coffee shop, analyzing the mob and classifying them according to their social strata

“as much interest, for documentary as well as artistic reasons” (Benjamin 48), when a subject on the street catches his attention. As any man trying to satisfy his curiosity the narrator follows him. At this point we can add that the narrator from “The Man of the Crowd” has the same qualities of the adventurer that exposes Simmel, and he also has the impulsiveness presented in the pariahs (we can say this by the irrational plan that appeared in his mind to follow this strange man, he never gave a second thought to this impulse, he just acted). The narrator that follows this peculiar character is describing him by what he sees, he is gazing the old man and following him in his walk. In the same sense we are following the pariah throughout the description of the narrator, as if we are placed in the same situation and in the same moment when the story begins. We gaze our pariahs, we follow them by the narrator’s description and suddenly we are placed in the urban landscape understanding his fears and anxieties. This sense of identification with the character is relevant because it produces in the reader an effect, a clear vision of what is happening and the audience “is allowed to form his own opinion about the events in a most modern, open ending technique” (Popescu). This means that the conclusions about the actions and state of mind of the characters, is part of the judgment that each reader makes when facing the narration. We are not able to completely trust in the narration made by the pariahs because of the inner state of mind of them, they are constantly mixing madness with reality, in consequence, we are being forced to evaluate these subjects and their deeds according to our own perspective.

While walking side by side with the pariah, we realize that he feels at home when sauntering between crowded thoroughfares, the act of visiting the margins of the urban area and haunting the town at night seems to be one of his leisure activity, he is certainly not afraid and he feels safe by the shelter that the mob represents. What Poe does with the figure of the pariah and his excursions over the metropolis, is to blur the limits of the flâneur with the ones of the pariah⁹. The flâneur prowls the streets for pleasure, while the pariah does it to complete one purpose; one of them is to find a victim, as the narrator proposes in the case of “The Man in the Crowd”. The narrator follows this strange man that inspires him mystery and “is the type and genius of deep crime” (Poe 237). Another purpose can be the necessity of freedom, for example in “The Black Cat”, the man goes out to walk around in order to calm his inner state of mind. And also, what miscreants might be looking for in the crowd is the sense of belonging to somewhere, they want

⁹ This idea is exposed in Walter Benjamin’s “The Flâneur.” He refers to how Poe mixes the characteristics of a flâneur with the ones of the criminal, both seek the crowd.

to fill the emptiness produced by their own loneliness and the loss of community. In order to complete the notion of belonging they seek companion in the mob, this is the case of “The Imp of the Perverse”, where the man feels secure between other human beings. The city and its crowded streets are his shelter, as Benjamin states in “The Flâneur” : “To Poe the flâneur was, above all, someone who does not feel comfortable in his own company. That is why he seeks out the crowd; the reason why he hides in it is probably close at hand” (48). Edgar Allan Poe establishes the mystery present in every human heart and the anonymity of the crowd as the perfect place to hide secrets.

The city is then pictured as a dangerous place where human beings struggle to survive, where secrets are kept and in order to recognize each individual in the crowd one must pay attention to each person’s behavior. This is the principal role of the flâneur in the city, to gaze and recognize different kinds of human beings. This is the same procedure used by the narrator of “The man of the crowd” at the beginning of the story when he is sitting by a window in a coffee shop and describes with attention and precision the mob that passes through the street.

The flâneur then is turned now into “an unwilling detective”¹⁰ by observing the crowd he is no able to recognize the miscreants; but at the same this flâneur can be the pariah that observes and follows his victim into the crowded streets and dark alleys. The man described by the narrator in “The Man of the Crowd” is a simply flâneur seeking desperately for company or can be a criminal searching for a victim.

We can here make the distinction between the observant and the one being observed. The pariah can be the one gazing the victim, the flâneur at the same time is following with the eyes to this pariah and his victim, and we as readers are gazing the pariah, the victim and the flâneur by means of the description of the narrator¹¹ . Gazing these subjects makes us detectives, witness of the movements of suspect persons. The notion of being a detective while reading Poe’s fiction is connected to the interpretative process carried out by readers. The detailed description made by the narrator helped to create an image of each circumstance in which the subjects are involved. When we deconstruct the tales, we pay attention to minimal features that could evidence

¹⁰In Walter Benjamin’s “The Flâneur” we also find the concept of the flâneur as a witness by means of observation of the crowd.

¹¹ I propose this idea taking into consideration ‘Seduced by the text: theories of the gaze’.

something necessary to the interpretation of the work. As any researcher, we do not trust in the narrator, instead we look for elemental circumstances that can reveal something hidden in the words of the subject. We analyze and made our own conclusions about the character and the situation that we experience through reading, as a result, we are detectives following cautiously each step of the pariah in order to make judgments.

Who is in the fiction the observant and the one being observed? The relation of opposition can change when the pariah that has being observing his victim is suddenly the one being observed by the eyes of the flâneur or the detective, and when we follow the detective through different spaces in the city by the narration, and can also turn into a flâneur when following the detective or the pariah across the city.

Edgar Allan Poe wanted to become one with the crowd he felt the need to become a flâneur, to join the constant movement in the streets. That is why he decided to work with characters presented in the crowd, but he choose a special subject among the crowd, the outlaw, the misfit, the one isolated and not functioning in the same rhythm as the rest of the city. He seemed delighted by the diversity in the metropolis, but he was mostly intrigued with the secrets that pariahs could carry and the struggle that they silently hide in the mob.

It seems that Poe decided to include the figure of the pariah in his tales not only to uncover oppressed or minority groups “while exposing what was seen as secret corruption among the pillars of society” (Reynolds 200) but also to expose the city by his eyes, he wanted to exhibit his fears, his anger and the quotidian by the perspective of a member of a lower class of society.

What Poe did with the inclusion of the pariah in his narrative was to show the hierarchy of the upper class, as well as provide the elite with a new perspective of the city and its circumstances. The lawbreaker believes himself to be over any of the rules of the society, he breaks the balance in which the elite is the heavier side and assumes power over them by not adhering the rules established by higher classes in society, besides he commits crimes in order to complete his impulses. This figure unafraid of the city and of the rules is the one that Poe presents to the masses exposing the opposition between luxury and poverty. Elite readers are able to walk through places that they did not know existed in their cities, and the common readers found themselves pleased with the presence of the recognizable places in which they were used to

prowl. While the pariah projects the violent fantasies of the working class, to the nobility he represents the reality of the masses and the city.

What Edgar Allan Poe had in mind when he decided to introduce the urban subject of the pariah, was first of all to generate an effect. He mentions how the effect is important when trying to impress, and how originality is always in view. The inclusion of the character of the lawbreaker certainly did have an effect in the mass, it was innovative in the period the publication of stories related to the human nature, dark desires of the heart and above all, the insertion of a marginal character. Poe was concerned with elements that represented beauty in his fiction, he worked with the figure of the asocial by using metaphors of his soul, heart and mind. Beauty was present not only in the representation of the inner thoughts of his protagonists, but also in the urban landscape in which he placed them. The detailed description of places and circumstances embellish his fiction to a new stage in which the limits between reality and fiction are not distinguished. We can relate the idea of the gloomy atmosphere in which the pariah was placed with Poe's notion of melancholy, he believes it to be "the most legitimate of all the poetical tones"(745).

One of the effects that Poe expected to create in the reader was the one of curiosity, he wanted the audience to be enchanted by the characters and the fiction, along with quotidian situations, would create the perfect environment of mystery. He manages to create situations based in contrast, surreal circumstances that are bound to an action and to its effect, as in the case of "The Black Cat" where the caresses natural in the cat appear excessive to the eyes of the reader and contrasts with the hate of the master. This situation appears to be normal, but the use of certain details and descriptions in the narration made us believe that there is something fantastic in the way both animal and pariah relate to each other.

He speaks of the fantastic with an air of seriousness always presuming to have an effect on the reader. To Poe "the human thirst for self-torture" (749) was important in the creation of fiction, pariahs showed the torture in which they were immersed by the different situations in which they were involved. The ideal was not represented with this urban subject, reality was mixed with the inner state of the pariah, decorating the stories with traces of melancholy and dullness, originality in this subject and its representation of the city, was fundamental.

IV . Conclusion

I pretended to portrait the modern city and the particular character of the pariah present in Edgar Allan Poe's selection of tales. The way in which this asocial person dwells between the city and his personal space has been exposed, as well as his personality and the reasons that Poe had to illustrate this strange and solitary individual in his tales.

The selection of tales chosen reflected the way in which the quotidian takes place in literature. Poe illustrated carefully details of the life and environment of the pariah and made us believe the story to be far from fiction and closer to reality. It is true that the reaction that Edgar Allan Poe's tales had in the audience was the one of surprise, people reacted to the generation of the new characters that illustrated ordinary citizen with their human frailties and recognizable urban landscapes.

While reading for the first time Edgar Allan Poe's tales, we notice the magnificent work of his geniality. We comprehend the nature of the pariah exposed in the narrations, his obsessions, his fears, his egocentrism and the lack of relations that these individuals had with other human beings. But when reading using the method of the deconstruction, we find different associations between the characters and their environment that cannot be noticeable for the first time reading the tales.

While studying the emergence of the pariah in the context of a modern city, we are able to notice how literature explored the urban mob with delicacy in their narrations. The crowded cities were the shelter of a diversity of characters, we have found in these thoroughfares the relations of hierarchy between the higher and lower social classes, this is a concept that appeared while reading closely to the short stories selected. The relation between these classes are not explicitly exposed in Poe's narrative, we have to look for details and descriptions that could exemplify the difference present in the metropolis, for example the relation that the police had with the pariah and the representation that both have in the stories. The pariah represents the lower classes of society, while the police personify the higher classes and the bourgeoisie, that is finally the one who wins, justice is always done and the elite societies always triumph.

The discovery of the triumph of the bourgeoisie is present in almost all of the selection of tales studied in this work, the pariah is finally caught and he is punished by jail. We see them in cells describing their crimes, paying for their sins. The power of the higher classes of society is

imposed by the detention and punishment of the asocial character that broke the regular function of society. But something has been missing in this study, what is the punishment that the thief of the letter gets? We may think that because of the social status of the character, he is not going to be at prison as any other pariah. This concept deserves to be analyzed, the injustice presented when a member of nobility breaks the law in comparison to what happens when a marginal subject commits a felony.

Another idea that appeared while studying the subject of the pariah was the relation between this asocial character and the inhuman characteristic of the modern life. In the interpretation of the stories, the outlaw is described as an individual acting by following his impulses, his human nature; but in order to survive in the metropolis, subjects needed to leave their humanity and act almost by reflections. In this case we faced the dilemma of the contradiction between what society expects and what pariahs are. Subjects were supposed to act in an inhuman way by leaving their impulses behind, and the pariah acting by his nature was classified and punished for being “inhuman”. The contradiction was perceived in the tales that were studied, and contributed to the interpretation of the narrations by generating an image of a misunderstood pariah, which by trying to fulfill the demands of the society, is judged by the elite, despite of the fact that he had the inhuman characteristic that the society sought.

When examining the concept of the asocial character, emerged the similitude in the way in which pariahs hide the corpses of their victims. In the case of “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Black Cat” and “The Cask of Amontillado” murders hide the victim’s bodies in his houses. In “The Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” killers disguise their crimes in the same place where the dead person lived. What is common and deserves further investigation in these three tales is the action of walling-up the cadaver. In the case of “The Black Cat” the miscreant hides the woman in one of the walls. In “The Cask of Amontillado” Fortunato is enclosed by bricks. In “The Tell-Tale Heart” the old man is buried on his room’s ground with the wooden planks over him. What does the notion of walling-up mean? Is there any significance in the way in which the lawbreakers deal with the corpse? This came to my mind while studying the inner state of mind of the subjects and the way in which they committed their crimes. It seems that there is something that could be related to the sense of freedom that they felt while committing these acts. When pariahs enclose these figures that represent obsession, they feel finally free. This thought

can be related to the physical place in which they were locked, as well as the inner state of mind in which they were trapped.

The pariah is a subject separated from the normal function of society, he is isolated and does not belong to groups of work. When Poe included this character, he did not only want to expose the marginal character of society, he also wanted to illustrate that lawbreakers could be found at any social class. This could be reflected in the inclusion of the corrupted politician. In the case of “The Purloined Letter” we face this thief from the elite, he is a minister and carries out a function in society. Poe wanted to give information to the masses, he opened the nobility and masses’ eyes by giving them the idea that a lawbreaker could be anyone in any class of the society. The main idea of Poe’s decision to include this character in his tales could be studied in further investigations. Why did he want to change the stereotype of a criminal? He certainly in this case proposed the idea of a noble lawbreaker.

Related to the opposition between good and evil that was exposed in this work, it seems that we are dealing with irony. The image of Montresor walling-up his friend Fortunato who is dressed in a motley reveals Poe’s irony expressed in this image. Edgar Allan Poe tends to use irony to convey different meanings in his works, What did he want to portrait with this image? This can be closely studied if we relate it to the inner desires of the pariah in the story. We need to keep in mind that what Fortunato wanted, was revenge. We do not know what kinds of injury Fortunato received from Montresor, we may deduce that the asocial character of this story is blinded and he takes things seriously, but of course, the narrator leads these concepts and ideas to our imagination.

In the present work, the figure of the marginal was studied, but when we think of a crime that has been committed, we find several repercussions. One of them is the victim, what happens to the victim? In many cases the figure of happiness in the stories is a woman (as in the case of “Berenice”) who gets killed by the figure that represents her opposite. Pariahs are mostly men and represent darkness, contrary to the joy that represents women. What happens in Poe’s stories is that women are consumed by men, they end up always murdered. Pariahs take the life and cheerfulness away from these feminine figures and then, something happens to the murders. It seems that women “come back” from death in order to avenge their deaths. Each of these figures causes an impression in the asocial subjects that has being essential in the auto-destruction of the

protagonists. In the case of “The Black Cat” the wife of the murderer seems to have an ally, the cat. The cat cries in the exact spot where the woman is buried, The representation of this scene makes us think of how an innocent figure as the wife comes back from death to bring on the pariah’s auto-destruction. The same situation can be found in “Berenice” and “The Fall of the House of Usher”.

The implications that the figure of the asocial had in literature has generated many different points of view related to the modern city and its circumstances. The miscreant has demonstrated the differences in social classes, on the one hand we have the figure that believes to be over the power of the law, that is to say, the pariah. On the other hand, we find the subject that represents the law and is above the asocial character, in other words, the detective. The vision of both perspectives of the world and the city began to be discovered with the introduction of Edgar Allan Poe’s mysteries. From the period in which he introduced the marginal in society, authors comprehend the different viewpoints and representations that city could have depending on the urban subject’s position. The urban landscape is then represented as a contrast between wealth and filth, but what is common to both illustrations of the city is the darkness of the landscape, not only by physical appearance of the city, but by the representation of the darkness itself that is present in the subject studied.

In the story “The Man of the Crowd”, we see the differences presented in the city by the accentuation of two kinds of people; on the one hand we see the luxury shops, the streets at night illuminated by gaslight, noblemen and merchants which are part of the “tumultuous sea of human heads” (Poe 264) (monotony was also presented in the description of the narrator). On the other hand, we arrive to the darkest places of London, where poverty is common in the urban landscape, crime and desolation are the words by which the author describes this prospect, completely different to the one that was presented to us at the beginning of the narration.

Between the human beings that we find in the contrast of both kinds of places in the urban landscape, we find the pickpockets and beggars between others. The differentiation between these places in the same city, lead us to understand the notion of why Edgar Allan Poe decided to illustrate the city by the eyes of the asocial character, by including the periphery in his tales, he includes the mob and the ordinary in his narratives. The elite has the opportunity to cover these places full of poverty by the narrative provided by Poe, they are facing the differences between

them and the working class, the dangerous places of the city in which they would never dare to dwell.

This thesis may be helpful to construct the stereotype of the miscreant, and also to comprehend the inclusion of this figure in Edgar Allan Poe's tales. We can go even further if we relate the mystery surrounding the modern urban landscape with the origin and creation of the detective tales. This work could be treated from a sociological point of view in which we can see how society is related to the pariah and how the bourgeoisie tries to help the character in order to put him back in society after the punishment.

The urban subjects analyzed in this work represent the ordinary man, the quotidian and the city by the eyes of the marginal. It would be a good idea to work with the study of the society and the criminal if we think of how the elite classes are always above lower classes, how justice is always done in Edgar Allan Poe's selection of tales.

In further studies that pretend to analyze the urban landscape, it will be necessary to include in the analysis the point of view of different urban subjects that dwell in the city, the pariah is one of them; but when talking about the pariah we also have to include the features that are related to him, the victim, the detective, the society, the elite class, the mob, and of course the inner state of mind of the pariah that could be related to the description of the city in which he is habitant.

This work based on the decision of Poe to illustrate the city by the eyes of the asocial, contributes to a new vision of the city by the eyes of the misfits characters, they are presented in every society and we cannot close our eyes and pretend we do not see them. Poe forced us to admire the city by the perspective of a subject rejected in his community, an individual unable to find his place in the world and above all, a character that matches with the mystery and darkness of the city since his mind is obscure and full of secrets, or how Poe will denominate it: a person that represents the "perverseness" of the human soul. This work will help to create new perspectives of the city, in addition, it would make us curious about the way in which the city is view by different characters that, alike to the pariah, remain hidden in the crowd and invisible to the eyes of others.

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