

committing a sin.’⁷ The lexical field is closely tied to that which would describe the punishment for disobedient slaves. The repetitive use of this creates the persona of having an obsession with the hanging of black slaves.

I suggest that *The Black Cat* was influenced with the historical incident of Nat Turner's revolt but primarily the Southern antebellum version and obsession with it. Nat Turner was an enslaved African-American from Southampton County, Virginia. On August 21, 1831, he led a rebellion of slaves and free blacks, resulting in the death of at least 50 white people and the killing of over 200 black people by white militias and mobs. Although this is the factual happening Southern reporters took a different view of the rebellion, describing them as: ‘rebellious slaves (acting) as a gang of thieving banditti.’⁸ Just as this Southern version of Nat Turner's revolt the narrator's aggression first of all appears motiveless as it turns into criminality. Furthermore, the narrator expresses no remorse for the murder.

In addition, I argue, that Poe was using Pluto as a metaphor for slavery in Southern antebellum America. The name Pluto is not the only name of a planet in Poe's tales.

Ginsberg notes that a character in *The Gold-Bug*, ‘provides a bit of blackface humour.’ This extract demonstrates this: ‘The old negro called Jupiter.’ *The Gold bug* was one of Poe's most popular stories in his time and it was published less than two months before *The Black Cat*. This further implies that *The Black Cat* was a product of slavery in Southern antebellum America.

⁷ Poe, *The Black Cat*, 11.

⁸ Ginsberg, *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*, 101.