



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Dr. Moulay Tahar University, Saida  
Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts  
Department of English Language and Literature



Narrative Suspense in Edgar Allan Poe's Writings: Selected Short Stories

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in  
Literature and Civilization

Presented by:

Miss Asmaa ZITOUNI

Supervised by:

Dr. Amaria MEHDAOUI

**Board of Examiners**

Dr. Souhila BOUKHLIFA	(MCA) Chair Person	University of Saida
Dr. Amaria MEHDAOUI	(MCA) Supervisor	University of Saida
Dr. Nawel OUHIBA	(MCB) Examiner	University of Saida

2021/2022

### **Declaration of Originality**

This is to certify that this thesis is my proper work. I hereby declare that the content of this paper entitled “Narrative Suspense in Edgar Allan Poe’s Writings: Selected Short Stories” is the product of my own work and I affirm that all references and sources that helped in preparing this thesis have been acknowledged.

Name: Zitouni Asmaa Nour el Houda

Date: 27/04/2022

## **Dedication**

Every challenging work needs all support as well as the guidance of others, especially from those who are very close to our hearts.

My thankfulness, I dedicate it to my sweet and dear mother at the first place. She has always been there for me, believed in me and supported me.

Dear father, you have always been my source of inspiration and my first companion in my learning journey. I would never satisfy your efforts and sacrifices for us.

Without forgetting the support of my one and only: Amine Wafa; an honest friend and a loving sister.

May Allah bless you all.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr A. Mehdaoui. I have always considered her as my idol, my motivator and my support. I would appreciate all the confidence that she has provided me with in conducting my research work and I thank her for her help and guidance.

I would also like to thank the board of examiners, Dr Ouhiba and Dr Boukhelifa who have given their time to read and evaluate this humble work.

Likewise, I am deeply indebted to Prof Benadla and Dr Bessadet for the wonderful experience, and the most enriching learning journey I have ever had.

Last but not least, I would like to express my regards and blessings to all of those who provided me with support during the completion of this research work.

## Abstract

In fiction literature, dramatic effects are considered to be some of the strongest pillars that an interesting narrative stands on. Suspense as such, however, is tolerated as a complex paradox which seems hard to achieve within a fictional narrative. As Edgar Allan Poe gains all the credit in inspiring and motivating other writers to challenge his ability to create suspense, this research aims at the first place to study suspense activation in Poe's short stories. As such, it ingratiate the main aspects, techniques as well as tactics that Edgar adopted to realise suspense in its perfect shape. In the light of Reader Response Theory that allows digging within the gaps that suspense maintains between the written text and the reader, this study examines both sides of the reading process on which suspense stands. It treats the reader interactions and anticipations as well as assumptions in regard to suspense development. Plus, it studies the major items and key points of the text that served suspense creation.

**Keywords:** Gothic Narratives- Reader Interactions- Reader Response Theory- Short Story Genre- Suspense.

## Abstract

Dans la littérature de fiction, les effets dramatiques sont considérés comme l'un des piliers les plus solides sur lesquels repose un récit intéressant. Le suspense, cependant, est toléré comme un paradoxe complexe qui semble difficile à réaliser dans un récit de fiction. Comme Edgar Allan Poe a tout le mérite d'avoir inspiré et motivé d'autres écrivains à défier sa capacité à créer du suspense, cette recherche vise à étudier l'activation du suspense dans les nouvelles de Poe. En tant que telle, elle met en évidence les principaux aspects, les techniques ainsi que les tactiques qu'Edgar a adoptées pour réaliser le suspense dans sa forme parfaite. À la lumière de la théorie de La Réponse de Lecteur qui permet de creuser les écarts que le suspense maintient entre le texte écrit et le lecteur, cette étude examine les deux côtés du processus de lecture entre lesquels se trouve le suspense. Elle traite des interactions et des anticipations du lecteur ainsi que des hypothèses relatives au développement du suspense. De plus, elle étudie les éléments majeurs et les points clés du texte qui ont servi à la création du suspense.

## ملخص

تصنف القصة الأدبية على أنها قصة مثيرة للاهتمام في حال ما كانت تركز على تأثيرات درامية صلبة. من بينها عنصر التشويق الذي يعتبر من التأثيرات المعقدة التي يصعب تحقيقها ضمن الحكايات الروائية، و لأن القصص الخيالية الغنية بالتشويق السردى تحوز على اهتمام معظم القراء، يلجأ الكتاب إلى أعمال الكاتب و الشاعر "إدغار آلان بو" الذي يعتبر في المقام الأول أيقونة السرد و التشويق. في هذا النطاق، يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة تفعيل التشويق في قصص "بو" القصيرة. و بذلك، يبرز الجوانب الأساسية و التقنيات المهمة التي إتخذها "بو" لإدراك التشويق في شكله الكامل. في ضوء نظرية استجابة القارئ التي تتيح تحليل الفجوات الناتجة عن التشويق بين النص القصة و استمتاعه و القارئ؛ تعمل هذه الدراسة على التدقيق في استجابة القراء للتشويق خلال نهج المطالعة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعمل هذه المذكرة على تحديد أهم القواعد التي تخلق التشويق السردى و تستحوذ على تعلق القارئ بأحداث بها .

## **Table of Contents**

Declaration of Originality	II
Dedication	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Abstract	V
Table of Contents	VII
List of abbreviations	IX
General Introduction	1

## **Chapter One: Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature**

1.1. Introduction	4
1.2. The Concept of Narrative in Literature	4
1.3. Interactions in Literature	6
1.4. Emotion and Fictional Narratives	7
1.5. Narrative Suspense	9
1.6. Suspense Creation	11
1.7. Reader Response Theory	12
1.7.1. Transactional Reader Response Theory	14
1.7.2. Affective Stylistic	15
1.7.3. Subjective Reader Response Theory	15
1.7.4. Psychological Reader Response Theory	16
1.7.5. Social Reader Response Theory	17
1.8. Conclusion	18

## **Chapter Two: Edgar Allan Poe and Literature**

2.1. Introduction	20
2.2. American Literature in the Nineteenth Century	20
2.2.1. American Romantic Authors	20
2.2.2. Realism in American Literature	22

2.3.	Gothic Literature	23
2.4.	Detective Fiction	24
2.5.	Edgar Allan Poe: A Psychological Profile	25
2.6.	Major Themes in Edgar Allan Poe Short Stories	26
2.6.1.	Guilt and Sin	27
2.6.2.	Morality	27
2.6.3.	The Power of the Dead over the Living	28
2.6.4.	Atmosphere of Fear and Horror	28
2.7.	Poe's Styles of Writing	29
2.8.	Edgar Allan Poe and Suspense	31
2.9.	Conclusion	32
<b>Chapter Three: A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories</b>		
3.1.	Introduction	34
3.2.	<i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i>	34
3.3.	<i>The Black Cat</i>	38
3.4.	<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	41
3.5.	<i>The Murders in the Rue Morgue</i>	44
3.6.	<i>Berenice</i>	47
3.7.	A Synthesis of the Selected Short Stories	50
3.8.	Conclusion	51
General Conclusion		53
List of References		55
List of Appendices		57
Appendix A: A Closer Look at Poe		57
Appendix B: Summary of the Selected Stories		59



**List of Abbreviations**

BC: *The Black Cat*

FHU: *The Fall of the House of Usher*

MRM: *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*

RRT: Reader Response Theory

TTH: *The Tell-Tale Heart*

## **General Introduction**

Fiction is a huge world of amazement, where the great stories are been created, told, shared and felt. As its aims and purposes differ, fiction remains a tool of entertainment and pleasure as it brings mixture of feelings and interpretations to the real world. It is highly agreed that literary fiction – especially the written one – had proved its significance and preserved its powerful effect through different cultures and centuries. Indeed, the archaic works (the 19th and the 18th eras) have always captured people interest; for their realisation of emotional effects such as curiosity, surprise and suspense. One of the brilliant icons who left a legacy of interesting works to America in particular and to the world of literature in general is Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).

Edgar Allan Poe achieved undefeatable glory in the ground of horror fictions, detective plots and poetry. He created complex conflicts with perfect resolutions by adopting the principle of ratiocination (the logical thinking). Indeed, he impressed his audience and influenced their cold blood to boil out through suspense development all along his tales. Plus, Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be “the master of suspense”. As a result, suspense is treated as a key paradox that maintains readers’ interest and satisfaction. Hence, portraying Poe’s creation of suspense through written texts has become a serious challenge for modern authors.

This dissertation is conducted in order to combine suspense creation and development to how readers actually react to it. Therefore, the present work aims to deduce the main tactics and techniques that Poe adopted in order to activate suspense in his narratives. It also serves to study the effect of suspense in maintaining the readers’ interest. In addition, it seeks to analyse the way the reader interact with suspense development through Poe selected short stories.

The major question that led to the birth of this research is: how did Edgar Allan Poe develop suspense all along his narratives to an extent that has captured his readers’ interest and amazement to the present day?

In order to achieve the purpose of the present study, it is important to find relevant answers to the fundamental questions:

- What are the main techniques and literary devices that Poe adopted to create suspense within his short stories?
- In what way does the genre of Poe narratives contribute to serve suspense creation?

- What is the effect of suspense in maintaining reader's interest and satisfaction?
- In what way do readers interact with suspense development within Poe major selected stories?

These questions in return led to the development of the following hypotheses to conduct this work:

1. Suspense creation is potentially related to the genre of mystery that companioned Poe's major works.
2. The use of certain literary techniques, such as: imagery, symbolism and foreshadowing might play an important role in suspense realisation within Poe's tales.
3. Suspense development is probably connected to the reader's interest which is built out of intentional gaps created by Poe.

To conduct a convenient academic research, the researcher has gathered information and data using online resources as primary sources and printed collections of Edgar Allan Poe to realise a suitable analysis using Reader Response Theory as a tool of investigation of Poe selected stories: *Berenice*, *The Black Cat*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*. To fulfil the objectives of this theory, the responses of the researcher are considered as the case of this study.

The present work is divided into three major parts; the first chapter is an introductory chapter that defines the concept of narratives, interactions in literature and presents the theory of Reader Response Criticism with its major pillars. The second chapter is a gate to Poe's inner world starting from the movement that witnessed his legacy creation to his personal profile and style of writing. Lastly, the third chapter is an analytical part that studies a group of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories using RRT in order to deduce suspense realisation

## **Chapter One: Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature**

### 1.1. Introduction

The world is a huge setting with different plots of numerous characters. Each plot narrates a story that stands for a major theme. Once told, the story becomes enjoyable and interesting. Moreover, it affects both the emotions and the mind-set of human beings. Hence, studying a narrated story or tale has always been a wild field in literature. Many literary techniques and theories were conducted to closely examine all the features and structures of narrated stories in the multiple literary genres: prose, poetry and drama. These theories also aim to elaborate the interactions and inspirations that narratives usually conduct.

In this vein, this present chapter aims to define the concept of narratives. It also sheds light on interactions in literature and clarifies the inspiration of emotions while the reading process and its relation with the fictional narratives. Moreover, it gives an overview of narrative suspense and its composition. By the end of this chapter, the researcher focuses on the Reader Response Criticism as a literary tool to use while analysing the selected short stories of this dissertation.

### 1.2. The Concept of Narrative in Literature

In order to convey a coherent definition to the word “narrative”; it is necessary to provide its correct meaning from the dictionary first. According to Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, the word narrative refers to the story itself within a novel rather than the dialogue. It is the part which explains events in order to illustrate morals and values. That is to say, a narrative is a group of related events that form the main story that evokes a specific theme or aim. The term narrative is related to the verb narrate; which is a widespread activity; the act of telling a series of elements according to chronological as well as logical orders. Hence, narration is everywhere. It is found when someone is telling a story, an event, transmitting news or sharing details. Fludernik argues: “everything narrated by a narrator is a narrative” (03).

In either fictional or non-fictional world, plot raises with interesting events to produce a story. Therefore, the story narrates a group of well detailed elements that certain characters cause or experience. In Literature, a narrative text is a text in which the author tells a story to audience using language. A narrative can be written, spoken, or seen. In other words, all what

## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

is told, transmitted or narrated is defined as narrative, such as short stories, novels, plays, novellas, fairy tales and the like. In this regard, Bal defines narratives as follows:

Narrative text is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee (“tells” the reader, viewer, or listener) a story in a medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A story is the content of that text and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and “colouring” of a fabula. A fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. (05)

According to Bal definition, a narrative text must be addressed to an addressee through a medium that can be both verbal and non-verbal. Moreover, Bal indicates that a narrative stands on two basic components; the story and the fabula. For better understanding, the whole plot is the story. However, the rising and falling events (which are parts of the plot) are the fabula.

After providing a general definition of narrative and having discussed its main components (story and fabula), it seems that narratives can suit all the disciplines where an actual narrator exists and a specific element is told. Hence, readers may adopt a kind of uncertainty concerning the nature of narrative as literary works and whether it matches in hand with narrative discourse (storytelling) rather than the act of narration itself. It also questions the difference between narration, story and discourse. In this regard, Genette’s distinction between these three elements of narrative takes place. According to him, the story is the actual order of events in the text, narrative discourse and the narration. The statements made constitute narrative discourse. The narration is the act of making the statements. Narrative discourse is thus imbedded in the narration of the story, but is not identical to either of them (Cited. In Mambrol).

Coupled with Genette distinctions, narratives stand on the “what” happen to the characters in certain time and place (story) and the “how” this story is constructed and formed (the narrative discourse). Therefore, one particular story can be presented in multiple guises. The fairy tale of Cinderella is perhaps one of the best examples of stories which have multiple versions. Cinderella, despite her unquestioned popularity, has more than 500 versions in Europe. Almost every single culture develops its own version of the story. Every storyteller narrates Cinderella in his or her different way. Thus, the story remains the same in its major aspects but its discourse differs once the narrator and the community differ (Northrup).

## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

Narrative texts can be classified into fictional and non-fictional works. The fictional narratives are the category of imaginative and creative stories that can be either logical or illogical but still make sense to the reader's mind. On the other hand, the non-fictional narratives are the stories based on real events and elements. Literature is more concerned with fictional narratives where authors usually conduct a variety of stories that restrain readers' attentions and capture their breaths. Thus, fictional narratives present the identity of literature.

Generally speaking, narratives seek to entertain and inform its audience. The telling of any story is considered as an art in which human instincts, desires and beliefs participate in the reading process. Therefore, this process builds a kind of connection between readers and fictional narratives where both inspire each other. Hence, literature invites its readers to interact and anticipate with its written texts. At this point, an overview about inspirations in literature follows.

### 1.3. Interactions in Literature

Unlike the other disciplines, literature is imaginative. It narrates detailed stories of almost vivid characters. Therefore, literary works invite readers to conduct certain ideologies through reading a literary text or paper. Hence, readers interact with the text in front of them in order to evoke a meaningful understanding and a successful resolution.

During the process of reading, readers link their cognitive inputs which can be defined as the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension with a given work of literature by conducting a sort of complex interactions. These interactions emerge as a result of the given textual cues and the previous knowledge. While dealing with a certain narrative, readers focus their attention on eventual sequences and interesting narration. They form imaginative connections with the characters and start adopting particular feelings and expectations. In this regard, Golden highlights:

The reader's input is also critical. Through a series of cognitive operations, such as formulating and modifying expectations, combining information, and filling in the gaps of text, the reader draws not only on the text but also on personal knowledge the world and other works of literature. The literary text, from this perspective, is dynamic in nature, unfolding during the reading process. (91)

Reader-Text interaction differs from a literary pattern to another since each reader can develop his own analytical process according to his prior knowledge and background. The plot structure and the dynamical presentation of events prepare the reader to receive certain sort of expectations. Hence, the reader composes series of thoughts and ideas. Once the events attain beyond these expectations, the reader experiences a combination of surprise and curiosity and starts wondering what will happen next? And worrying about his or her favourite character; is she going to make it? Is he keeping the secret? Are they going to catch him? The readers often adopt concrete feelings towards the different characters of a story. The interaction between the readers and the characters of a particular story is cohesive and epic. Just like real people, characters are the figures that perform the different phases of the story, live in various situations and experiment many problems. In addition, characters are usually people who can imaginatively feel and think just like the reader does. Therefore, characters can be loved, supported or repelled.

According to what has been said above, the act of reading is an experience similar to any other experience in which anyone can add knowledge to his personal inbox, collect morals and lessons, and most importantly, respond intellectually and emotionally to what he is experiencing. Therefore, a good piece of literature can affect not only the ideologies and manners of its audience but also their senses and emotions.

#### **1.4. Emotion and Fictional Narratives**

Feelings and emotions are spiritual states that every human being recognizes. These emotions are often felt as a reaction to something, a situation or a memory. It happens, in fact, that people switch from the real world to the fictional one sometimes, in which they escape their surroundings and travel miles away from their actual setting. They travel by their souls only. Hence, they pack nothing with them but their emotions. In a fictional world, between the papers of a novel for example, they get to know the stories of new characters, with whom they share strong feelings that sometimes drive them to cry. The only trick here is the act of sharing since the fictional feelings do not actually exist. The only emotions that truly exist are those of the reader.



## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

Fiction is desirable and pleasant because it affects its audiences. It invites them to be involved in the story with one way or another. Thus, they find themselves connected to the fictional characters. They worry when certain characters are threatened, they cry in case their favourite character dies, they adopt a feeling of gratitude toward someone and they blame another. They fall for a scene and completely hate the other. However, fictional texts are more powerful in terms of affections. Is it even believable that speaking ink on papers can actually be heart touching? It is no stranger that every reader finds this believable. Since, if not all, the majority of readers have experienced grief as well as frustration at least once upon their reading journey. It is agreeable that there is always something moving about the perfect timing, the well description of characters, the tiny details that make every page of the novel seems real. That is what makes a piece of narrative a perfect narrative.

In this regard, Nicholson hints that the key influence of a novel remains in the perspective that exists in it. According to her, nothing can truly immerse the reader like the first person narrative. Because it creates the same effects that any visual or aural character does. In this way readers can have an access to the character's thoughts and ideas rather than his actions and expressions only. Therefore, characters become extensions to their reader's selves. Thus, they are obliged to feel emotionally engagement in what they are reading.

The emotionally responses of readers might turn on within specific pages and burn out within others. The good narrative is the one that maintains its reader's emotionally reading active. Among these narratives, there are specific genres that develop a group of strong feelings, such as suspense, surprise and curiosity. It is commonly agreed that the tragic narratives, the mysterious, horror and adventure once create certain gaps and incomplete satisfaction in its reader's mind and make him wonder about a particular event. Taking the novel of *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) by Agatha Christie as an example; in which the French detective Poirot tries to solve a murder that happens on a train heading to London. In the raising events, Poirot meets an old man named Ratchett. Ratchett is described by the detective as an evil man. He, then, turns to Poirot and tells him that his life is in danger and that he is seeking for protection. At this point, readers expect that Ratchett might die in any moment. Therefore, they keep reading feeling a sense of curiosity. On the next morning, Ratchett is found killed. In front of 12 suspects, Poirot finds himself investigating about the details of the crime in order to reveal the identity of the murderer. In this vein, readers' mind is full of doubts and accusations. They disguise as detectives. They join Poirot in his investigation by shaping their own hypotheses. The fact that they are thirsty and they seek for more evidence to solve this mystery lives them

## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

boiling in suspense within the rest chapters. At the end of the novel, Christie surprises her readers by revealing the identity of the killer in a very smart way. The emotion of surprise that all the readers share at this point is unquestionable, since the author breaks all their expectations and accusations.

In *Murder on the Orient Express*, readers find themselves deeply involved in the fictional world of Poirot. They seek for nothing except revealing the curtain on what really happened the night Ratchett died. They, indeed, question themselves about what would they do if they were at the same position as Poirot. They link what happened on that train with what might happen on the train they are taking usually to work or to travel. For this exact reason, literature creates fictional gaps that need to be fulfilled by real cues.

To sum up what have been said above, Nicholson hints in her article the following:

The intermingling of an unpredictable or unfamiliar plotline that leaves us lacking all sense of control and a protagonist with a strong voice allows a novel to manipulate its readers' mood. One moment we can be in tears, the next frightened, frustrated or even laughing and it is these emotions that show we truly care about these worlds crafted by authors and make every word on the page worth reading.

Getting emotionally engaged within a literary narrative seems to be a common phenomenon among the story fans. It is widely agreed that the emotions developed by fiction differ from those that people experience in their daily life. Fiction fans usually seek for the experiment of risks and danger to raise their adrenaline. Taking suspense to best illustrate, suspense is a strong feeling that maintains the reader's interestingness in the story and amuse her as well. For this reason, this dissertation focuses on narrative suspense and introduces its composition in the section that follows.

### 1.5. Narrative Suspense

An interesting narrative is the one that captures its reader's breath and seizes his attention. It is commonly agreed that detective stories as well as action and adventure narratives require attention more than other genres. All along their pages they evoke surprise, curiosity and

## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

suspense. Suspense is one of the emotional experiences that a well plotted narrative can offer to its readers. In fact, narrative suspense manipulates the reader's expectations as well as anticipations. It raises certain questions in his mind and keeps him uncertain of everything. What will happen next? And what are the coming pages going to narrate about the protagonist fate? These are the two main anticipations that suspense raises. Hence, suspense drags the story reader to feel sympathy, fear and anxiety toward the protagonist since he faces complex situation and massive problems. In this regard, Iwata quotes Lodge view as follows:

Lodge associates an effect of suspense particularly with the adventure story and the thriller, or a genre combining detective story and adventure story. In these kinds of narratives, protagonists are continuously put into situations of extreme jeopardy and can successfully arouse in the reader a feeling of sympathetic fear and anxiety about the character's destiny. (19)

However suspense is not only about rising questions and creating wonders and curiosity. Carol argues that suspense is not only limited by the question of what will happen next. It involves the generation of a state of anxious uncertainty about the following events. This state of anxious uncertainty develops once the formed questions and doubts are dramatized through the representation of two alternative narrative outcomes of specific kind. On one hand, the moral outcome and hence, conventionally speaking, desirable, yet it is unlikely. On the other hand, the immoral outcome that is conventionally undesirable, yet it is likely to happen. (qtd. in Allen 2). Here, readers experience two sorts of anxiety through suspense. They desire an event to happen, a character to show up and a change to occur. At the same time, they fear other things to happen. They refuse the fact that this undesirable details might truly occur within the fictional story they are reading. Still, they enjoy their uncertainties because it keeps them focused and involved.

Narrative suspense occurs as a result of lack of information as well. While reading, readers encounter incomplete information, some scenes which are not well explained, a bench of missing details and uncovered truth. Therefore, the narrative will seem to have gaps. These gaps allow nothing but suspense to enter among the pages. The reader's thirst for answers refers to what suspense is about. What sustains suspense is, in Sternberg's view, "the clash of the reader's hopes and fears about the outcome of the future confrontation caused by the writer's postponing the answers" (qtd. In Iwata 21).

Taking the story of *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn as an example, by the sudden disappearance of his wife Amy, Nick finds himself as the first head on the suspects list of the detective Rhonda. At the very beginning of the novel, Amy is pictured to the readers as a purely successful woman, the pride of her parents and the amazing one for her audiences. Thus her sudden disappearance did not make any sense. At this point, readers start to feel suspense while trying to uncover the unknown details of her possible death. These gaps left intentionally by Gillian rise questions and doubts. Upon the raising events to the climax, readers get to know more and discover less. Indeed, they are manipulated in a very amusing way. Soon, the truth reveals to them. Amy is the one who faked her own death to have her own revenge. However, she is about to be exposed. Readers are requested to feel sympathy but now for Nick rather than Amy. They both shifted roles in their fans perceptions. Here even the character valence is manipulated. In the falling events, all what readers care about is the resolution of the story. The final truth, what will happen to Nick? What about Amy and Nick's twin? In what genius way will Amy explain her own trick? Suspense combines the readers all along the novel till the resolution elaborates readers' satisfaction.

Having mentioned the novel ends and resolutions open the door to another important factor of suspense that researchers may ignore. The postponing of the resolution or leaving readers with an open end can maintain suspense for even longer periods. In this vein, Iwata highlights: "suspense unresolved are fairly commonly found and this is an issue of significance that we should not miss, because (...) it is one of the points in which the making of suspenseful literary narratives differs from that of more entertaining, popular type of suspense fictions" (23).

## 1.6. Suspense Creation

Creating suspense within story line of a narrative is a skill that not any writer masters. Narrative suspense is a multi-faced emotion that combines both literature and psychology. Literature does not only open the door for all the outcomes of imagination but it also sustains reader's attention and enriches his sensibilities. Therefore it is one of the essential cues that realises suspense through two main conditions. In this regard, Iwata cites these conditions as follows:

A plot of the protagonist's endangerment might better be simple enough to naturally allow the reader to anticipate its bifurcated or a very few potential alternative developments that can be classified, from the viewpoint of the protagonist in trouble, as either a desirable or undesirable; The outcome of a suspenseful event/situation is presented after some delay and, presumably at the point a little later than expected so that the reader's. (35)

Those two conditions can be classified as both literary and narratological pillars of suspense. In addition to the psychological approach that studies readers' interactions, responses, anticipations as well as emotions, that seek for several condition to create suspense as well. In this regard, Iwata estimates that suspense creation is related to the development of the protagonist of the story at the first place that allows the reader to conduct certain attitudes, feelings and emotions toward this imaginative character. The second point that Iwata tackles is the situations and the problems that this protagonist faces which wake the reader's wonders, worries and doubts toward the protagonist fate and well-being. Lastly, Iwata indicates that suspense is highly related to the resolution of the story and the way the protagonist solves the problem and deals with his fate. (35-36).

Since suspense is one of the important effects that literature evokes to its readers, the relation between the readers' responses and the literary works should be well studied and analysed. Therefore, suspense development within certain narratives would be best examined as well as illustrated. The researcher sees that the Reader Response Criticism suits this case the most and it is the best tool to convey further studies in the coming chapters. Thus, Reader Response Theory will be introduced in the next section.

### **1.7. Reader Response Theory**

Reader Response Criticism is a Germanic school of literary criticism known as the Konstanz school where both Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser were active. As its name implies, reader response theory focuses on the reader's responses to the text. Therefore, it was until the 1970s that this theory started receiving attention. Unlike the formalists and new critics, who treat a work of literature as a self-contained object that serves its meaning by its existence on the paper only far away from its author and reader, reader response critics believe that the literary text exists only in the consciousness of its reader who is going to form and construct

## Readers' Interactions and Responses in Literature

meaning based on his or her situation, experiences and personal understanding to the text. Hence, this theory focuses basically on the search of meaning through reading literary texts.

In this vein, one may wonder how can readers, who are only secondary participants after the author himself, form textual meanings and create a work of literature through their reading process? According to reader response theorists, through the reading process, readers can successfully convey a subjective meaning by filling in the gaps that appear between what they have in mind and what the written words convey. In this regard, Rapaport mentions: "Wolfgang Iser famously spoke of the gaps, blanks that the reader is required to fill in by means of implication, reason, fantasy, and so on." (44)

In contrast to many critical approaches, reader response criticism is purely subjective. In fact the reader conveys a kind of an arbitrary subjective act. Thus, these acts of reading and reacting to a particular text differ from a reader to another. Moreover, the same reader may construct different meanings from the same literary work on two different occasions. Since between the first reading and the second one several things may change or occur such as the reader's experiences, the knowledge acquired between the two occasions, change in the mood between the two encounters to the text, or even the purpose behind re-reading the literary work (Tyson 170).

The reader response theory is not only about conducting subjective responses of a particular text but also about examining and analysing this response as well as the responses of others. As consequence, reader response theorists share two major beliefs. The first belief emphasises on the role of the reader in understanding literature and that his role can never be omitted. The other belief argues that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature (Tyson 170).

Having said this, Tyson Illustrates this point by exposing a passage that describes a particular house, in which he mentions both the positive and negative qualities of it. Then he imaginatively creates two different occasions. In the first one, considering the reader as a house buyer; once his reading is complete he could extract some good and other bad qualities of the house that may motivate or prevent him from buying the house. Now in the second occasion, the reader has to extract the good as well as the bad qualities of the house in case he wants to rob it. Here, the second list differs from the first. Although the passage is the same and the reader is the same; the meaning remains changeable according to the reader's encounters.

As the illustration above explains, the response of the reader is the primary key for the text existence. This does not mean that the written text does not already exist. But if the reader does not read it and interacts with its content, the text will never conduct its own value. See it this way, if a novel is written and published but no one has ever read it or tried to criticise it, the novel will be considered as a dead novel on the roof of library. Hence, reader role in evaluating the value of a written work is as important as its physical existence.

Like any other theory, reader response criticism has several tools of analysis. These approaches are: transactional reader-response theory, affective stylistics, subjective reader-response theory, psychological reader response theory and social reader-response theory. In order to well define and explain each approach, the researcher would like to categorize each one apart from the other in form of different variants.

### **1.7.1. Transactional Reader Response Theory**

The transactional literary theory focuses mainly on the analysis of the transaction between the reader and the text. By transactions Rosenblatt means the different interpretations that the reader develops during his reading process. While reading, readers usually interact with the text. They awake their feelings and memories and include them in forming responses concerning the given text. The external occasions and factors of readers are all involved in the various points of reading. At this grade, they can always come back to the text and correct certain interpretations that went across the instructions that the text gives. The correcting process and the re-reading act refer to the importance of the text in guiding its reader. These transactions are what this approach stands for. Once the complete and final meaning takes several stations and modification to reach its pure significance, transactional reader response analysis takes place (Cited. In Tyson 173).

According to Rosenblatt, this approach can occur within the aesthetic mode only. Which is in fact logical since the efferent mode deals with abstract knowledge and information that the text gives; unlike the aesthetic mode that invites feelings and emotions to join the reader in his reading trip. In addition, transactional analysis will by no means be possible if the indeterminate meaning is not achieved. In other words, the text conducts two types of meanings: the determinate and the indeterminate meanings. The first one refers to the unquestioned interpretations that readers adopt. However, the indeterminate meaning is more about the gaps

that need to be fulfilled; just like the unexplained actions of certain characters and unexpected events that inspire readers to form their own interpretations.

### **1.7.2. Affective Stylistic**

Stanley Fish is the first theorist who coined the term affective stylistic to describe the approach in which reader's interpretations contribute to the literary work meaning rather than extracting it like some other critics claim (Cited. In Wood). This approach bases generally on the notions and structures of the literary works; and how certain responses are constructed through reading the text line by line. Hence, Tyson argues that the response is used to show that the meaning of the text does not consist of the final conclusion we draw about what the text says; rather, the meaning of the text consists of our experience of what the text does to us as we read it (176). In other words, the style of structures that affects readers in a particular way is what drives readers to build certain interpretations and not what the text means. Tyson estimates: "what a text is cannot be separated from what it does" (170). The affective stylistic analysis deals with the quality of the text and how certain notions of text compositions lead to the fulfilment of particular gaps by arising uncertainty and doubts. It also examines the role of the text as separated parts in establishing the reading experience that the reader passes through.

### **1.7.3. Subjective Reader Response Theory**

David Bleich is presented in literature as the father of this methodology; in which he strongly estimates: "the responses of readers are the text" itself. According to Bleich view, the analysis of certain literary texts is in fact the analysis of the written responses of its readers. He also believes that the text has no literary meanings beyond what the reader interprets (Cited. In Tyson 178). In this regard, Bleich coined two kinds of objects. The real object which is the physical object that exists in the real world in form of abstract materials; such as books, papers, cars, mirrors, tables and the like. On the other hand, the symbolic object, which is the object that occurs in the mind of the reader rather than the real world. These symbolic objects refer to the feelings, emotions, experiences and previous memories that readers possess (qtd in Tyson 178). Therefore, subjective response criticism deals with the study of the connection that the reader creates between the text and the interpretations formed in his conceptual world. In this context, Tyson explains as:



Symbolization: our perception and identification of our reading experience create a conceptual, or symbolic, world in our mind as we read. Therefore, when we interpret the meaning of the text, we are actually interpreting the meaning of our own symbolization: we are interpreting the meaning of the conceptual experience we created in response to the text (178).

Moreover, certain interpretations which are based on purely subjective responses elaborate a sense of what Bleich like to call Resymbolization. Resymbolization is the desire of readers to explain and evaluate what they are experiencing upon their readings. To better understand, since the subjective responses are merely written symbolizations that exist on the text, readers usually seek to evaluate the quality of it. Hence, readers, in one way or another, evaluate their own conceptual world. They might like some texts and dislike others.

These methods of conducting coherent subjective responses to certain texts do not but supporting the starting point of David Bleich which claims that the actual text exists in the mind of the reader. In this vein, he clarifies: "The pillars on which this approach stands are highly experience oriented. They discuss the reader's reactions to the text, describing exactly how specific passages made the reader feel, think, or associate" (Cited. In Tyson 180). These responses generally include judgements, evaluation and examination of certain characters, actions, events and passages. They also analyse how some passages affect the reader's emotions and feelings in certain ways.

#### **1.7.4. Psychological Reader Response Theory**

Human's psyche walks in hand with his daily, ordinary life. It often participates in the different activities any person does. For Holland, there is a strong link between what people read and their psychological state. Moreover, Holland considers the reading process as a transaction activity between the text and the reader in which his interpretation reveals some truths about himself rather than the text as a written object (Cited. In Tyson 182). In this vein, Tyson gives the best illustration to better explain this theory by referring to two different readers who have a common history with victimization whether by friends, family or peers. These readers would interact perfectly with the novel of Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* in which the protagonist Pecola suffers from victimization. She was abused and bullied for her shape by her closest social circle. Tyson develops his example by estimating how each reader would interact with the same text. The first reader, he says, might perceive Pecola as a victim, since her

sufferings remind him with his own sufferings. He, then, takes a defensive position toward Pecola. He believes through his readings that Pecola did not harm anyone. She is peaceful with a childlike heart. Hence, he would ignore or minimize Pecola's pain to reject his own sufferings by focusing on other aspects of the novel. He, thus, defends himself at the first place. On the other hand, however, the second reader may interact with the same novel in different way. He would blame Pecola for her passiveness and refusing to stand up for herself. He, then, admits in a way or another that his own experience as a victim is present within his reading of the novel (183).

Holland defines the psychological interpretations and responses in three modes. The first mode is the defensive mode, in which the psychological defences are raised by the written text. Second, the fantasy mode; which interprets the text by controlling the defences and fulfilling the desire to be protected from threats. Third, the transformation mode, which transforms the first two steps into an abstract interpretation so that we can get the psychological satisfaction we desire without acknowledging to ourselves the anxiety-producing defences and guilt-producing fantasies that underlie our assessment of the text (Cited. In Tyson 184).

### **1.7.5. Social Reader Response Theory**

Social reader response criticism, as Fish notes, is the product of response that certain community produce. In other words, what is considered to be subjective individual response is, in fact, a group of shared strategies of interpretations within a specific community. Since readers cooperate with their culture and share common beliefs that result in some assumptions about what makes a text a literary text and what sorts of meaning readers are supposed to find in it (Tyson 185).

After introducing the theory of reader response, it can only be agreeable that reading is purely a personal experience. It is about certain texts that touch its readers and evaluate the way these texts succeed in clarifying things, disappointing, surprising, confusing and satisfying each reader in a similar but slightly different way. Reader responses often draw a bridge between the fictional world of a novel and the inner world of each reader by exposing particular interactions toward characters, dramatic events and incidents.

### **1.8. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher conducted an overview of narratives as the essential part of a narrated story and how this story invites its reader to interact with its main events. Therefore, this interaction between a particular reader and certain narrative evokes strong feelings and emotions. In this regard, this present chapter introduced narrative suspense as one of those feelings that narratives evoke and focused on the basic components that led to its creation. Due to this, the researcher gave a glimpse of the chosen theory that can help in analysing the development of suspense in the given short stories.

## **Chapter Two: Edgar Allan Poe and Literature**

## **2.1. Introduction**

Edgar Allan Poe is known as the father of the detective genre. As he mastered the main aspects of Romanticism and gothic fiction; he became the icon of American literature. In order to convey a better understanding of suspense' development within Allan's writings; the era that gave birth to these writings, as well as Poe's major skills should be taken into consideration. Therefore, this chapter aims to discuss American literature in the nineteenth century. It also introduces the gothic literature as Poe's developed it. In addition, it tries to present the detective genre and its main elements. Furthermore, it portrays a closer look at Poe's profile and it discusses his major themes. By the end of this chapter, a general analysis of Edgar's style of writing is conducted.

## **2.2. American Literature in the Nineteenth Century**

Toward history, the different human disciplines knew some changes in their different aspects. Literature, for instance, recognized several movements through centuries. It walked in hand with the main historical changes that the world witnessed century after century. Nowadays, the literary movements are used to analyse both the fictional and non-fictional works of every author. The main literary movements related to that era are Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, and Modernism.

American literature in the nineteenth century was one of the cultural responses that shaped the new independent identity of Native Americans after The Revolutionary War and The War of 1812. Americans woke their attentions of native origins and sense of nationalism. They sought for self-expression and men's freedom in addition to democracy and equality. It was at this exact period where writers like William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe produced original literature to break the literary exploitation of the British over their writings.

### **2.2.1. American Romantic Authors**

At the first half of the nineteenth century, American writers were mainly Romantic authors. They followed the Romantic movement of that era that characterized works of music, art and literature. This movement adopted imagination as the main component of creativity rather

## Edgar Allan Poe and Literature

than logic. Romantic writers were interested in nature. Hence, they considered nature as a source of beauty. For instance, John Keats wrote a poem describing autumn and the seasonal circle all along the year. Romantics developed a strong focus on individualism. They supported the emphasis on individual characters within their writings. Individual experiences and previous incidents shaped their most stories and plots. In addition, Romantic writers had a great deal with emotions and feelings. They used their literary works to express themselves, describe their pain and break their silence. In fiction, Romanticism developed by expressing the emotional struggles and conflicts that a fictional character passes through. The spiritual sensitivity and women idealization were central themes that coined this movement as well. Romantics believed in the goodness and pureness of men kind and evoked morality of human beings.

American literature flourished as its authors' pens were constantly active. Ralph Waldo Emerson was highly known for his essays that focused on individualism. He wrote the essay of *First Series* (1841) and the poem of *The Rhodora* (1847). Walt Whitman is considered to be the most important poet of the American Romantic literature. It is argued that: "Whitman's poetry dwells on many of the themes that were important in American Romanticism. We'll find big doses of nature in his work, as well as reflections on freedom and democracy, and an emphasis on individualism and the imagination. He's the Poet Laureate of Romanticism" ("American Romanticism Top Authors"). Whitman is well known of his work *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and *Democratic Vistas* (1871). Herman Melville also contributed to the American Romanticism by his novel *Moby Dick* which narrates the tale of Captain Ahab and his obsession to find the white whale.

Romanticism idealized mankind and symbolized pureness and morality. At the same time, it had a dark side that pictures the other side of human beings and exposed the evil that guide peoples' manners and attitudes toward themselves and others. Dark Romanticism was much pessimistic than Romanticism. It exposed human sins and feelings of guilt and revenge. In addition, it put emphasis on human's imperfections and inner weaknesses to develop dark habits and commit bad things. Dark Romanticism was involved with Gothic Literature as well in which it came with horror facts and mysterious scenes surrounded by alienation, death, and lost. It adopted the "what can go wrong, will" philosophy as well as "tell it like it is" belief. A great example of Dark Romanticism might be that one of Edgar Allan Poe short stories and poems. Edgar had written a poem entitled *The Raven*, in which the protagonist mourned his dead love and found his condolences coming from a speaking raven. The poem of Poe pictures the

## Edgar Allan Poe and Literature

techniques that shape pessimism and alienation. It idealizes women, focuses on individual incidents, and breaks the logical stream of the conscious mind.

Another author who serves the pessimistic Romanticism of the fictional prose is Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne gave birth to his novel *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. The novel deals with several themes of both Romanticism and Dark Romanticism, it deals also with questions of justice and morality, sensations and free will. Moreover, it examines humanistic immorality and evil soul. The novel raises a kind of punishments and judgements towards those who commit mistakes in order to conduct a feeling of guilt and massive grief.

In brief, Romanticism as a literary movement was highly adopted by so many writers who were influenced by nature and moral values. It supported feelings' expressions and emotional struggles. Romantic authors lived in a beautiful fantasy close to perfection in a world that pictures everything but perfection. Hence, another movement came as a reaction by the mid nineteenth. It was known as the Realistic Movement.

### 2.2.2. Realism in American Literature

It was until the late nineteenth century that American literature adopted another techniques and themes. With the spread of Realism as a new artistic movement, American and European authors' works became more real and logic. At this exact period, Americans were passing through the United States Civil War. Hence, they dealt with social issues; they explained their true conditions and transformed their sufferings to powerful literary texts.

Realist authors were more into reality and facts. They wrote about the truth as it is by depending on different themes of nature, government, freedom and wars which affected the human kind. American authors could come with masterpieces dealing with this intellectual movement; such as Henry James and his novel *Daisy Miller* and William Dean Howells with his work *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, in addition to Mark Twain and Stephen Crane.

To sum up all what has been said above, American literature of the nineteenth century recognized several aspects and dealt with serious issues that were concerned with human beings as individual units of society and social issues that linked these literary works with the historical backgrounds of this era. With brilliant writers like Whitman, Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe, the American literature shaped its own flavour and imposed its existence. For instance, Edgar

## Edgar Allan Poe and Literature

Allan Poe manipulated his works between the common themes of Dark Romanticism and the gothic basis of storytelling. Hence, he raised his literary texts to become powerful and maintained his readers' sense of suspense, curiosity and surprise.

### 2.3. Gothic Literature

A gothic novel or story is often the story that narrates fictional events based on dark scenes and foggy atmosphere of a mixture of fear and danger. In this vein, Kennedy defines:

In the most general terms, Gothic literature can be defined as writing that employs dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic narrative devices, and an overall atmosphere of exoticism, mystery, fear, and dread. Often, a Gothic novel or story will revolve around a large, ancient house that conceals a terrible secret or serves as the refuge of an especially frightening and threatening character.

According to this view, Gothic writers include Romantic themes and supernatural elements to form their literary ground of the story. These authors narrate certain adventures and unusual incidents to capture their reader's attention, suspense as well as entertainment.

This genre was highly linked with the Romanticism movement, as they both came to existence at the same historical period and witnessed the massive changes that occurred in the world in general and in literature in particular. Furthermore, the nineteenth century gothic literature was unique and famous, for its perfect combination of romantic themes, supernatural element, the break over the traditional and classical writings and the mystery that it stands first on.

Speaking of Gothic literature and mentioning Romanticism as literary movement brings one main icon to both ancient and nowadays readers: Edgar Allan Poe the king of his time and the well-known author who could impact literature in general by his smart and well plotted tales. Poe, as it has been argued, "found a place to explore psychological trauma, the evils of man, and mental illness. Any modern-day zombie story, detective story, or Stephen King novel owes a debt to Poe. There may have been successful Gothic writers before and after him, but no one perfected the genre quite like Poe" (Kennedy).



Since Gothic literature depends on mystery and alienation, in addition to death and murders; the idea of creating a new genre in literature that deals with mysterious murders done intentionally to cause pain and lost and express revenge and evil seems to be interesting. Therefore, the detective genres came to existence at the same time in which gothic writings were receiving much attention and appreciation.

## **2.4. Detective Fiction**

Among the different gates that lead to the heart of pure literature, readers are drawn more to the gate of detective fiction. A far eye can observe this gate and sees series of questions, incomplete satisfaction and a complex suspense. Once crossing the gate, a long trip full of mystery and horror starts. The detective fiction is interesting because it is way different than the other fictional genres. In a well-planned plot, a character is either killed or disappeared, hence, the protagonist tracks, stacks and analyses the details left on the scene; s/he gathers evidence and clues and develops certain doubts and accusations to solve the mystery by reviling the identity of the murderer.

Back to the American literature, Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be the father of the detective fiction. Many writers are influenced by his detective stories. He created the genre of crime-solving fiction. He developed the detective stories by including a brilliant detective “Dupin” within his plots. This detective is competent enough to solve the mysterious events that the police could not figure them out. Poe knew how to get his readers involved within the suspenseful landscape he created. He formed a story under the form of a puzzle, in which readers seek to play the role of Mister Dupin. They focus with every detail in order to link the characters of the story to the clues and evidence given within the scenes of the story. As they read, they develop a sense of suspense and curiosity to reveal the reasonable truth behind the crime. Just like the modern works of Agatha Christie which are consisting a great number of fans.

Poe’s acknowledgement in today’s modern detective plots is still admitted. Arthur Conan expresses Poe’s influence on his creation of the character Holmes and says: “Where was the detective story until Poe breathed the breath of life into it?” (Eschner). In this regard, Poe’s role as the father of the American detective fiction can never be denied. The way he developed the plots, the ultimate need of the police for Dupin way of thinking and analysing, the impossibility

## Edgar Allan Poe and Literature

of the crime to be solved and the genius resolution that satisfy the reader's reasoning is what made this genre interesting.

Speaking of Poe's role in creating the detective fiction brings to mind his crime-solving stories that were full of gaps and mystery in addition to horror and manipulation. Naming *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, *The Purloined Letter* and of course *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*; Which play an important role in nowadays literary criticism and influence both the authors and readers of detective genre.

Having spoken about Edgar Allan Poe and his concordant print within the American literature makes the reader curious about Poe's inner world and mind set. How was Edgar Allan Poe? And what are the main incidents that helped in his development of the gothic genre, the detective fiction and the romantic stories?

### 2.5. Edgar Allan Poe: A Psychological Profile

Among the authors of the nineteenth century, Edgar Allan Poe gained specific gratitude. His style of writing, his stories events and the type of his literature made him distinctive from the other writers of that time. It is agreeable that one's writings can be well distinguished from others if he himself was different than others. Hence, Poe made his own empire of attractive literature by creating his own landscape. His imagination gave birth to an almost perfect set of stories. Thus, the question that asks itself rather than "who is Poe?" is "What is Poe?" And how did his brain work?

With no doubts, Edgar Allan Poe suffered from depression as both a young and an adult man. He had serious mental illnesses. He was isolated and alienated as a young man who is supposed to be socially active. Poe's depression grew as he was growing up. He was raised as an orphan. He was barren from family love. Soon after he lost his mother, father, foster mother, wife... The list remains long. His miserable experiences with lost and death drew a large haul within his circle of life. Soon after, Poe started dealing with alcohol and drugs. Hence, he was drunk and high the majority of time. His mind set was built up of hallucinations as he was unconscious or half conscious. In addition to that; having Poe thinking and forming dark plots in his head about death and lost made him more into mystery and horror. As he kept writing stories about revenge, sins, guilt and mystery always captured him in this weird mode. Poe was described as the man who never smiles.

Critics argue that Poe used The Insanity Defence within his detective and gothic stories. The insanity defence is often an excuse used by the defendant to justify their crimes in which they defend themselves claiming that they were insane or that they could not control their consciousness the moment the crime was committed. At this point, one might take the issue of alcohol addiction that Poe had to the next level. Far away from Poe's personal life experiences, the insanity defence might be applied on Poe himself as an author who lived certain moments of insanity. At these exact moments, Poe's brain baked the stories that reflected his inner self, his dark mode and the immoral side of human being who can come at the place of the sinner and defendant.

As one gets deeper in Poe's ideologies, s/he faces more complex puzzles that need to be solved logically. Speaking of logic, Poe's writings leant on fictional elements, supernatural events and mysterious cases. Still, he worshiped reason. Poe described his tales as tales of ratiocination. That is to say, his tales stand on logical reasoning. Each fictional tale, criminal plot and mysterious story that seems impossible to be solved had its own reason – in Poe's eye – that make sense to the reader. Unlike the other authors, Poe could manage his tales. He always knew how to concentrate on the gaps that formed a serious issue within the story. Whether by using his conscious or unconscious imagination, he could exactly fill in the complex gaps and satisfy his reader's suspense and curiosity. Poe was simply genius manipulator. The way he pictured the plots, using gothic characteristics, adding a slight of mystery and horror tone and creating hard gaps that seemed impossible to be solved made his own literary texts stand for themselves. Therefore, Poe found the bridge that links the reader's emotions with the story's events. A mixture of terror, fear, suspense, curiosity and delicious satisfaction can be experienced within one tale that Poe had written.

## **2.6. Major Themes in Edgar Allan Poe Short Stories**

Poe's works differ from the major American literary works not only because brought originality to both the American gothic and detective fields; but also because they dealt with humanistic self and morality, they often pictured all what mankind deny through their massive themes. The major themes that were spotted in Edgar Allan Poe's literature are guilt and sin, morality, the power of the dead over the living and the atmosphere of fear and horror.

### 2.6.1. Guilt and Sin

Literary fiction has always shadowed the mere core of humanity. It often narrates stories about two alternative sides: The good side (usually of the protagonist) and the evil side (the one of the antagonist). These two sides are found in constant confrontation. Thus, the good side is always rewarded according to moral qualities and the evil side is punished and haunted by feelings of guilt and regret.

For a writer who wrote at the nineteenth century as Edgar Allan Poe, it seems merely impossible to not include the main moral and immoral lessons within his fictions. The nineteenth century was a sensitive era for all the Americans. Hence, the feeling of guilt was always affected by society. As an attempt to express their inner feelings toward self and others concerning human fate and punishments; both Edgar and Hawthorne treated the theme of sins and guilt within their writings. Hawthorne's *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment* is the best example to examine the impact of guilt on a human being. Hawthorne conveys a strong message to society by claiming that guilt will always remain unforgivable and unforgettable. If someone's sin was tolerated by others, it may still never be tolerated by his self. The feeling of regret will always remain there, deep inside the person who committed it. However, Edgar Allan Poe's work of *The Masque of Red Death* tolerates sins and guilt from another perspective. He adopts the idea of alienation to overcome the massive feeling of regret. Because, according to Poe, if one could not treat his or her own feeling of guilt he will be drawn in his own darkness and ends up by destroying his self.

### 2.6.2. Morality

If anyone is meant to raise himself by his self, and if every human being is able to choose whether to be good or bad, if anyone is capable to switch between his angel and evil self; is he going to develop the feeling of regret once committing something wrong? Is the feeling of gratitude going to be there once committing something right? The fact that someone can choose to be moral by his own will is pleasant and so satisfying, but the alternative fact might have the same degree of satisfaction if the one choosing it believes that it fits his characteristics and pleases his ego. The distinction between wrong or right is what morality stands for. Edgar Poe adopted the struggle of morality as one of his main themes, in his story *The Tell-Tale Heart* he

wrote about an unnamed man who lives in an ultimate dilemma. The man's dark side wins the struggle and he kills a good old man. Within the story, the fact of committing a murder, becoming bad, and adopt wrongdoings turn to be rejected by the narrator. Therefore, he leans to the insanity defence. Morality has always been a serious theme in literature that portrays psychological, social and religious backgrounds.

Among other authors who tackled this theme is Nathaniel Hawthorne in his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. In which he focused on the consequences of sins and feelings of guilt and regret. Morality had an important role in shaping the events of the novel all along the story. Even though the sin was claimed to be done for love, Hawthorne insisted on its results rather than its causes. Hester and Dimmesdale had to face their wrongdoings and immoral attitudes.

### **2.6.3. The Power of the Dead over the Living**

Poe's experience with death had with no doubts a deep impact on his personality and attitudes. He lost almost everyone he once loved. Poe's own concept of death is highly related to love. He combined the gothic elements of story creating with the supernatural and illogical aspects to create his own plots. When writing about death, Poe made it possible to the dead people to come back to life through a symbolic memory. In his tale *Ligeia*, Poe wrote a strange story about a man who lost his first wife Ligeia and got married to another. While his second wife is suffering from a mysterious sickness, the protagonist travels with his mind to his days with Ligeia, only in his mind he remembers details and misses memories. At this exact point, Ligeia takes his memories of her as a bridge to come back from the dead and she takes place in the physical world all again. Through this, we can see that Poe used terror and ghosts to portray the unforgettable love.

### **2.6.4. Atmosphere of Fear and Horror**

Besides mystery, Poe's tales conduct moods of horror and fear. One may stop reading to recapture his breaths. It is true that Poe liked what he was writing about, he was strange and full of secrets. He used mystery and ambiguity to show his talent. Still, the genre he adopted often held gloomy atmospheres and weird details. According to Poe's life challenges, he had experienced the feeling of fear, lost and terror over and over again. He knew how strong this feeling is, hence, he narrated his stories using scary events and details to guarantee his readers'

attention and suspense. The foggy atmosphere behind Poe's plot made the interaction between the reader and the literary texts more exciting. The sense of horror was often explored once the protagonist is put under threat. Either his life is in danger or he is about to commit something that will bring hard consequences. Once the protagonist is at the place of a victim the antagonist is, with no doubt, at his highest degrees of evil and the plot raises its climax.

Taking the example of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the specific details and elements used to describe the house were chosen to add the gloomy mood to the story. The mental disorder, the pre-sentiments and the weird composition of the setting are all conducted to prepare the reader and invite him to develop a specific kind of imagination that suits the mystery and the scary tone of the story. As the raising events take place, the reader forms hypothesis and conducts doubts about Madeleine's soul and after death existence. Hence, the supernatural element shows and takes place within the logical order of the story.

Poe's regarded fear as an important ingredient to add a special flavour to his stories. Therefore, his tales are categorized as the most pleasant stories with genius and different composition. In this vein, the atmosphere of horror and fear in Edgar Allan Poe tales is considered to be the sign which distinguishes Poe's stories than other's once.

Edgar Allan Poe's fame goes back to his brilliant imagination, his convenient choice of literary genres and subgenres in addition to his main theories, ideologies and style of writing. Just like any other author, Poe had his own style and techniques of prose and poetry writing that worked in hand with his talent as the father of gothic literature and detective tales.

## 2.7. Poe's Styles of Writing

Edgar Allan Poe is well known for his gothic stories and scary tales. His work belongs to the dark romanticism genre. He is considered to be the first American writer who mastered this genre and contributed to the science fictional literature by adopting the emerged technologies of that time within his writings.

Through history, Poe earned many titles, such as: the master of mystery, the well-known men of letters, and the father of horror, plus the inventor of the detective genre. Thus, Poe's writings are classified as one of the most admired tales of all time. Many schools and universities have examined his writings, criticized his style and analysed his language. Poe is

## Edgar Allan Poe and Literature

well distinguished due to his style of writing. He has a complex imaginative brain. Therefore, his style is full of effective imagery, symbolism and irony.

When speaking of Edgar Allan Poe style of writing and language; one must mention that Poe used language to fit his themes and genres of writing. In addition to imagery, Poe used some special techniques to produce well cohesive paragraphs and conduct the correct effect on its readers. “He”, therefore, “employs a highly effective use of alliteration (repetition of initial sounds within words) and assonance (repetition of similar sounds between words) that lends a haunting musicality to his writings... This technique creates a rhythm that is both soothing and mesmerizing” (What Is Edgar Allan Poe's Writing Style?).

Moreover, Poe mastered the technique of “the double-entendre”. This literary technique serves to deduce multiple meanings or interpretations. He used it to either impose brilliant tricks to the scene or to add a humorous taste to the tale. In addition to these techniques, Poe was famous of “the show and don’t tell” technique, which is based on showing clues and hints without giving direct interpretations. This device raises a sense of foreboding within the readers and fans of Poe. In fact it has a great deal with suspense and surprise effects within story telling.

Another device that has a large credit to Poe in the American literature is the use of metaphors. The use of metaphors, imagery and even symbolism turns a literary text to a vivid one. It feeds the story with beautiful narration and complete description. In this regard, Virginia C. Poe, the granddaughter of Poe highlights: “He uses figurative language with great skill and precision... Metaphors can serve many purposes and often does double duty... It can be used as a figure-of-speech to illuminate an aspect of the story, or it can be used as a stylistic device to make your writing more vivid and more powerful” (What Is Edgar Allan Poe's Writing Style?).

Poe’s writing style, techniques and literary devices served his purpose to create a group of narratives and made it possible for him to achieve a great stage of affection within his readers. It was through his language that his tales came to life and lasted forever. Virginia C. Poe claimed that his techniques were conducted by the minimum tools; still, they achieved the maximum effects (What Is Edgar Allan Poe's Writing Style?). Hence, the bond that links the reader’s reactions while reading one of Poe’s tales and Poe’s major techniques and language is substantial. For a writer like Poe, who has shaped the literary genres of thriller, crime and mystery in terms of its background, language and fictional plots; it is merely impossible to not

inspire his reader's feelings of curiosity, tension and suspense by his writings. Hence, the sense of suspense is what keeps Poe's narratives lasting forever.

## 2.8. Edgar Allan Poe and Suspense

Creating suspense within a narrative requires many elements that contribute to its realisation. For Poe, raising suspense is a talent that was born within his pen. He knew how build an intimate link between a piece of literature and a reader. He could easily manipulate people's attention and emotions. Hence, evoking suspense, for Poe, is a matter of building a complete plot with high standards of affection.

In an analysis of one of Poe's short stories concerning the effect of suspense, a research found that Poe used certain standards to achieve the needed tension of suspense. It found that *The Tell-Tale Heart* is suspenseful narrative because it is constructed with multiple tools that helped on shaping it; naming the first-person narration as the first tool, story pacing, setting the scene and word choice ("How Does Edgar Allan Poe Keep the Reader in Suspense in 'The Tell-Tale Heart'?").

The use of first person narration makes the story seem more real, the details and the expressions portray the story in a more vivid way; hence, the reader would treat the main character as someone with whom s/he shares feelings, thought, and fate. In *The Tell-tale Heart* the narrator seem to be insane. He is not reliable and the reader cannot determine whether he is being logical or that he is hallucinating. Thus, the bound between the reader and the narrator becomes stronger as the author keeps using 'I' and 'my' to express his own views and thoughts. As a result, the whole atmosphere of the story becomes close to reality. At this point, suspense takes place by tracing the narrator decisions and questioning his destiny.

Story pacing is another important tool to convey suspense. Taking the same example of *The Tell-Tale Heart* where Poe shifted from a scene to another different scene by exposing each time new events that raised new gaps and questions in the mind of the reader. For instance, the narrator checks every night the eye of the old man under the light for eight nights until he kills him and the police show up, and then he decides to escape them. After that he thinks that he should meet one of them where he lives in a constant suspense and fear. The way Poe shifts from an event to another where the actions take place one after one is what the previous studies call the story pacing.



Setting the scene is more about the description of place and time. Poe often wrote tales about mystery, horror and death. For this exact reason he had chosen the dark and gloomy for his stories. After midnight scenes, dark places, creepy and empty houses, the season of winter where it gets dark and cold, rain and thunder. This selection of the setting supports the atmosphere of the story and enhances its general mood of ambiguity and fear. It also sets a good background to build the climax. Thus, suspense surrounds the story patterns and draws its impact on the readers.

Poe has for no doubt a creepy and complex language. He often chooses his words and sentences to serve the tone and the mood of the tale. In this regard, the syntax of his writings plays an important role to convey messages, transmits an idea, and inspires certain emotions. For instance, a research deduces an example from *The Tell-Tale Heart* where it says:

The narrator uses extremes in his descriptions, such as calling the eye the “vulture” or the “evil eye”, even though it is clear that the elderly man simply has glaucoma or a similar eye disease. The narrator also uses repetition, such as saying “I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously” each night when he goes into the room, emphasizing his actions and building suspense” (“How Does Edgar Allan Poe Keep the Reader in Suspense in ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’?”).

To sum up, the genre in which Poe was interested itself is a suspenseful field of literature. The dark themes and the atmospheres of horror and death have always captured their audiences’ attentions. For this exact reason, Poe did not face any troubles in conducting and transmitting multiple inspirations like suspense and curiosity.

## 2.9. Conclusion

This chapter gave the reader a general overview of the origins of Edgar Allan Poe’s works, his stylistic profile, as well as hint of the historical background. It also identified the main themes that influenced Edgar -as an American writer- to produce and develop plots and characters with gloomy flavours. To sum up, this chapter opened the door to the readers to get involved within Edgar world of mystery and suspense.

## **Chapter Three: A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories**

### 3.1. Introduction

In the modern world, Edgar Allan Poe is known as the icon of mystery and suspense for his legacy of works that influenced and inspired writers for decades. He is famous for his exceptional style of writing and clever techniques that maintain the dramatic effects which play an important role in capturing reader's interest of the written text.

In this regard, this present chapter aims to deduce the use of suspense within Poe writings. It studies suspense creation, development and realisation through a group of Poe's selected short stories. Moreover, it depicts the major tactics and literary devices that helps suspense fulfilment. It also analyse the effect of suspense on the reader's amazement and interest within the reading process. The analysis is conducted through RRT (Reader Response Theory) and applied on *Berenice*, *The BC (Black Cat)*, *The FHU (Fall of The House of Usher)*, *The MRM (Muders in The Rue Morgue)* and *The TTH (Tell-Tale Heart)*.

### 3.2. *The Fall of the House of Usher*

Edgar is famous of his gothic literature that adopts dark romantic themes. The atmospheres that he develops within his tales creation are, in fact, what led to his successful management of curiosity as well as suspense of his readers. Taking his short story *The Fall of the House of Usher* as an example, in which he paved the way to his readers to expect a well-shaped plot that soon inspires their assumptions and expectations. The title itself tells a lot and narrates nothing. Once referring to "the fall" of the house one is, likely, prepared to a crisis of the house (as a building) or to the ultimate dissociation of the Ushers as a family. With this preparation, Edgar opens his story.

At the very first sight, the reader finds himself involved within the gloomy and unpleasant atmosphere of the plot. As the narrator keeps receiving weird licentious and negative energy that outruns the mansion: "I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit" (Poe 11). Edgar, here, is preparing a solid landscape on which surprise, curiosity as well as suspense stand on later within the story. As noticed, Poe narrates his story using the first person omniscient. Hence, he refers to himself as the protagonist, more likely. Reading a story that has been narrated within the tongue of a direct

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

person creates stronger bond between the narrator and the reader than the one that may occur between third person omniscient and the reader.

Still with the opening of the story, the author maintains his emphasis of the dark powers that remains surrounding the house: "What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher?" (12). He, thus, raises certain questions and expresses his doubts concerning the house that leads the reader himself to question what kind of evil will occur inside the house? The fact that the reader is raising his own doubts keeps him attached to the plot, wondering and suggesting is suspense itself.

In the story, Poe prepared a delusive ground for his reader's expectations: "Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend" (13). Having come to this line, one must expand his roof of expectations. Eventually, the narrator seems to lose his connections with his friend a long period ago. He captures the boyhood image of Roderick. Unreliable image of a child that drove him to a weird, dark and evil house in the middle of autumn! If the presentation of the main characters is missing a lot, if the narrator does not know Roderick well; how is the reader supposed to deduce or develop a specific feeling toward him? The narrator convinced the reader, easily, that he is unable to know what is behind the Usher, and what will lead to their crisis.

A reader who is prospective to figure out the paradox of the house is getting nothing but more suspense since the narrator himself seems to know less than expected. The method that Allan uses within his story is very smart and manipulative. It preserves his reader curiosity and shifts the way he paved for the story in his mind with each details his pen brings to the paper.

As Edgar had always selected his characters on specific conditions for a reason, Roderick instability and mental disorder might mean something that can deduce the coming events or reveal some facts: "To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave" (21). For a reader- with certain doubts and several questions- Roderick instability leads to his creation of a completely different plot that judges and offends Roderick. Soon enough, every single detail takes another shape and another inspiration: "The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character were the unusual diagnosis" (23). Breaking all reader's expectations and assumptions so far by playing a winning card! A new character who may be real or unreal. A reader who does not know a lot about Roderick nor

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

the narrator has two options; whether to take Roderick speech seriously and link the fall of the Ushers to the disease or maybe curse that hunted the brothers and ruined their life, or to classify Madeline existence as a kind of illusions and imagination creations of ill Roderick. The tactics that Poe uses are mainly dictions. He refers and symbolises things. Foreshadows the facts and keeps always some pieces missing. He raises gaps and creates hauls that allows suspense as well as surprise to get in. Poe's texts invite the reader to interpret, question and dare him to come at the right imagination. For this reason, the Reader's involvement within Poe's works is highly necessary and important.

Back to Madeline as a newly introduced character, one might link the pr-sentiments of evil power that the narrator could catch with the mental illness of Roderick and the unpleasant and scary atmosphere of the house and come to conclusion that suggests that Madeline is the resolution of the previous assumptions. She seems to present the key to the paradox of tale: "A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them" (33-34).

This passage is supposed to be the changing key of the story, the reader's satisfaction of knowing more is realized. He is no longer eager to have answers. The narrator discovered for the very first time that Madeline and Roderick are twins! This explains a lot. If they are twins, it is a bit odd that both share spiritual connections that normal brothers do not share. So the fact that Roderick was dying mentally is highly linked to his twin's death physically. Within her death, we can deduce that Roderick is the last Usher alive. Gathering this much of hints and information all at once is all what the reader has been seeking for so far. Still, he needs to figure out what exactly will happen with Roderick. Having the dead body buried under the house is not something common, is it?

What Poe mastered the most to convey the needed response from his readers is the perfect timing. He knew exactly when to refer, to symbolise, to tell less or more: "And you have not seen it?' he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.' Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm" (37). The story is breaking the gloomy tone to enter the scary one. With the reader's expectations of more death

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

and chaos, a new diction occurs. Roderick's use of "it" makes the reader wonder again and again what does he mean? He is referring to what? What has he seen? The Storm and thunder usually warn that something really bad is about to happen. The descriptive tone that Poe's uses within the story makes the reader feels like if he is almost there. He can imagine and picture every single detail like if it is being seen by his own eyes. The precision of the elements of the story is close to reality, hence, it inspires the readers to feel and interact with its characters and experience its events.

Dealing with a gothic tale requires for no doubts the break of logic, the presence of supernatural elements and dark obsession: "Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I dared not speak! We have put her living in the tomb! Said I not that my senses were acute" (44). Although she is dead, Roderick could hear her voice. The repeated "I dared not" and "I dared not speak"; The use of these particular expressions within this quote serves suspense and surprise development. It turns out that Madeline is Alive, with other words, probably she has been buried alive! Despite the facts that visualizes Madeline's death as the climax of the story; Poe pops the whole plot with an unexpected surprise. The factor of surprise here is what maintains suspense creation. Now, that the story broke the usual and normal tone. The reader seeks for nothing but to know what will happen next? What is Roderick's fate? And what will happen to Madeline?

The following passage from the story can be treated as a resolution that maintains readers' interest and curiosity: "While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the 'House of Usher'" (46).

The waited crisis, the fall of both the Ushers and their house is finally here. By the fall of the Mansion, suspense comes to an end and the story remains ambiguous at certain points. The fate of the narrator for example is left to the reader to imagine. *The Fall of the House of Usher* is a mysterious trip or more likely a weird experience that swallow its readers feelings and emotions. The diction and symbolism as well as imagery and atmosphere controlled the main aspects of the story led to the creation of suspense as the dominant guide that companion the

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

reader all along the story; With no doubts the tale's genre, tone and atmosphere all contributed to the suspense creation. But still, the reader's existence and entertainment serves to Poe's objective behind sharing such a terrifying plot and mysterious characters. The bond that the readers develop with the narrator is so close and epic. For a far eye, the narrator seems to be important to the readers and his fate is as important as theirs. The detailed descriptions of the plot, setting, weather, emotions within the story are the winning card of Poe as a master of suspense. The choice of vocabularies and words made the readers involvement within the story deep and vivid. To conclude, *The Fall of the House of Usher* is one of the most suspenseful works that Edgar gave birth to. It is rich, complete and so satisfying.

### 3.3. *The Black Cat*

Through a plot that witnessed horrible murders, evil sins, and a mixture of dark feelings; Poe raised his tale *The Black Cat* (1843). *The Black Cat* is one of Poe's most famous stories. For its gothic elements and complex events that expose evil control over an unnamed character. Poe developed his story on a purpose of spreading illusion and fear among his fans. *The Black Cat* is a powerful tale that symbolises deep meanings and covers dark truths. Hence, it is both an interesting and exceptional tale.

In order to interact with a written text, there must be a motive. Therefore, *The Black Cat* can be treated as a motive that inspires its readers' emotions and senses on two levels. First, its creepy plot and dramatic events could manage successfully the reader's interest, curiosity as well as suspense. Second, the linguistic elements used by Poe could realise a balance between the genre, the tone, and the plot of the story.

The title of the story refers to a cat, a black one. Hence, the reader expects that the whole story is probably revolved around a black cat. Or at least the black cat of this tale is important. This idea can be introduced as the ground on which the readers build their assumptions, interactions and anticipations: "But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events" (Poe, par.1) the opening paragraph indicates that the narrator is about to die, and before meeting his death; he feels the urge to unburden his soul. One might wonder, why would the narrator want to unburden his soul? What burdened him so far? Thus,

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

the first anticipation starts to take shape within the reader's mind and suspense develops its first step within the narrative.

For a reader who is expecting something to happen with or about the cat, the following line, "the ancient popular notion, which regarded all black cats as witches in disguise" (par.4) will be considered a hint to what is coming next. One might think that the cat has something to do with magic or some witchcraft. Still, s/he will never get to know unless s/he reads the rest of the story. Involving such traces for the readers to follow seems to be a winning card for Poe to maintain their interest and tension.

The pace of the tale is highly considered to preserve its pace within the raising events. However, readers are told that the attitudes of the narrator change; he is no longer the same person he used to be: "I took from my waistcoat-pocket a penknife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity" (par.7) The moment he places the penknife in the cat's eye sounds merciless. Still the illusion that readers may observe remains within some weird expression that an evil soul would not consider. The man is fully conscious, getting annoyed by the cat as he always used to. He decides to cut off his eye with cold heart; so why calling him "poor beast"? Why would he be "blushed", "burned" and "shuddered"?

As noticed so far, Poe's use of illusion serves to drive the readers to question some doings and actions. It plants uncertainty and doubts within their reading process and grasp them to get involved more and more with the narrative. Once the reader is uncertain and ready to expect what is worse; suspense takes more steps with certain shape. In addition to that, the well use of description pictures the whole scenes and brings them to life. Thus, the readers' involvement with the story secures their assumptions and feelings' inspirations.

Having the story told by unreliable narrator permits him to guide the readers according to his own vision of events (the case of *The Tell-Tale Heart*). As a consequence, the way the reader reacts is highly related to the narrator's actions: "One morning, in cool blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;--hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes" (par.9). Probably, the reader has expected a lot from the narrator but never expected him to hang the little beast. The pure evil that controls his soul is powerful and soft at the same time. The contradiction that reveals within the narrator is complicated and ambiguous. He kills with



## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

“cool blood” and he has “tears streaming” from his eyes! Poe enjoyed manipulating his readers and knew how to convey the needed effect on them all along the story.

The black cat is now killed, the narrator is a sinner and the readers are surprised and unsure of what will happen next. And that is exactly the wanted impact of such narratives: “The words “strange!” “singular!” and other similar expressions, excited my curiosity.” The two words have excited the unnamed character as well as the readers: “I approached and saw, as if graven in bas relief upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic cat. The impression was given with an accuracy truly marvellous. There was a rope about the animal's neck” (par.11). Before discussing this passage, it is more convenient to clarify that the use of foreshadowing within the tale was the suitable tool to add dramatic effects to the events, link the hints, guide the readers and prove the narrator's unreliability. More importantly, foreshadowing inspired the readers and evoked their senses suspense and curiosity.

Back to the passage, the strange things that took place after the cat's death must signify or refer to something. However, the narrator chooses to ignore the signs that happened to occur in front of his eyes. Still, readers are afraid, suspicious and uncertain. Something really bad is nearly happening; something that breaks the flow of logic and nature. As the narrator comments, “I approached it, and touched it with my hand. It was a black cat--a very large one--fully as large as Pluto, and closely resembling him in every respect but one” (par.14).

Remaining in the vein of foreshadowing, the story is being more interesting. The events are dispersed and readers are gathering the pieces of the full picture: “like Pluto, it also had been deprived of one of its eyes” (par.18). It has to be the black cat. It has several souls, yes maybe this is the idea that Poe is trying to convey. For the moment, the reader feels like if he overruns the narrator since he is careful and awake unlike the murderer. Throughout the coming line of the story, “It was now, I say, the image of a hideous--of a ghastly thing--of the GALLOWS!” (par.20). The narrator confirms the readers' suspicions and doubts. The cat has come from the dead for revenge. Questions quickly arose in the reader's mind as his suspense is well cooked. He needs to satisfy his urge immediately and witness the justice taking its place.

The readers' roof of expectations is high; they wait with impatient to the turning point. Nevertheless, it seemed that they forgot that Poe is the best in breaking their expectations and anticipations. He is full of surprises and here is another surprise comes to existence: “I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot, without a

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

groan" (par.23), the narrator puts it openly. The insane murderer kills his wife with an axe. The details that preceded the second killing act inspire all kinds of curiosity and suspense within the readers. Then, suddenly, it pops up everything once the wife is killed instead of the black cat. The readers' main concern at this part is to figure out what the next step of the madman is.

In the coming, the narrator instability is highly expressed within this passage, "the guilt of my dark deed disturbed me but little" (par.28). He admitted that he felt the guilt but not enough although he was claiming to admire both his pet and wife. As a result, the reader is not satisfied. He still needs to read in order to discover more and be convinced by the resolution.

By the end of the narrative, the police showed and had a tour in the man's house. The reader expects nothing but the dead corpse to be found and for the narrator to be caught: "a party of the police came, very unexpectedly, into the house, and proceeded again to make rigorous investigation of the premises" (par.29). This line was the last hope of the reader to feed his/her curiosity and satisfy his/her urge and moral side that calls for justice. Until the very last of the tale, readers could not only feel suspense but also enjoy it. As the curtain is closed and the last word has been said; everything seems to reach and end except for the readers' imagination. The bond that Poe could create between his readers and *The Black Cat* was so strong to the point that an open ending was not sufficient. The tale preserved some questions and wonders to be solved by the readers' creative mind.

### 3.4. *The Tell-Tale Heart*

Poe's tales are addressed to the cold blood audiences, those once who manage their fear and enjoy terrifying scenes. *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) is one of Poe's darkest tales. It has a scary and weird atmosphere in which the reader experiences severe and uncommon emotions that a normal tale would never dare to transmit to him. Toward his tale, Poe did not only transmit particular feelings and implications to his readers; he transformed them from a peaceful world to a dreadful one. Where they could hear their own heart beats, feel their sweat within their foreheads and holding their nerves out of suspense and suspicions.

If the opening of the story can be described in one word, it would be described as "a setting". A setting in which Poe first introduces his protagonist, a setting in a very intimate and close area of the main character. A setting deep inside the soul of a madman: "TRUE! --Nervous -- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? (...)

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

Hearken! and observe how healthily --how calmly I can tell you the whole story" (Poe 27). The narrator is already speaking, if not to himself, then, surely to his readers. First of all, Poe chose to tell the story using the first person omniscient. Hence, the reader finds an easy access to the character; who claims to be obvious and direct. However, the character seems to question the readers about his own sanity. As a starting point, readers might adopt certain suspicions and uncertainties concerning the reliability of the narrator. Still, they feel the urge to know the whole story: "I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever" (27). As instable and weird this may seem, for a close reader, it might be a solution to get rid of the anxiety and fear of the narrator. He does not intend to harm the old man (as he says); he needs to relieve himself from the evil eye! Having this statement here makes the readers questioning and wondering the coming events. They look forward to know what the next step of the narrator is and whether he is killing the old man. If yes, how! If not, what is the alternative solution?

The narrator addresses the reader directly, "Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me" (27). As noticed so far, Poe uses repetition to emphasise the sanity of the man. However, the repetition here serves all the opposite. If a madman claims that he is sane again and again it assures nothing but that he is actually insane. The repetition here is used to transmit the full identification of the murderer to the readers. If a reader is expected to rely on an unreliable character to pursuit the events of the story, then, s/he needs to understand him, feel him and decode him. The more the reader understands the madman the more s/he questions the details and expects with impatient what the rest of the story holds. As a consequence, the reader's interest is hold, his suspense is sustained and his entertainment is realised: "And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it --oh so gently!" (27-28).

Considering how careful Poe was with his description and use of details shows how talented he is. He selected the right words for the right situations: "! I moved it slowly --very, very slowly" (28). This example illustrates his emphasis on the details made the reader picture the whole scenes, hence, Poe ensured his involvement with the elements of the story and guaranteed his affection by the atmosphere of the tale. Tracing a murderer who is about to commit probably his first kill is unusual. Hence, trying to figure out his steps, especially at midnight is so important. The way Poe organizes the events of the story is very interesting. He considers

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

everything just to serve the readers' attachment with the text: "I undid the lantern cautiously--oh, so cautiously --cautiously (for the hinges creaked) --I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye...And so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily" (28-29).

Considering these two quotations shows how powerful the suspense of *The Tell Tale Heart* is. Poe controls successfully the pace of reading of his fans. He uses punctuation, imagery, and details description to form a very coherent piece of literature that maintains its reader focus and attention. Hence, it develops their suspense and evokes their worries and fears. "I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out --"Who's there?" (29). this example best portrays the slow motion that the reader needs to consider, the expectations that s/he has, the chance to draw and more importantly, it forms enough gaps and allows doubts and uncertainties to take place within the bound between the narrator and the readers.

With no doubts, Poe could drive his readers to see and hear toward a literary text: "Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief --oh, no! --it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe" (29). In this passage, the readers' senses moved; the sounds, the hearing capacities of the murderer and the different voices produced by the tale are often an important clue that gives the text a virtual soul that stands between its written form and reader's anticipations: "It was open --wide, wide open --and I grew furious as I gazed upon it" (30). It is quietly agreeable that Poe did not use only words and expressions to evoke suspense. He sets himself an access to the mind of his readers toward the narrator. In fact, he manipulates his readers' consciousness. He drives them to believe that the eye was truly evil and disgusting. Having describing the eye so far with its massive effects on the murderer conscious and psychological state impacts the readers themselves. In a way or another, they share the same desires with the murderer, they feel not only the urge to get rid of the eye, but also they reincarnate the narrator.

Almighty God! --no, no! They heard! --they suspected! --they knew! --they were making a mockery of my horror!--this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now --again! --hark! louder! louder! louder! louder! (34).

As the tale is all turning around sounds, voices and noises; having sounds as motives to defeat the murderer is a smart tip from Poe. All along the story, the readers are guided by unreliable narrator; though they know from the beginning that he is mad and insane they followed his narration and believed every detail he mentioned in some terms. It is ironic how steady the readers become! Every detail is to be questioned, still Poe's choose to ignore their own voices of logic and trust the hints of an insane, weird murderer. Until the very last line of the story, the readers keep their senses of curiosity, fear and suspense. The idea that suggests that the murderer might be caught was highly nominated. But what really leads the reader to wonder is whether the narrator was afraid from the police or reader suspicions on him? On scale of one to ten, it is certain that the narrator was exposed; the trick came to its end once he heard the heart beats of a dead corpse. Readers can follow his reasoning, trust his massive ability of hearing and believe his phobia; until he breaks the flow of logic. Eventually, the madman is not as smart as he claims. The key of *The Tell-Tale Heart* remains in its narration. Poe plays the role of a murderer and pictures the whole story on virtual stage that stole the reader from his/her setting to another.

### 3.5. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*

If suspense is highly sustained as a consequence of sequential curiosity and anticipations of uncertain plots or mysteries; then, Poe's tale *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) is the best masterpiece that illustrates suspense development within a detective work of literature. A work that presents a complex mystery in a form of puzzle that needs to be solved.

In his detective tale, Poe invites his fans to participate in a competitive challenge to solve the mysterious crime that occurred in The Rue of Morgue in Paris. Poe, first, presents the story using an unnamed narrator who happened to meet a genius man with extraordinary capacities. As the unnamed narrator knowledge was limited just as the one of the readers, Dupin's knowledge went beyond the ordinary. He was described as a smart and calm fellow until his art of thinking, observing and analysing disclosed leaving both the narrator and the readers astonished as well as curious, questioning the method or probably the secret that allowed Dupin to figure out the unknown. "Tell me, for Heaven's sake," I exclaimed, "the method --if method

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

there is --by which you have been enabled to fathom my soul in this matter...In fact I was even more startled than I would have been willing to express" (Poe, par.15). As the narrator feels enough suspense to understand, the reader is the first companion of the narrator in his purpose. The narrator himself reflects the reader's mindset and expected emotions.

Another point to observe within this passage is the sequential questioning and demanding of having answers. In fact, the use of expressions such as "tell me, for Heaven's sake" boils the reader's sense of suspense and experience of curiosity; it also captures his full interest with the coming events. With no doubts, the reader is eager to read a satisfied answer that might hit his own expectations or go beyond them.

Dupin's method of analysing and imagining the facts is now exposed. His detective art is well explained. Hence, every reader finds himself eager enough to challenge the protagonist to solve the details of the murders as the main details arouse, and proofs his own intelligence in comparison of Dupin's. In fact, Poe characterized detective Dupin to assure his readers involvement in the challenge. Therefore, making sure that every reader is forming his own doubts and suspicions. A well planned challenge that takes place between a fictional and real world can realise nothing but suspense and reader's interest all along the mystery.

Within the first pages of the story, Poe uses a group of difficult vocabularies for a reason. He uses some specific terms and philosophical words to make the reading process of his readers slow. Thus, their readings would be more focused. His readers, therefore, are awake, more attentive and careful with every detail written in front of them. Coming to this point, with readers' full and complete attention and ultimate focus, in addition to their competitive spirits, their curiosity and suspense take place. As they seek to develop the first hint or detail that refer to the murders indicated by the title.

This passage must be the waited part that serves to the first hints of the murders: "Not long after this, we were looking over an evening edition of the "Gazette des Tribunaux," when the following paragraphs arrested our attention" (par.22). As the reader has prepared himself so far for extraordinary murders; Poe prepares him for the conflict, the story problem that satisfies his readers' wonders and develops their interest, hence, their suspense.

The readers of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* form many expectations and assumptions all along the story. One of this expectation is the idea that the more details they collect the easier

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

the case will be. However, Poe breaks all the waited standards expected from him: "I am now awaiting," continued he, "looking toward the door of our apartment --I am now awaiting a person who, although perhaps not the perpetrator of these butcheries, must have been in some measure implicated in their perpetration" (par.53). Detective Dupin seems to overrun the narrator as well as the readers with his resolutions. Hence, he enjoys guiding the readers and paves their way to make their assumptions close to the desired once. With every detail he brings to light, the narrator is either surprised or astonished. As he says: "You astonished me." And "how was it possible." Keeping in mind that the unnamed character's state of amazement is exactly the same of the readers, the reader face two options, whether to keep the challenge (although it seems almost impossible to them to solve the murders) or to give up and follow the logical reasoning that Dupin must hand. In both cases, the need to know is increasing; the amount of questions that seem to have no answers is at its higher degree. Still, Poe enjoys declining details. This tactic is known in literature as withholding information that serves the sense of suspense at the first place. The author mastered this technique. He knew exactly what to reveal and what to conserve. As a consequence, the reader finds himself desiring the resolution and seeking for satisfaction. Especially for those who admitted that the puzzle has no solution. It is their turn to challenge Poe and Dupin to hand them the murderer and provide them with ratiocinated resolution.

Having all the puzzle's pieces in hand requires not only attention or focus; it requires satisfaction. An analytical mind, a powerful imaginative brain of a brilliant character is expected with no doubts to steak to reason, logic and provide a great resolution that fits all the parts of the mystery. That is to say, the detective tale of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* reached the highest level of mystery; Poe had to make sense of everything he described or tackled. And surprisingly he did. For a writer like Poe, ratiocination was a matter of discussion, analysis and well planning; just like Dupin's belief.

Scary murders, enormous power, weird voices, inhuman behaviours and no motive are the basis on which the resolution was built. After connecting the puzzle pieces together and the picture is finally complete to the sight of the readers; their curiosity prevents them to stop reading. The murderer identity is revealed; it is logical and makes sense. But how comes? How did it exactly happen? How could an "ourang outang" commit two full and complete murders by itself? And more importantly, how could Dupin solve the crimes? As long as the reader still possesses questions, suspense is still there.

Moving to the tone and the atmosphere of the tale, as explained above, the tone of the story is curiosity and suspense. Which is the case of the most mysterious and thriller stories. The human being in his nature is eager to know, curious, and seeks to develop and explore things; the case of the readers of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is a vivid example that explains how does a series of events full of gaps and missing elements capture its readers breath and evoke their wild senses that are often led by stubborn cues that govern the human psyche. It is because Poe was aware of the complex that mystery evokes that he pleased his readers with such a great genre that gave birth to generations of creative mysteries in literature.

### 3.6. *Berenice*

Obsession can be well defined as a thought that imposes its constant existence in a person's mind. As literature cares for all the aspects of life and existence; authors write about obsession and they are influenced by the weird desires that often over-control the human beings' behaviours. However, for Poe, obsession could inspire only the dark side of his imagination. Through *Berenice* (1835), he created a creepy plot with unusual elements that picture obsession in its most terrible forms.

Poe chose to open his tale with a hint of tragedy: "MISERY is manifold. The wretchedness of earth is multiform" (Poe 37). Mentioning "misery" by the first line of the tale suggests that miserable events are expected to happen. Hence, the reader follows the lines of the story with gloomy expectations: "How is it that from Beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness? — from the covenant of Peace a simile of sorrow?" (37). Soon after, the narrator raises certain questions about the consequences of his wrong behaviour; which provoke the readers' curiosity and sense of suspense.

As always expected from Poe, he narrates his story using the first person narrator. This technique always allows an epic connection to be built between the reader and the protagonist of the story. Surprisingly this time, the narrator name is mentioned: "My baptismal name is Egæus — that of my family I will not mention" (37). However, he prefers not to reveal his family name. One can only relate this to the narrator's shame to share his family name for the misery he has caused in his family line. As readers are close enough from the narrator, they can start deducing and wondering what kind of misery and shame Egæus has done.



## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

In “Berenice and I were cousins” (39), Poe finally reveals the curtain from the title of the tale that “Berenice” is a name of a woman, Egaeus’ cousin. Hence, the reader is collecting clues that seem all to be related. Since the story title refers to the name of the narrator’s cousin; the first assumption of the reader highlights that the misery has something serious to do with Berenice. Thus, the expectation grows wilder and suspense starts to fill the air.

Poe is well known of his powerful imagination and unique talent of description as he provides his readers with enough details to allow them to conduct a full image of the setting and the characters. Hence, adding a more realistic effect within his tales was realised each time: “the sound! Ah! vividly is her image before me now, as in the early days of her light-heartedness and joy! Oh! gorgeous yet fantastic beauty! Oh! Sylph amid the shrubberies of Arnheim! — Oh! Naiad among her fountains! — and then — then all is mystery and terror” (39). In the passage, Egaeus describes Berenice’s fantastic beauty and vivid soul. Poe chooses the exact perfect word of each detail. Plus, the punctuation he uses to express amazement and combine the thoughts of the narrator. The group of techniques that maintain suspense development are all along gathered within this passage: the detailed description, the word choice and punctuation to control the pace of process of reading.

As more facts are revealed to the reader, the story seems more interesting: “in my case, the powers of meditation (not to speak technically) busied, and, as it were, buried themselves in the contemplation of even the most common objects of the universe” (40-41). From these lines, the reader can deduce that the narrator has some kind of mental issues; which inspire him to wonder and leave some gaps to form within the previous image he has formed. Poe always knows when to cover and when to reveal the story elements. As a consequence, his tales reach their best and capture their readers’ interest all along the process of reading.

Illusion plays an important role in suspense building. Once it is conducted within a narration; the reader finds himself more focused and inspired to pursuit the coming events! “During the brightest days of her unparalleled beauty, most surely I had never loved her. In the strange anomaly of my existence, feelings, with me, had never been of the heart, and my passions always were of the mind” (44). The reader doubts that the bond that links Egaeus with Berenice is a romantic one. He expects that the third component between them is love. However, the narrator assures that he has never loved her. From someone who desires with his mind only, his ill mind, what is waiting the reader?

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

Following the atmosphere of the story and expecting a tragedy to occur, the reader finds himself considering this passage with full focus: "Through the grey of the early morning — among the trellissed shadows of the forest at noon-day — and in the silence of my library at night, she had flitted by my eyes, and I had seen her — not as the living and breathing Berenice, but as the Berenice of a dream" (44). Berenice is visiting the narrator's haunted mind. Foreshadowing takes place within this phase of the reading process. The hint that Poe is probably referring to is still hard to decode. Plus, the reader is lost, and unsure: "in an evil moment, I spoke to her of marriage" (44). As have been spoken of above, Egaeus does not admire Berenice; then why to propose? "An evil moment" Poe chooses the word evil for a reason. Still, readers cannot shape the full image; there are still countless gaps in their mind and they are questioning the narrator's reliability, hence, Berenice existence as well. In fact, uncertainties and doubts serve the atmosphere of the story as well as its tone.

Since the protagonist opens a window for the readers to look in his soul and mind set, the reader finds himself sharing with him his sensitiveness regardless his reliability: "An icy chill ran through my frame; a sense of insufferable anxiety oppressed me; a consuming curiosity pervaded my soul; and, sinking back upon the chair, I remained for some time breathless, and motionless, and with my eyes rivetted upon her person" (45). The amount of imagery expressed within this passage awakes the readers' sensitivity and emotions. Thus, one can only feel his breath captured, just like Egaeus, in front of the ghost Berenice. The effect of imagery develops the reader's emotional involvement within the plot.

Egaeus's obsession comes to light; Poe uses repetition to insist on its important to the rest of the story: "The teeth! — the teeth! — they were here" (46). The reader, thus, is surprised. He expects everything but this. The factor of surprise has always walked in hand with suspense within Poe's tales: "I arose hurriedly from my seat, and, throwing open one of the doors of the library, there stood out in the antechamber a servant maiden, all in tears, and she told me that Berenice was — no more" (47-48). Having Berenice dead turns the readers' suspicions toward Egaeus. With impatient, they wait for the next step that Egaeus is taking.

Back to imagery and realistic effects, the description of the sounds, raising questions and throwing hints indicate that the end is soon to occur: "the shrill and piercing shriek of a female voice seemed to be ringing in my ears. I had done a deed — what was it? And the echoes of the chamber answered me — "what was it?" (48). The questions of both the narrator and the readers

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

are soon to be answered. Suspense is well cooked and satisfaction, as usual, is soon to be served: "There rolled out some instruments of dental surgery, intermingled with many white and glistening substances that were scattered to and fro about the floor" (50). Eventually, the picture's parts are gathered and the curtain is closed. However, Poe chooses to leave his readers with an open ending; offering a complete resolution that can be only a start.

### 3.7. A Synthesis of the Selected Short Stories

A fictional story with dramatic events often needs to be read or performed to impose its existence in the literary world. Written Fiction – in particular - is all about its affections, themes and morals. Hence, the more it captures its reader's attention and interest; it becomes a great piece in its own field. According to this current study, maintaining the reader's full interest can be realised through suspense development. Edgar Allan Poe is known as the master of suspense and the king of mystery. Therefore, his tales seem to be the perfect samples to analyse in order to study suspense creation through written narratives. The outcome of the analysis brought to light several components and tactics that serve suspense achievement.

First of all, suspense follows the genre of the story. While dealing with a detective story, a mysterious tale or even a horrific narrative; readers' emotions become more influenced and easy to evoke. The literary genre to which the written text belongs comes at the first place. Since, in the case of Poe, the elements of story play an important role in suspense creation. For instance, the setting in *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* is at night in an empty dark house. Furthermore, the gloomy tone and the mysterious, creepy atmospheres of *Berenice*, *The Black Cat*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Tell-Tale Heart* all share the same effect on the reader's mind-set and assumptions.

The narrator of the tale comes at the second place while dealing with suspense. According to the analysis of Poe's stories, the use of the first person narrator walks in hand with suspense realisation. In fact, the narrator's vision guides the reader through the story details. Thus, Poe depends more on unreliable narrators to tell his tales, this the case of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *Berenice* and *The Black Cat*.

Moving to the literary techniques that Poe adopts within his stories; as the analyses of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Black Cat* and *Berenice* indicate, suspense development is evoked through foreshadowing and illusion. Since the responses and the interactions of the

## A Literary Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

readers are highly active within these tactics. Another important point is the use of surprise. Within the analysis of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*; the element of suspense raised once the reader finds himself surprised and astonished due to the detailed description and imagery that picture the plot as a real part of the readers' world.

Curiosity is considered as a motive for suspense; hence, working on curiosity development serves suspense indirectly. The analyses of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Black Cat* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* in particular set out the writing techniques of Poe that evoke both suspense and curiosity: mentioning withholding information, pace control through punctuation and dictions, in addition to word choice, and the use of hints.

Lastly, the analyses of the tales show that the outcome of the stories generally protects the flow of suspense. It either maintains it through open endings, the case of *Berenice* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*; or consumes it through a ratiocinated resolution that leaves the reader with a high degree of satisfaction like *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Tell Tale Heart*.

To conclude, suspense is a dramatic effect that companioned Poe's dark tales page after page. The tactics and techniques that Poe used to raise suspense are unquestionable. With the help of the genre that he adopted, Poe could manage suspense and tame it to serve his tales, plots and resolutions.

### 3.8. Conclusion

This chapter deduced the use of suspense which played an important role in raising the reader's interest and amazement all along Poe stories. It, hence, gathered the main aspects and literary devices that contributed in suspense creation as well as development. This section analysed suspense and its effect on reader's interactions through the literary criticism tool RRT.

## General Conclusion

Literature is considered to be a part of the cultural identity. It varies and differs, grows and develops through time. Fictional narratives, however, symbolise its spirit and significance. They are a source of education as well as inspiration. Moreover, the audience consider literature to be a mean of entertainment for its impact and influence on their attitudes. Through words only, people can enjoy, interact and feel the imagination of the author. Therefore, maintaining the readers' interest of a literary work is as important as its content. Certain studies found that suspense is one of the keys that maintain the readers' interest and entertainment. As consequence, modern authors seek to realise suspense within their fictional works to receive the required prosperity and achieve the high levels of creativity. Hence, suspense has become one of the important dramatic effects that a fictional narrative should develop. This research has considered Edgar Allan Poe's selected short stories as the most convenient samples to study suspense.

In this regard, this research treated suspense from several perspectives; starting from its creation, development and resolution. It also brought attention to its importance in sustaining readers' interest. Moreover, it shed light on the most important techniques and literary devices that Edgar Allan Poe adopted to evoke suspense within his tales.

Keeping into account that suspense stands on both sides of the written texts and the readers' existence to fulfil the gaps that suspense evokes; the researcher believes that RRT is the suitable tool to critic and analyse the works of Poe since it treats both the written texts content and its influence on the reader. The RRT had been condemned through five selected short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, naming *Berenice*, *The FHU*, *The MRM*, *The TTH* and *The BC*.

The findings of this study varied from a tale to another; still they preserved some common points that suspense could never escape within Poe stories. The researcher found that the genre through which Poe served is the mysterious genre of horror and ambiguity; hence, suspense development suited the genre perfectly. In addition, the analysis of the narratives led to the exploration of Poe major tactics and techniques that helped in raising suspense, such as foreshadowing, punctuation and withholding information. It also tackled the resolution of suspense and traced its effects on readers' satisfaction. Besides, the analysis of reader-text

interactions proved that the gaps created by Poe technique of narration maintained readers' interest and curiosity all along the lines of the short stories.

The researcher observed some intentional signs, hints and gaps that did not contribute in suspense creation; still Poe kept them under the scenes. For further investigations, the researcher suggests that Poe's short stories should be studied according to deeper aspects that lead the intentional amplifications and signs to the next level. Therefore, the suggested studies could offer a new gate to Edgar's plots and resolutions that might provide each narrative with extra events and conflicts that link each story to another.

### List of References

- Allen, Richard. "Hitchcock and Narrative Suspense: Theory and Practice." *Camera Obscura, Camera Lucida: Essays in Honor of Annette Michelson*, edited by Richard Allen and Malcolm Turvey, Amsterdam University Press, 2003, pp. 163–82, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n2cn.13>.
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Fourth Edition. 4th ed., University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2017.
- "Edgar Allan Poe Invented the Detective Story." *Smithsonian Tween Tribune*, [www.tweentribune.com/article/tween78/edgar-allan-poe-invented-detective-story](http://www.tweentribune.com/article/tween78/edgar-allan-poe-invented-detective-story). Accessed 21 Mar. 2022.
- Eschner, Kat. "American Romanticism Top Authors." *Shmoop*, [www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literary-movements/american-romanticism/authors](http://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literary-movements/american-romanticism/authors). Accessed 31 Mar. 2022.
- Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2009.
- Golden, Joanne M. "Reader-Text Interaction." *Theory Into Practice*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1986, pp. 91–96, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476526>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.
- "How Does Edgar Allan Poe Keep the Reader in Suspense in 'The Tell-Tale Heart'?" *Seattlepi*, maria magher, [education.seattlepi.com/edgar-allan-poe-keep-reader-suspense-the-telltale-heart-6117.html](http://education.seattlepi.com/edgar-allan-poe-keep-reader-suspense-the-telltale-heart-6117.html). Accessed 11 Mar. 2022.
- Iwata, Yumiko. *CREATING SUSPENSE AND SURPRISE IN SHORT LITERARY FICTION: A STYLISTIC AND NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACH*. 2008.
- Kennedy, Patrick. "What Is Gothic Literature?" *ThoughtCo*, 23 Jan. 2020, [www.thoughtco.com/gothic-literature-2207825](http://www.thoughtco.com/gothic-literature-2207825).
- Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Gerard Genette and Structural Narratology." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 3 Dec. 2016, [literariness.org/2016/12/03/gerard-genette-and-structuralnarratology/#comments](http://literariness.org/2016/12/03/gerard-genette-and-structuralnarratology/#comments).
- « Narrative ». *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/narrative\\_1](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/narrative_1). Accessed 20 janvier 2022.
- Nicholson, Lauren. "The Boar." *Fiction and Feelings*, 27 Jan. 2020, [theboar.org/2020/01/literature-on-mood](http://theboar.org/2020/01/literature-on-mood).

Northrup, Mary. "Multicultural Cinderella Stories." About ALA, 18 July 2017, [www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/resources/multicultural](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/resources/multicultural).

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Black Cat by Edgar Allan Poe." Poestories, Giordano Robert, [poestories.com/read/blackcat](http://poestories.com/read/blackcat). Accessed 5 Apr. 2022.

---. *The Fall of the House of Usher*. 2nd ed., FLITES Editions, 2009.

---. *King Pest: And Other Short Stories*. FLITES Editions, 2012.

---. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue by Edgar Allan Poe." Poestories, Giordano Robert, [poestories.com/read/murders](http://poestories.com/read/murders). Accessed 4 Apr. 2022.

Rapaport, Herman. *The Literary Theory Toolkit: A Compendium of Concepts and Methods*. 1st ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today a User-friendly Guide*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2006

"What Is Edgar Allan Poe's Writing Style? •." English Notes, 20 Sept. 2021, [englishnotes.com/what-is-edgar-allan-poes-writing-style](http://englishnotes.com/what-is-edgar-allan-poes-writing-style).

Wood, Chauncey. "Project MUSE - Affective Stylistics and the Study of Chaucer." Project MUSE, [muse.jhu.edu/article/658309](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/658309). Accessed 21 Dec. 2021.



## **List of Appendices**

### **Appendix A: A Closer Look at Poe**

Just like any author of fiction, Edgar Allan Poe's life story has a great impact on his writings. What he has been through as both a child and an adult affected his own imaginative mind-set and stories creation. Despite the fact that Edgar had written mainly about murders and deaths, he liked to express his feelings in a rigorous and tough way using his dark pen to narrate horror and mystery.

Edgar was born on January 19, 1809 in Boston Massachusetts. His parents David and Elizabeth Poe were traveling actors. Edgar did not have the chance to know his parents, since his father abandoned the family when Poe was only two years old. A year after his mother died leaving her three children orphans. Soon after, a tobacco merchant's family adopted Edgar. Edgar's foster father John Allan was successful in his work. Therefore, Edgar was raised in good conditions and was educated in proper schools.

Edgar went to a private school in England when he was six years old. There, he could learn Latin and French in addition to mathematics and history. He came back to America for a while. He soon left home at the age of seventeen to matriculate Virginia University. Unfortunately, Poe could not continue his studies there because the money he had was never enough. He returned to Richmond where he surprisingly found his fiancé taken by another man.

In this period, Poe developed a new hobby to himself; he started drinking heavily and frequently until he found himself in debts, broken and jobless with no money in his pockets. At this point, Poe decided to join the U.S Army at the age of eighteen. Above all, Edgar was a good soldier and he reached the rank of a Sergeant. He Joined the West Point as his foster father signed him the application. He stayed for a while only because the funds that John was sending stopped and he refused to send any more.

When Edgar moved to New York, he started writings poems and short stories. But his work was not accepted by different magazines. Four years later, Edgar started working as an editor for a newspaper. He, then, married his cousin Virginia who was only thirteen years old. Poe's

work started flourishing, simply because he was good at what he was doing. In 1837, he wrote *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* after quitting his job at the newspaper. He could not publish his story because he had no money to do so. Moving to Philadelphia in 1836, where he wrote *Ligeia* and *The haunted Palace*. Edgar kept struggling to realise his dream and publish his writings so that they can be read. In 1839, he published his first volume of short stories entitled *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*.

Edgar was found of Gothic Literature, he wrote horror and mysterious novels. Stories full of secrets and ambiguous details. He used his imagination to narrate detective stories as well. Describing murders and deaths and living his readers with certain questions and numerous gaps; Edgar became famous as the father of horror and master of suspense. He successfully wrote about love, adventures and comedy as well. What Edgar gave to literature is still impacting nowadays writers. Edgar reshaped the American literature and affected its writers. He could achieve a massive success as the icon of suspense.

Edgar Allan Poe died on October 3rd, 1849 in Philadelphia. Edgar's death remains a secret. He was suddenly found next to the public house Gunner's Hall. He was taken to the hospital but he could not say a word about what happened to him. He was neither conscious nor unconscious. He remained in this state for four days until he died. Edgar's death remains legendary just like his masterpieces of literature.

## **Appendix B: The Selected Stories' Summary**

### ***The Fall of the House of Usher***

*The Fall of the House of Usher* is a story about an unnamed narrator who finds himself in front of the Ushers house due to an invitation from his childhood friend Roderick. In a dark and creepy setting, the narrator is informed about his friend's unnamed mental disease. Soon after, he discovers that his friend has a twin sister "Madeline" that he has never known before. The sister seems to be ill too and dies right after. Roderick and his friend buried Madeline in the tombs below the house in order to avoid medical investigations. One night, and while the narrator was reading to Roderick who could not sleep; they heard voices, voices that seemed like Madeline's. Apparently, it seems that Roderick has buried his sister alive and that she is back after struggle to stand in front of him. Roderick could not resist the image of Madeline in a white rope covered with blood and he dies of fear and the house of Usher falls apart as the narrator hardly escapes.

### ***The Black Cat***

The story is about an unnamed narrator who tells his story in the death bed to reduce his misery before his death. He narrates the horrific events that happened with him once he adopted a black cat. The narrator admits that the black cat was a friend of his and a good fellow, until his own attitudes changed because of alcohol addictions. The company of the black cat started annoying him and disturbing his psychological state. Suddenly, he faces the cat at his door and he grabs him and takes off his eye. Soon after, the cat recovers and start denying the narrator and avoiding him. One day, the narrator hung the cat from his neck through a tree and leaves him to die. The story climax take place once the narrator start observing hints and weird signs that indicates that he is being haunted by the cat. Still, he ignores them and adopts another cat. The second cat preserves the same standing as the first one within the narrator's spirit. In a moment of anger the narrator tries to kill him with an axe by the axe comes across his wife and he kills her. He hides her in the house and the cat disappears. The falling events start occurring when the police officers visit the narrator asking for his wife. He enjoys his cold blood nerves and denies the truth, until the wall starts taking shape and reveals his dead wife body with the head of the black cat.

### ***The Tell-tale heart***

*The tell-Tale Heart* is a dark tale about an unreliable narrator who suffers from a vulture eye of an old man who lives with him. The creepy obsession of the narrator becomes irresistible and decides to kill him. The raising events take place while the narrator checks the old man while sleeping every night for seven days to deduce the evil eye. Soon after, the narrator kills the old man with cold blood and buries him in the house. The Police officers pay a sudden visit to the narrator investigating about the weird shrink that the neighbours heard the other night. Everything seemed to be perfect for them since the narrator took a great care of the evidence that could end him. While chatting with the police officers, the narrator starts hearing heart beating of the dead old man. Toward terrifying hallucinations; the narrator admits his evil doing to the police.

### ***The Murders in the Rue Morgue***

The tale is about two murders committed in the Rue Morgue in Paris by an unknown killer. Detective Dupin and the narrator deduce the details of the crime through the Gazette newspaper and collect evidence. The crime happens in a locked loft, an old woman's head has been taken off and the young girl has been found dead in the chimney. The motive of the crime is absent and the way that the murderer took to escape seem impossible to be revealed. As detective Dupin is brilliant and owns a great analytical mind, he finds himself using his skills to reveal the killer's identity. He traces the evidence and visits the crime scene. Soon after, he collects the needed data and solves the murder details. He, then, tells the narrator that the murderer is an animal; an Ourang Outang in particular that had escaped his master house and climbed the window at night to commit the crime

### ***Berenice***

*Berenice* is a mysterious story that deals with Egaeus who suffers from mental disorder and constant meditations that stole his conscious mind from time to time. He was fond of his cousin Berenice who presented beauty and sanity. He spends time with her often and observes her more often. Soon after, Berenice falls ill and he asked intentionally for her hand. Egaeus starts imagining Berenice and her teeth especially within his meditations. Thus, he adopts a kind of obsessions toward her white teeth! One night, he hears his housemaid crying, she tells him that Berenice died of her disease and they bury her. Right after, Egaeus keeps receiving unusual pre-sentiments that put him in uncertain state and mysterious dilemma of something that he

knows but he could not deduce. By the end of the story, Egaeus discover a box on his desk full of Berenice's teeth.