

The Phantasmal Future: Memory, Haunting, and Spectral Longing in the Selected Poems of Edgar Allan Poe

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ABSTRACT

Hauntology means to study ghosts of the lost time or lost souls which is no longer and may never be. This study analyses how solitude becomes temporal suspension in the poems *The Raven*, *Annabel Lee* and *The Spirits of the Dead* by Edgar Allan Poe. The qualitative approach of research has been done over the lost future which is dominated by the ancestral spectres and lingers the atmosphere which itself refuse to stay silent. This paper finds the echoes from the compulsive repetition of absence and the speakers loop of mourning. These three poems by Edgar Allan Poe gives voice to the temporal stasis and forecloses futurity. It highlights the shared hauntological condition in which the dead persists in the present, hence anticipates the concerns of modern time about unresolved histories and stalled future.

Keywords: Edgar Allan Poe, Hauntology, Future Denial, Nostalgia

Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe in the 19th century looked painstakingly into the subtle ways to study repressed emotions and psychological patterns which were plentiful for soul stirring experiences and poignant enough to be nostalgic. According to (Ahmad, 2025, p. 73) the poetry of Poe has its dealings in the physical world as well as in the supernatural world which played the role of a bridge between these two spheres. His poetry animated the dead within the present, focusing on remembrances rather than on becoming in the time to come. As the poem, *Raven* speaks on the behalf his spirit

animal and his body language performed the function of his grim and daunting presence. Collection of fate, despondency and melancholia is what made him look like a spirit. Poe defined the human life experiences through this bird. The solicitude and infatuation of Poe for his lover *Annabel Lee* is something which is untouched by decay and Poe rephrased that memory into a myth. The poetry in the *Spirits of the Dead* suspends the memory and it returned obsessively and has not faded or healed. It belonged to the existential stillness.

The theoretical approach which is used to elucidate these poems of Poe combines through the Hauntology by Jacques Derrida. The hauntology necessitate the abstraction of nostalgia and future losses which terminates at the lost future. Pugliese (2020) marked this suspension by the name of temporal dimension which is contrived by Derrida, and it is yet to be untangled. These three poems of Poe broke down the linear movements and their lost figures from the past are not truant. They spook the space and psyche which transmogrified observances into their spectral companions. The poet of these poems lived in the suspended present and revisited his loss ceaselessly. The revival of the past episodes of life cancelled the arrival of future which benefitted nostalgia by the name of intrusive thought and an involuntary action. It has named after the absolute negation or by the happening of idealistic romantic nostalgia through romantic fixation. Lost future put backed by the corporeal proximity to death. Such tenets of growth and shared life are permanently destroyed. In this manner, the spectral continuation transpired by the persistence of love which itself is not a lived escapade.

Literature Review

Merchand (1934) apprised that the mind of Poe taught us nothing except sufferings or experiences imagined with perceptions. He was an active member for the practice of journalism and practiced it along with the art and aesthetics of his mind. He even said a lot about democracy, science and unimaginable literature just to break the bond with the conservative side of literature. He started his journey as a writer with the contemporary manners and skills. Poe had his interest in the social reforms, and he even reformed the movement of feminism. The fascination of science ruled over the mind of Poe and gave him imaginations for his fictional pieces. He was out of the

belief for the perfectibility of the race. He proved that struggle or strive have no impact on it. Not only this, but even men do also not seem to be contented as they were thousands of years ago. Poe had given some voices in the beginning years of his career as a reviewer; therefore, he had this little motivation to cure the mind of young people. Poe picked the colours of his environment and hence, it was taken as his role by the name of a gentleman. He had a large appetite to give call of liberty and even acted as a major person to give voice to inferior races.

Zanger (1978) prepared the paradoxes of Poe works with the use of images, ideas and patterns which were concerned by the employment of him. The coherence of his works just like of *fall of house of Usher* moved with the multiple groupings which was more than the assumptions of a single critic. The main body of knowledge which we gained from his works was the destruction of traditionalist concepts and the knowledge which he consciously spoke about was the forbidden one. The major contrast which came in the writings of Poe was that his protagonists were passives rather than active ones. In his tales, the information moved in one dimension and the characters were so immersed that even the protagonist threw the light on the nature of forbidden knowledge. If the interpretation would be done, it would appear as a face of great and natural personifications which were not only engulfed but were entirely damaged as well. The double vision of women, one with the classic truth and the other with the horror fascinated the Poe even through his own works. Even the sexual metaphors of his tales presumed the self-reliance beyond the control. The protagonists observed, plan and protest while their bodies were hurried to destruction.

Wang (2014) shelled out that Edgar Allan Poe was a gifted personality for the people of America. The issue was that he was not that much enhanced in his contemporaries. As time reveals the truth, he was accepted by the society during his years of Europe. It happened in the years of modernism in the whole Europe. He was highly dissatisfied by the complete traditionalism of the Europe. Therefore, he worked for the originality and wrote against the social norms and standards. The poetry and fiction written by Poe reflected the recentness and innovations for the people of that period. He forwarded that a talented writer first built the story in

mind then write it on the paper. Among all of his objectives, the first one which he followed was the sense of originality in the writing. He implemented aesthetic views over the criticism but in the shape of anti-traditionalist approach. He was developed by the sense of time because that is how a modern writer should write. He was a mixture of scientific and philosophical influenced personality which was according to the time of modern era. He even allowed the psychological time technique in his works which is a high sign of modernist writer of literature. The settings of all his works consisted of the mid-nighttime which brought consciousness and unconsciousness together as it merged the physical time into the psychological time, another trait of modern writers.

Bellin (2015) expanded that Poe was known as the identity who used foreign literary methods and was a nationalist in term of its construction towards the romanticism of America. Poe was a self-built image in the eyes of Americans. He was populace due to tormented life of him into sufferings and deceptions. He was not just a poet; he was also a member of important socio-political and literary relations which reinforced his own particularity among the people of his time. A Brazilian writer was inspired by his socio-political context and like him, he set his perspectives over the social manners and political representations. Poe exposed many poets because he felt lack of beauty in writing as it is the general term of art and literature. Hence, Poe was one of the intellectualities concerned people of Nineteenth century. He was a kind of writer who gained many endeavours in France. Poe was a struggling writer who was alienated and high on utility and symbolism. Poe was cited in the writings as Alone by many writers and proposed the theory of unity which insisted the short writing of a text to have the lasting impacts over the mind of readers. Poe acted as an interesting key just to understand the modernity of English literature.

Kamiljonovona (2022) collected all the information related to the publications of Poe as very first publication of him went certainly unnoticed. He proposed his own concept of poetry and devoted his full time towards the journalism. He provided his own philosophy which was the second name of his creativity. It was done for the sake of his personal understanding of poetry. He called the term of poetry somehow opposite of the novel and has acquired that it contains more feelings rather than the

truth. Beside the status of just be a literary critic, he was also an editor for many magazines. Even though he reviewed many contemporary works. He was professionally overworked which was seen as the misstep in the writing of his short stories. He became a retrograde who was overlooked by the ideals and professionals. All these commodities were assembled by him in his works in the form of lyrics of poems and likewise, in short stories. He was among one of those individuals who raised the standard of American aestheticism. At one time he also called this place a sort of prison in which he was forced to breathe but in a deadliest way. Poe wanted to maintain a balanced relationship between the idealism and the practicality of American People.

Material and Methods

The theory of hauntology mentioned the range of ideas and their capacity to haunt the present through the existence of eerie and spirits. The memories and their correlation with the loss of future and past life events promote the eye of nostalgia with a wide range of senses. The ghost of nostalgia murmured the present stage and play the role of both past and future as well. Derrida (1994, p. 158) intensified that this ghost is under the protection of some cultural and institutional objects and can happen in the form of present-absent, sensuousness and non-sensuousness. The previous incarnation associated with the psychological fear and horror which we call nostalgia of the past existence in hauntology. The concept of lost future has specified using nostalgia and how it covers the hauntings of happenings related to the events of upcoming life. For the analysis of such powerful variations, we use the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, and these master works of art are: *The Raven*, *Anabel Lee* and *Spirits of the Dead*.

Discussion and Results

The poems of Edgar Allan Poe described the key features which focus majorly on the hauntological studies. While reading the poetry of Poe, readers face the multiple sources of psychological fears, and it is majorly developed through the spirited reminisces and evocations. The wistfulness of the lost past and future is what keep a person full of impressions and mentally haunted followed by a series of unusual happenings or events.

They return repeatedly even though you won't necessarily see them clearly, after all. Perhaps though before anything, it should be asked why, and with what legitimacy. (Blanco and Peeren, 2013, p. 69)

The ghost's metaphors used in the Poems of Edgar Allan Poe resurfaces with the different meaning of poems. It takes it into another dimension which is occupied by the presence of many dreadful emotions which terrify the human psychology with the assistance of temporal zone of past or future. The neurotic phobias have arranged in the poems of Poe such as in *The Raven*, *Anabel Lee* and *Spirits of the Dead*. These poems show a different and intense feeling of loathing and revulsion which is expressed through disgust. Even the character of raven is comprised of many identities as his own colour which is black, is a symbol of his dark and fainted life. Moreover, the soul of Anabel Lee tried to reconnect which is a depiction of otherworldly attachment. Lastly, Dead spirits continued to be jinxed throughout the whole life due to their unfinished longings in either by gone time or hereafter.

Nostalgia and the Loss/Lost of future in the poem *The Raven*

In this poem, there are these initial lines, once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, / Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore / While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping. (Collins, 2016, p. 03) forecast the longing for an unrealized future. The "forgotten lore" (Collins, 2016, p. 03) shows the forgetful past which seemed like it has lost but it is still here in the present to haunt the poet. In the same way, the state of sleep and wakefulness talked about a time which is between these two states. It is where the time becomes unstable due to haunted nostalgia. This shows the even before the appearance, the time has lost and it is moving towards something which has already disappeared.

The meaning has not being valued but the return is compulsive from his side. In the next lines of the poem, "Qouth the Raven, Nevermore" (Collins, 2016, p. 05) there is a repetition in the form of spectre which is empty in his own originality and intention. This moved with the possessed past and hoped for no reunion in the future as well. The nostalgia hits with the hauntological logic as it constant yearns in the form of retrospection. The negation of no futuristic consolation and commiseration in the form pity and relief known as the matter of loss of upcoming life. There will

be no events in the future for the poet which provided disclaimer about the veiled future and look like it has permanently sealed but only by linguistically. The close direction of time ahead is what made the poet tormented and tortured in the current life and preoccupied with the past traumas as well. This act has given the pledge of being tortured by the other-worldly visits from the temporal past.

Nostalgia and Lost/ Loss of Future in the poem *Anabel Lee*:

In this poem, the opening lines, “It was many and many a years ago, / In a kingdom by the sea” (Collins, 2016, p. 114) surprises with the perfectionism of the past and the time that has specified here is not actually the past but a suspension has found with the name of nostalgia which is historically refused by the reality of time. The restoration of that time is not possible therefore, to revive the time is just a dejection. In the next line, the lost future has rendered as the ultimate past as the kingdom named as a space which has apotheosized in the past life and have more value in imagination rather than in the reality. It is pointed towards a time which has not only the spectral distance but also haunted by the instability of time. Hence, the past lingered either through nostalgic echoes of events or through imagined futuristic loss.

In other lines of the poems, A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling / MY beautiful Annabel Lee (Collins, 2016, p. 114) it introduced the force that waves at the death and it is something which is quite impersonal. The death here is confirmed by the meaning of meaninglessness and the unjust acts. The word chill is used both for base meaning and the emotional meaning as well. Hauntologically, it has introduced as the absence of future happenings which is mentioned by the name of coldness. In such way, the cancellation of future happened violently through many moments. This has also named as retro-futurism.

Nostalgia and the Lost/Loss of future in the poem *Spirits of the Dead*:

In the poem, the second paragraph lines show the hauntological treatment of scattered time of nostalgia and absence of future. As the lines, the spirits of the dead who stood / In life before thee are again. (Collins, 2016, p. 23) truly pictured that the dead ones are no longer absent in the present. They are occupied by the space in a way which promotes the vision of unfinished moments of the past and they are

buried in the form of recollections and hence refuse to change the future as well. They are forced to live repeatedly not progressively. In hauntology, spirits return and they re-entered in the adjacent which refused to stay buried. Past horrified through nostalgia and made it impossible to look into future. Hence, future has also lost through these hauntings.

In the next lines, In death around thee-and their will shall overshadow thee: be still. (Collins, 2016, p. 23) the over determination of the futuristic loss has seen due to the spectrality from the ghosts, and it closed the new possibilities for whole life. Swath became dominant at this point which does not permit the future changes done by the living people. In short, the future has colonized by the eerie. The word “be still” (Collins, 2016, p. 23) is recommended for the arrested form of time and the suspension of existence to modify the future’s loss.

Conclusion

These poems *The Raven*, *Annabel Lee* and *Spirits of the Dead* by Edgar Allan Poe picturized how hauntology can happen through the uncertainties. The demonstration of nostalgic times in the shape of neurosis and annoyance fractured the idealistic concept of future life. Here, the panic and inner psychological terror assured how dreadful echoes can dominate over the persona of people and places. The nostalgic times has leaded the way within a whole turmoil. This disquietude made the narrator to forget the time of here and now and his personality is seen as bygone and unrecalled by the upcoming temporal scenarios of life. The lover is ghosted in the eyes of the poet in the poem *Annabel Lee* and the bird is directed by another world in the *Raven*. Similarly, he produced the incoherent and silent voices which muted his life and his longing for the right dimension of the world. The phobias about place formed in the reserved outraged and survival hauntings in the *Spirits of the Dead*. Three of these poems have obsessive personal recollections replaced by eternal mourning and ended with foreclosed and seizure subsequence.

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