

Edgar Allan Poe and Modernism

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Abstract

The present research, in light of the comparison between the narrative techniques, aesthetic thoughts and themes of Poe's works with those of Modernist writers, attempts to argue that Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), the famous American short story writer, poet and critic, is one of the most important forerunners of Modernism and that Poe's works have provided the writers in the mainstream of the Modernist movements with literary inspirations and theoretical bases. Both the works of Poe and those by the Modernist writers depicted the alienated and isolated characters subject to self-fragmentation and self-destruction in a world of wasteland devoid of any meaning and significance. Poe's strong sense of spiritual alienation and isolation in society embodied in his literary protagonists provided a perfect model for the Modernists. The Poe-cult was initiated by Charles Baudelaire, the French Symbolist poet, but his influence upon Modernism spread to the major "isms" in the European continent where Expressionism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Futurism and Stream of Consciousness burst into fabulous flower on the stage of literature and art.

Keywords: Edgar Allan Poe, forerunner, modernism, originality, space and time, wasteland

1. Introduction

What is modernism? According to *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (2005), Modernism in Roman Catholic Church history was a movement in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth that "sought to reinterpret the tradition Catholic teaching in the light of nineteenth-century philosophical, historical and psychological theories and called for freedom of conscience" (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2005, p. 645). In this definition of Modernism, we find that it was firstly used to refer to the movement in terms of religious revolt against the traditional belief. But as time goes on, Modernism has become a term not only "frequently used in discussions of twentieth-century literature" (Faulkner, 1977, p.viii) but also of all forms of twentieth-century art.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), the famous American short story writer, poet and critic, though gifted, was not much appreciated by his contemporaries during his life time. But time is the touchstone of truth. When the indomitable waves of Modernism swept the whole Europe, his genius as a first-rank poet, a brilliant short story writer and a critic of insight was gradually secured for good in Europe, America and the whole world. To some extent, it is due to his tragic, miserable and precarious life that Poe created his unique works from which the Modernist writers drew inspirations. Although his personal reputation after his death was temporarily ruined by his literary executor, Rufus Wilmot Griswold, whose hostile and malicious characterizations of Poe became the unofficial record of Poe's biography, "his genius and originality were immediately recognized and his reputation established" (Pope-Hennessy, 1971, p.331) when the indomitable waves of Modernism swept the whole Europe.

2. The Avant-garde Sense

2.1 Originality and Anti-tradition

Poe, the first American writer who made the American theories of criticism crucially influential in the European countries, dissatisfied with the traditional literary norms and standards, established his own theories in both fiction and poetry and put his avant-garde theories of originality into practices. In his life time and even shortly

after his death, Poe was not appreciated by many men of letters in America where the writers and critics were concerned with the glorification and independence of the native American culture and social potentials. However, as time passes on, his avant-garde sense of originality and anti-traditional method advocated in his artistic theories and employed in his literary practices, paved the way for the Modernist writers searching desperately for inspirations.

Poe particularly sensitive to the originality in his criticism on the writers regarding the form of fiction spoke highly of the originality in Hawthorne's writings. He argued that a skillful artist should bear a construction in mind when writing a tale: "if wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique of single *effect*...this preconceived effect." (Thompson, 1984, p.572) He advocated further that writers should pay much attention to the initial sentence in order to bring out this kind of effect and if not, then the whole fiction would be a total failure. In addition to paying unselfish tribute to other writer's originality, Poe stated that "my first object (as usual) is originality" (Thompson, 1984, p.20).

Although living in an age when American High Romanticism dominated the literary stage, Poe was deeply concerned with the anti-traditional aesthetic views on literary creation. In his literary criticism, *Letter to B—* (1836), he expressed clearly his opposition to the traditional idea that truth or instruction is the end of poetry but asserted that pleasure was the ultimate aim of poetry. He was also against the heresy characteristic of the British Lake School represented by William Wordsworth. Moreover, Poe, in his another criticism, *The Poetic Principle* (1848), revealed his antagonistic attitude towards the traditional theme of morality in poetry which he termed as the "Heresy of The Didactic":

Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans, especially, have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very specially, have developed it in full. (Thompson, 1984, p.75)

In order to seek a new way of eliminating this traditional theme in writing poems, he put forward his radical idea that poets should write "poem simply for the poem's sake". (Thompson, 1984, p.572) Unlike the Romanticists who glorified the nature or who were concerned solely with vitality and powerful emotions, Poe stepped into the dark side of the human consciousness, even unconsciousness exemplified in *The Raven* and *the Hunted Palace* (1839), aiming to depict a picture of doom, degradation and destruction as the death-ridden images abound in *The City in the Sea* (1831) and *The Conqueror Worm* (1843).

2.2 From the World Outside to the World Inside

Poe's stress on originality and his unique moral sense encouraged later Modernist writers to give special attention to the condition of the human self, especially the condition of the mind as Virginia Woolf suggested that the art should not aim to reflect the world without, but to "illumine the mind within, to portray consciousness itself" (Stevenson, 1992, p. 17). One of the central characteristics of Modernist writing is to focus on the world within the human self rather than the outside world displayed in the Realists writings. Poe's works written before the middle of the nineteenth century several decades before the emergence of the Modernist movements, however, have showed this kind of technique consciously or unconsciously in his own experiments, thus providing an encouraging literary model for the Modernists.

Most of Poe's stories are deeply concerned with the protagonists' state of mind rather than the world they live in. In *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843), the first-person narrator tells the reader that the old man's "Evil Eye" (Poe, 1966, p.121) makes him very "dreadfully nervous" (Poe, 1966, p.121) and the idea of murdering the old man "haunted him every day and night" (Poe, 1966, p.121). In order to get rid of this kind of nervousness, he murders the old man at a dreadful hour of the eighth night, dismembers his body and conceals it into his floorboard. But when the policemen come to investigate his house, he mystically reveals his crime to them because of the irresistible sounds of a beating heart ringing in his ears. Beneath the surface of a story of murder, it is the protagonist's abnormal mental state that drives him to commit the murder and leads to his final confession. The narrator in *The Imp of Perverseness* (1845), before narrating his story of murder, explains in detail his perverseness defined as "a mobile without motive, a motive not *motiviert*" (Poe, 1966, p.272).

Poe was particularly preoccupied with "unnatural and irrational states of consciousness" (Parini & Millier, 2005, p. 185) that offer a good opportunity for him to plunge deeply into another inner side of the human mind, a state of dreams that is the "border between life and death" (Noys, 2005, p. 10) and the boundary between sanity and insanity. In the preface of his prose poem *Eureka* (1848), Poe says that he aims to offer this work to "the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities" (Thompson, 2004, p. 568). Moreover, in the poem, *Dream-Land* (1844), the speaker's poetic imagination wells from the place "by a route obscure and lonely/ Haunted by ill angels only" (Poe, 1966, p.751). In the poem *The Raven*, Poe even portrays the

protagonist's unconsciousness when he asks the raven questions that cannot be answered by a bird in reality. But in Poe's poetic imagination, the repetitions of "Nevermore" answered by the bird of evil when he assumes that it is the spirit of his dead lover drive the protagonist from nervous sanity into insanity.

Looking back to the Modernist's writers, we find that they are particularly concerned with the same world inside the human self as Poe was in his literary experiments. Henry James, the pre-Modernist writer as some critics called him, places much emphasis on the conflict between the European and American personal attitudes towards the world, especially the relationship between the world outside and the world inside of his characters as he experiments on his famous international themes in his novels such as *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Ambassadors* (1903). D. H. Lawrence, one of the greatest English Modernists, in *Woman in Love* (1920) and *The Rainbow* (1945) also quantitatively depicts the inner feelings and movements of the psyche of his protagonists. To the Modernist poets represented by T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, and Ezra Pound, "the 'lost outside' matters no longer, because now everything is and happens 'inside,'" (Emig, 1995, p. 123) reflecting the same interests with their contemporary writers in fiction.

2.3 From the Physical Time to the Psychological Time

When Modernist writers began to shift their interests from the world outside to the world inside, their attitudes towards time would inevitably change from the time on the clock to the time on the mind for time and place are inter-related with each other. As a result, the central experiments of the technique concerning time in the Modernist works shifted from the traditional physical time to the psychological time. This kind of change, however, did not originate solely from their views towards space, but also was strongly influenced by the scientific and philosophical development regarding time in the modern era.

However, more than half a century before Bergson published his time philosophy, Poe, a unique writer among his contemporaries, had already in his works broken through the traditional chronological time method and experimented on the psychological time technique imbued in and characteristic of the Modernist literature. Poe, in order to place the emphasis on the character or the speakers' mind experience, constructed his works by using the time on the mind rather than the time on the clock. In his literary criticism, *The Poetic Principle* (1848), he wrote:

Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone." (Thompson, 1984, p. 77)

The word time in the above-mentioned sentence is capitalized, clearly indicating Poe's special attention to time in his artistic assessments. In most of Poe's stories, we seldom find the specific date in history, but the time dependent on and associated with the characters' experience of mind. To Poe's protagonists, time is not a means to account the daily experience but a method of recording the streams of their psychological state of mind. *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1843), for example, tells about the mental experience suffered from the cruelly psychological tortures when the narrator is faced with death penalty by a court of religion. These descriptions on the narrator's sense of time in the whole story shed light on the narrator's psychological streams of consciousness and even unconsciousness, sharing a close relationship with the duration of Bergson's philosophy of time.

Poe in his poems also expressed the same attitude towards time as he did in his short stories. He transcended the traditional knowledge of time in *Al Aaraaf* (1829) as he wrote: "when old Time my wing did disentrall / Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower, / And years I left behind me in a hour." (780) In *Dream-Land* (1844), the speaker travels in the lands "Out of SPACE—out of TIME." (Poe, 1966, p. 751) Moreover, Poe shows clearly his hostility to time in the poem in the short story, *The Assignment* (1834): "Alas! For that accursed time / They bore thee o'er the billow" (Poe, 1966, p. 146). Throughout his stories and poems, Poe always arranged the setting at mid-night so as to probe deeply into the narrator or the speaker's consciousness or even unconsciousness, transcending the physical time into the psychological time characteristic of the Modernist works.

Like Poe in his experiments on time in his works, the Modernist writers prefer the psychological time to the physical time. As Tim Armstrong argued, Ronald Schleifer's *Modernism and Time* and Michael Tratner's *Deficits and Desires* approached the problem of the concept of time in Modernist literature and their common attitude was "a fascination with the embodiment of time in human experience" (Armstrong, 2005, p. 13). In *Orlando* (1928), Woolf expressed clearly her literary and philosophical tendency to "favor 'time in the mind' rather than 'time on the clock'" (Stevenson, 1992, p. 105).

3. The Lonely Wanderer on the Wasteland

3.1 Self-Fragmentation and Self-Destruction

As is argued, Poe and the Modernists share the change of interests from the world outside to the world inside, namely from the focus on the natural world to the emphasis upon the human self. The self featured in the works of Poe and the Modernists, however, is not the one of spiritual integrity, but of mental self-fragmentation and self-destruction. Poe aimed to depict the morbid mental state of his protagonists and speakers in his prose and poem as he argued in the preface to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) that the terror in his works “is not of Germany, but of the soul” (Thompson, 2004, p. 621). In order to achieve an effect of horror that might be felt in the depth of the reader’s mind, Poe portrayed a fragmented human soul driven by the death-wish of self-destruction in his literary imaginations.

Allan Tate in his criticism on Poe titled *The Angelic Imagination* argues that “Poe is the transitional figure in modern literature, because he discovered our great subject, the disintegration of personality.” (as cited in Bloom, 1985, p. 39) However, this kind of fragmented and disintegrated personality has been displayed in Poe’s works. The narrator, Egæus, in *Berenice* (1835) tells the reader that he suffers from a kind of disease called monomania, an intensified interest buried “in the contemplation of even the most ordinary objects of the universe.” (Poe, p. 172) In this short story, the fragmented mind of the protagonist subject to his unhealthy motive to possess the teeth of his wife is fully and artistically depicted.

Like the protagonists in his stories, the speakers in Poe’s poems also express consciously or unconsciously a sense of self-fragmentation and self-destruction. When the speaker in *The Raven* (1845) is grieving sadly over the death of his love in a midnight, a raven knocks his door of chamber, which he mistakes for her spirit. During the one-way response of conversation, the student “seems to enjoy perversely the pain of his loss”, (as cited in Hayes, 2005, p. 194) which results from his fragmented mind and is caused by his ineradicable memory of his lost Lenore. The repetitions of “Nevermore” answered by the black bird, therefore, are the words wished from the inner mind of the student, driving him from sanity to insanity. The speaker in *Ulalume* (1847) imagines his soul as one thing fragmented from his mind and externalized for his physical body as he “roamed with my Soul” (Poe, p. 757) and they have “serious and sober” (Poe, p. 757) talks with each other. The reason why he uses “we”, “our” and “us” in the poem is to indicate his incomplete and fragmented mind.

Like Poe’s characters in his prose and poems, self-fragmentation and self-destruction are also the major characteristics of the Modernist works. The narrator in Franz Kafka’s novel, *The Burrow* (1923), is preoccupied with a determination to construct a perfect burrow so as to hide him from the outside world and he tells in an obsessive detail about his plan. This kind of obsession with inward withdrawal implies the fragmented self of the narrator driven by his fear of the outside world. As Tim Armstrong argued, “Being and Time are split” (Armstrong, 2005, p. 9) when the self in the Modernist works struggles for the immutable identity in the dramatically changing modern society, it deserves our attention that the disembodied self “had played such an important part in early European modernism” (Nicholls, 1995, p. 193).

3.2 Alienation and Loneliness

Owing to the rapid growth of the capitalist industrialization and the trauma brought by the First World War, people in the modern era were threatened by self-fragmentation, suffering from the unbearable mental alienation from society. Meanwhile, life in reality was void and spiritually barren and the relationship between man and man, man and society, and man and nature was marred with isolation and alienation, which ultimately brought the loneliness of physical and spiritual life to mankind. However, living in the middle of the nineteenth century, Edgar Allan Poe in his literary creations had foresighted these themes that were characteristics of the works of Modernism.

Many protagonists in Poe’s short stories are people alienated and isolated from the traditional harmonious inter-relationship. In *Metzengerstein* (1832), the families of Berlifitzing and Metzengerstein have been hostile to each other from many generations and “near neighbors are seldom friends” (Poe, p. 250). Even the two family members themselves are alienated and isolated. When the narrator in *The Premature Burial* (1844) suffers from a kind of mental disorder termed catalepsy, his mind is loaded unbearably with a fear that his family “might consider any very protracted attack as sufficient excuse for getting rid of me altogether”. (Poe, p. 268) Moreover, Miss Signora Psyche Zenobia in *A Predicament* (1838) is very crude to his Negro servant called Pompey. When Pompey misunderstands her words, she curses “him in plain words, that he was a fool.” (Poe, p.331) Viewing from words quoted from the stories mentioned, we can clearly sense the alienated relationship among human beings under the pen of Poe.

In Poe's poems, the speakers also often express clearly or implicitly a sense of alienated and isolated relationship between man and nature. Unlike the Romanists who intended to glorify nature or draw spiritual imagination from it, Poe plunges into the sea of his own dreams for the sake of bringing solace and peace to his disturbed mind as the speaker in *To One in Paradise* (1833) asserts that "all my days are trances / And all nightly dreams / Are where thy eye glances" (Poe, p. 813). In *Stanzas* (1827), Poe wrote in the first sentence that "how often we forget all the time, when lone / admiring Nature's universal throne." (Poe, p. 768) Even nature in *Al Aaraaf* (1829) does not have any relationship with man's real life, but "That Nature loves best for Beauty's grave" (Poe, p. 776).

Like Poe whose literary characters in prose and poem are subject to alienation and loneliness, the modern men under the pen of the Modernist writers are also enveloped in such dilemma resulting from the specific trauma brought by the First World War and the rapid growth of capitalism. They suffered from the "growing estrangement from mass society" (Singal, 1991, p. 3), which pushed them to fall into inescapable loneliness both in the physical and spiritual life. Flem Snopes in William Faulkner's novel *The Hamlet* (1940) is alienated to such a degree that he employs any unscrupulous method good for his interests. Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) is a cold-blooded man whose fondness for other people is measured solely by their usefulness to him, and he makes desperate revenges the minute they fail him. Moreover, throughout Kafka's novels, "alienation is a prominent feature" (Murray, 1991, p. 49).

3.3 *The Landscape of Wasteland*

The fragmented, alienated and lonely self with a wish for self-destruction is commonly displayed in Poe's and the Modernists prose and poems and this technique that deliberately depicts the tormented inner self exerts a strong influence on the writers in the modern period. As T. S. Eliot pictures a world of physical degradation and spiritual bareness in his masterpiece, *The Waste Land* (1922), the characters in the Modernists' literary imaginations share similar social attitudes. Hence, the spiritually meaningless world, the landscape of wasteland, became the central stage on which the Modernist writers brought their literary experiments into full play.

The settings in most of Poe's short stories are also located in some dark, decayed and remote place where there is no sunshine of the vitality of normal life. When conjuring the settings of those stories, Poe tends to enhance the effect of horror on the part of the reader's faculty of mind and imagination, but more importantly, the horrible settings also reflect the author's pessimistic attitude towards his life and society in reality. In *The Assignment* (1834), the story opens in "a night of unusual gloom," when the "square of the Campanile lay silent and deserted, and the lights in the old Ducal Palace were dying fast away" (Poe, p. 139). Moreover, Montresor commits his murder against Fortunato in *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846) at his family vaults where "the walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead" (Poe, p. 194).

Likewise, in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, London was an "Unreal City" (DiYanni, 1994, p. 456) with an image of a desert "where man is alone with God" (Tamplin, 2004, p. 54) rather than a prosperous metropolis in modern society, while this image of waste-land can be easily found in Poe's poetic world. In *The Lake—To—* (1827), the speaker in the opening stanza clearly states his fondness for the lake of loneliness and desolation as he says: "So lovely was the loneliness / Of a wild lake," and from childhood he loves to "haunt of the wide world a spot". (Poe, p. 771) To the speaker, however, the terror of the lone lake "was not fright, / But a tremendous delight", and death is hiding "in that poisonous wave" (Poe, p. 771). Meditating in a lake remote from the turmoil of the daily life, the speaker finds solace in his "lone imagining" (Poe, p. 771) with a solitary soul upon the grave in the gulf of the lonely lake. Moreover, the images presented in *The City in the Sea* (1831) are also tinged with features of sadness, meaninglessness and desolation. Death spreads its spell over the city where "Resignedly beneath the sky / The melancholy waters lie" (Poe, p. 744). In the end of the poem, the city falls down into the sea and even "Hell, rising from a thousand thrones, / Shall do it reverence" (Poe, p. 745).

As is argued above, Poe and Modernist writers in prose and poem show a common tendency to depict the spiritually fragmented, alienated and lonely characters with a wish of self-destruction in a world of spiritual wasteland devoid of any meaning and significance. However, Poe, not only is a writer with strong modernistic features in terms of writing skills and themes, but also the tutor, spiritual leader and adventurer of some influential Modernist movements that spread over the western countries.

4. The Prophet of the Modernist Movements

4.1 *The Tutor of Expressionism*

Expressionism is a general term for a mode of literary or visual art that reacts extremely against realism and naturalism and it "presents a world violently distorted under the pressure of intense personal moods, ideas, and

emotions: images and language thus express feeling and imagination rather than represent external reality” (Baldick, 2000, p.78). In order to distance themselves from Realism and Naturalism, artists and writers in the German-speaking countries especially in Germany, attempted to employ new forms of creative expressions in the field of literature, arts and film.

But if we take a careful investigation on the history of literature, it deserves our attention that the famous American writer, Edgar Allan Poe who lived half a century before the precursors of Expressionist movement above mentioned is one of the most important tutors of Expressionism, making strong imprints into the avant-garde movement. In 1909, the hundredth anniversary of Poe’s birth, a famous German writer at that time, George Edward, delivered a momentous speech in Germany. Edward explicitly declared that Edgar Poe’s writings were absolutely modern and suitable to the modern readers. According to Edward, Poe’s works provided a unique method of writing to the German writers desperately attempting to find a new way of expression in which the inner side of the human soul rather the outside world could be brought to light. It is due to Edward’s effort that several Poe’s works in German editions emerged in the bookshops, among which the Müller editions with illustrations by Alfred Kubin was the most notable one.

Poe’s works translated in the German language with Kubin’s illustrations influenced German Expressionism in multiple ways and set a perfect model for the Expressionists who were and were to be active on the stage of literature and art during the high time of Expressionism in the German-speaking countries. George Grosz, one of the important Expressionists in painting, gave one of his drawings the title of *Double Murder in the Rue Morgue* (1913), apparently echoing Poe’s detective short story *The Murder in the Rue Morgue* (1841). Grosz’s choice of the title explicitly shows his warm dedication to Poe and inspirations derived from him.

Poe’s influence on the Expressionism also steps into the field of Expressionist films. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) scripted by Robert Wiene is generally considered as one of the most important representatives of Expressionist films. The sleep-walking plot in the film is clearly indebted to Poe’s two short stories on mesmerism, *Mesmeric Revelation* (1844) and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* (1845). Wiene, however, mistook the mentality of sleep-walking for mesmerism that Poe depicted with pseudo-scientific methods in his two short stories, but the influence is apparent as the main plot of sex murder also echoes the paintings of Kubin and Grosz. Likewise, *The Student of Prague* (1913), scripted by Hanns Heinz Ewers, is generally regarded as the first Expressionist film. The theme of dual identity in the film, however, reflects the influence of Poe’s short story *William Wilson* (1839), a story about the titular protagonist’s fragmented and dual identity.

4.2 The Spiritual Leader of Symbolism

As to the emergence of the Symbolism, T. S. Eliot although showed some contempt to Poe’s works, but he did not deny Poe’s strong influence on the Symbolist movement as he remarked that “we must remember that this French movement itself owed a good deal to an American of Irish extraction: Edgar Allan Poe” (as cited in Clarke, Vol. I, 1991, p. 275). After taking a careful examination of the history of Symbolism, we are bound to find a undeniable fact that Poe has a close spiritual relationship with the movement, influencing the whole generations of the French Symbolists from Baudelaire to Valéry and providing them with the inspirational models of writing to break through the fetters of Realism and Naturalism that dominated the western literary stage for a long period of time. On the other hand, it is also the French Symbolist that enables Poe after his death to resume his reputation as a writer of genius and originality throughout the world. Most importantly, Poe is hailed as the spirit leader of Symbolism.

Baudelaire, not only interested in Poe’s short stories but also inspired by his literary criticism, published his own literary critical works with Poe’s ideas as his own. “Following the argument of Poe’s ‘The Poetic Principle’” (Nicholls, 1995, p. 8), Baudelaire puts forward that the aim of poetry is not the pursuit of truth and morality, but the inner side of the human mind. Therefore, in most of his poems, we seldom meet the experience of everyday life in his works but the dark world where the lonely and alienated self is confronted with violence and perversity. This kind of perversity, as Poe elaborates on in his short story *The Imp of the Perverse* (1845), “suffuses the work of the European decadent writers” (Halliwell, 2006, p. 31), providing an inspiring literary model for the Modernists struggling to break through all kinds of doctrines.

Inspired by Poe’s poetic originality, Mallarmé applied Poe’s poetic theory on music to his own literary theories, as he admitted in a letter to Miss Sara Sigourney Rice that “Poe is so intimately linked to my mind that if ever I write anything of worth, I’ll owe it him”(as cited in Clarke, Vol. I, 1991, p. 275). T. S. Eliot in his literary criticism *From Poe to Valéry* (1949) argued that Poe’s personality was the major interest to Baudelaire, while to Mallarmé it was “the technique of verse, thought Poe’s is, as Mallarmé recognizes, a kind of versification which does not lend itself to use in the French language”(as cited in Clarke, Vol. II, 1991, p. 387-388). Therefore,

Poe's strong belief in the power of music became "a major preoccupation" (Vines, 1992, p. 40) for the Symbolist writers.

Through the hands of Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry, the major Symbolists in literature and Odile Redon, the Symbolist in the field of art, Poe's literary reputation was secured in Europe and he was gradually honored as the spirit leader of Symbolism. Poe's influence on Modernist movements, however, did not just stop at the Symbolist movements, and it also penetrated into the Surrealist movement as he was hailed as the Adventurer of Surrealism.

4.3 The Adventurer of Surrealism

As the Surrealist movement was initiated in France where Edgar Allan Poe was hailed to a position that can be compared with their greatest men of letters in the French history, the Surrealists have certainly turned to him to draw inspirations since they shared common interests concerning dream and the boundary between rationality and irrationality. Breton admitted in his first *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) that some writers before him had represented beforehand the Surrealist movement and called Poe a "Surrealist in adventure" (Breton, 1969, p. 27). Moreover, in an article entitled *Originality and Freedom* (1940), Breton stated again that "in our modern day, these explorers are called Hölderlin, Novalis, Nerval, Blake, Poe, Baudelaire, Browning, Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Lorca" (as cited in Rosemont 1978, p. 207).

As Breton openly declared his debt to Poe in the development of Surrealism, Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), a Surrealist poet and director of Bureau of Surrealist Research (1925) also expressed his admiration for the American great poet as he said: "If Edgar Poe was found dead one morning on the curb of a sidewalk in Baltimore, it was not in a crisis of delirium tremens due to alcohol, but because some sons of bitches who hated his genius..." (as cited in Rosemont 1978, p. 372) From the sentence quoted above, we can easily find the Surrealist poet's great sympathy conveyed to Poe's unfair literary position in his native country and his strong admiration for Poe's genius.

Like the Surrealists in literature, The Surrealist artists also showed their affinity with Poe. The Surrealist's "exhibitions in New York in 1932 and 1936 introduced first the figural art of Ernst and Dali" (Armstrong, 2005, p. 38) and influenced many American painters including Robert Motherwell, a famous abstract expressionist. But when he was interviewed near his end of his life, Motherwell "reiterated his devotion to Poe, naming him as a poet with whom he felt especially close" (as cited in Hayes, 2005, p. 225). Even the Surrealist painters like Marx Ernst and Dali are not the exception. Poe's short story *Berenice* (1835) influenced Ernst dramatically when he experimented on his collage *Microgramme Arp 1:25,000* (1921), a work that echoes Egaeus' (the protagonist) morbid obsession to his wife's (Berenice) teeth. In addition, Ernst in 1935 gave one of his paintings the title of *Berenice*, re-stating his devotion to the American writer of genius. Salvador Dali clearly remembered that Marie Bonaparte's critical book *Edgar Poe, Étude Psychanalytique* (1933) generated many discussions in Paris, and "greatly influenced the Surrealists" (as cited in Hayes, 2005, p. 236).

5. Conclusion

As is argued in the body part of this thesis, Poe cast his strong imprints on the Modernist movements through his own literary experiments from which the Modernist writers drew literary and artistic inspirations. We have enough reason to say that Poe even foreshadowed, to some extent, the emergence of Modernisms in Europe and worldwide. Moreover, the comparison between the narrative techniques, aesthetic thoughts and themes of his works with those of Modernist writers arrives at a conclusion that Poe is one of the most important forerunners of Modernism. Through exploring their common interests in originality, avant-garde techniques of writing in time and space, alienated and lonely characters subject to self-fragmentation and self-destruction in a world of wasteland devoid of any meaning and significance and by pointing out his strong influence on the major movements of Symbolism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Futurism and Streams of Consciousness through the hands of his admirers in France, all the three chapters are focused on the central idea that Edgar Allan Poe had a close relationship with Modernist movements and some major Modernist writers or so-called his followers are indebted to him.

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