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## Thoughtcraft: A Matter of Life and Death in Poe and Lovecraft

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### Abstract

Recent psychoanalytical and philosophical discussions on the works of Edgar Allan Poe and H. P. Lovecraft have changed their reception as popular pulp writers. Unique styles these writers create when describing various objects including a house, a tarn, an eye, a monster, and a city open up a speculative realm of indetermination between the animate and the inanimate. This problem discussed by Sigmund Freud in his two crucial works, “The Uncanny” and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, finds new expressions in some contemporary philosophical ventures such as speculative realism and object-oriented ontology whose leading figures are Quentin Meillassoux and Graham Harman respectively. Departing from Meillassoux’s concept of rupture, associating it with Freud’s reflections on indetermination, and finally drawing on Harman’s interpretation of Lovecraft, this article will explore how the membranous structures of the human mind are portrayed by Poe and Lovecraft. It will argue that Poe’s and Lovecraft’s works, as exemplified by the referred short stories, “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Call of Cthulhu” and “At the Mountain of Madness,” perform in different ways what may be called the thoughtcraft. The animate and the inanimate come into indirect contact on the membranous surfaces crafted to produce indetermination and speculative thought.

**Keywords:** Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Sigmund Freud, Quentin Meillassoux, Graham Harman, indetermination, rupture, thought

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## Düşünce Zanaati: Poe ve Lovecraft'ta Bir Ölüm Kalım Meselesi

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### Öz

Edgar Allan Poe ve H. P. Lovecraft, psikanalitik ve felsefi tartışmaların nesnesi haline geldikçe popüler kurmaca yazarı imajından kurtulmuşlardır. Bu iki önemli edebi figürün bir evi, bir dağ gölünü, bir gözü, bir canavarı ya da bir kenti betimlerken ortaya koydukları özgün tarz, canlıyla cansız arasında spekülasyon bir belirlenimsizlik alanı açar. Sigmund Freud'un "Tekinsiz" ve Haz İlkesinin Ötesinde adlı çalışmalarında ele aldığı bu sorunsal, spekülasyon gerçekçilik ve nesne yönelimli ontoloji gibi çağdaş felsefelerde farklı biçimlerde ifade bulmuştur. Spekülasyon gerçekçilik Quentin Meillassoux'dan ilham alırken, nesne yönelimli ontolojinin temellerini atan düşünür Graham Harman'dır. Bu makale, insan zihninin zar benzeri yapısının Poe ve Lovecraft tarafından nasıl tasvir edildiğini ortaya koymak amacıyla Meillassoux'nun kopma (rupture) kavramından yola çıkacak, bu kavramı Freud'un belirlenimsizlik üzerine söyledikleriyle ilişkilendirecek ve son olarak Harman'ın Lovecraft yorumundan yararlanacaktır. Makalede atıf yapılan "Usher Malikânesinin Çöküşü," "Gammaz Yürek", "Cthulhu'nun Çağrısı" ve "Deliliğin Dağlarında" öykülerinin örneklediği üzere, Poe'nun ve Lovecraft'ın farklı biçimlerde de olsa edebiyatlarında düşünce zanaati diye adlandırılabilir bir şeyi ortaya koydukları iddia edilecektir. Buna göre canlı ile cansız, belirlenimsizliği ve spekülasyon düşüncüyü üretmek üzere dokunan zar benzeri yüzeylerde dolaylı bir iletişime geçer.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Sigmund Freud, Quentin Meillassoux, Graham Harman, belirlenimsizlik, kopma, düşünce

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# Thoughtcraft: A Matter of Life and Death in Poe and Lovecraft

Hakan Atay

## 1. Introduction

Quentin Meillassoux (b. 1967), a contemporary French thinker whose idiosyncratic reflections on materialism have already become well-known in the circles of continental philosophy, posits that there are different orders of rupture in becoming which cannot be reduced to each other. He names matter, life, and thought as the three orders that becoming had undergone since the very beginning, and adds the fourth order, i.e., the world of justice, as a possibility. The fourth world exists in the form of hope and desire hence it can perhaps come out (2015, 236-238). Meillassoux's philosophy has numerous consequences regarding both "humanistic" and "anti-anthropocentric" dimensions, in Christopher Watkin's words (2016, 47), but the idea that ruptures in becoming leave their imprint in the human mind in most strange forms constitutes the focus of this article. This idea hints at an intellectual past, containing one rather unique predecessor, Sigmund Freud, in its forefront. In "The Uncanny" and Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud speculates how inorganic life relates to thought, enabling us to build a link between his psychoanalytic theory and Meillassoux's materialism.

This article aims to show that some elements of the common ground shared by Meillassoux and Freud are performed literarily by the works of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), who are deemed to be the masters of the uncanny in American literature. To explain how this performance is realized, the article will first outline the basic framework of Meillassoux's concept of rupture and then explain the significance of inorganic life in Freud's theory. It will argue that Meillassoux's rupture and Freud's thought are represented by Poe's

masterpiece, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839). To this end, it will analyze how the references to physicality reflect the indetermination between the material and immaterial worlds. Getting help from another classical short story by Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), the article will delve into Poe’s apprehension of the human mind as a space of thinking.

Poe crafts the membranous structures in a way that constructs them as spaces of thought production. The speculative nature of thought is further examined in the article through an engagement with Graham Harman’s interpretation of Lovecraft’s short stories, “The Call of Cthulhu” (1928) and “At the Mountain of Madness” (1936). As Harman, a contemporary American philosopher, initiated object-oriented ontology and wrote a book on Meillassoux, and as Lovecraft considered Poe the grand master, this final engagement will help foster the philosophical and literary transactions implied by the article. The purpose here is not to explicate certain episodes of Poe’s and Lovecraft’s short stories through theoretical engagements, but to reflect on the intriguing network of literature and philosophy.

## 2. Meillassoux on Rupture

Meillassoux’s yet-to-be-completed speculative work, *L’Inexistence divine* (The Divine Inexistence) was partially translated by Harman and added as an appendix to his book entitled *Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making*. In these excerpts, Meillassoux suggests that matter, life, and thought are neither the effects of some determinate causes nor creations of an absolute being. They are rather independent advents (*surgissement* in French) *ex nihilo* that form “the sole immanent concept of becoming” (2015, 226). “[A]dvent *ex nihilo*,” he maintains, “does not conceal an essentially religious notion,” paving the way for the possibilities of “our own world” (226, emphasis in original). Here, a true novelty would denote a becoming that cannot be reduced to the actualization of constant possibilities and thus would problematize the existing idea of origin (228). Meillassoux underlines that the idea of origin is usually considered in relation to divine creation, yet one may see “the advent of life in matter” if the intervention of transcendence is not allowed. The configurations of material things do not rely upon affections, perceptions, and thoughts, which are rather added to these configurations contingently. They do not pre-exist their organisms or more generally their “material components that accompany their advents” (229).

Meillassoux’s speculative work aims to define the future of these contingently formed chasms by referring to a fourth world in which thought will be “surmount[ed]...by its non-repetitive but recollective recommencement” (269). Material substances, living organisms, and animals with great intellectual skills emerged, not abiding by the necessary rules of causation or the principle of sufficient reason. His analysis proceeds rationally with the prospect to achieve a state of mind, which turns the traumatic experiences caused by such unprecedented emergences into hopeful anticipation in disquietude of a just world, or a world of justice (255).

It is not a coincidence that Meillassoux’s 2006 book *Après la finitude* (After Finitude) inspired some philosophers, including Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, and Graham Harman, to gather around the movement called “Speculative Realism” (Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman 2011, 2). Although those who identified themselves

with the speculative turn did not, in any way, form a homogenous group, their attempt to speculate on the nature of reality in itself, regardless of its relationship with thought and humans, was a common denominator (2011, 3). In the age of ecological crises and technological and neuroscientific developments, current continental philosophy was deemed inadequate. For these philosophers, the correlation between thinking and being was taken for granted by continental philosophy as a byproduct of its anti-realism (2011, 3). What Meillassoux calls “correlationism” holds that any knowledge of reality relies on thought which is geared to being. Accordingly, as “beings-in-the-world,” we necessarily consider reality within the realm of thought or language, a position that evokes idealism (2011, 4).

Yet, as Bryant, Srnicek, and Harman go on to explain, Meillassoux does not dismiss correlationism and instead takes it to extremes by bringing forth the necessity of contingency, which amounts to the suggestion that “anything is possible from one moment to the next” (2011, 8). Therefore, such complicated subjects as the material world’s coming into being, the disruption of the previous order of the fields of energy, the emergence of living in the midst of inanimate things, or the sudden development of the complexities of thinking out of life are all within the realm of Meillassoux’s philosophy. That is also the reason why Speculative Realism pays special attention to the uncanny ruptures in psychoanalytic and scientific knowledge. Among Poe’s short stories which offer a wide array of examples to discuss such uncanny ruptures, “The Fall of the House of Usher” is particularly strong with its enactment of the sense of being between the animate and the inanimate. Freud reflects on this sense by relating it to thought.

### 3. Freud’s Protective Shields

The culmination point of Freud’s career as a prolific writer can arguably best be represented by two remarkable essays, “The Uncanny” and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, published in 1919 and 1920 respectively. The former, originally entitled “Das Unheimliche,” was a reconsideration of a problem first expressed in 1906 by Ernest Jentsch. Jentsch, in his critical analysis of “The Sandman,” a famous story written by German romantic storyteller E. T. A. Hoffmann, attempted at describing a problematic psychic state that is based on indetermination or uncertainty. For Jentsch, uncertainty is symbolized, in the story, with the characterization of a mechanical doll named Olympia. When textual allusions create a living human figure out of Olympia, which should be nothing but an automaton, the reader’s attention loses its focus and orientation with a sense of sudden panic. The feeling evoked by the breaching of the presumably obvious gap between animate and inanimate states is called the uncanny. Freud, in his essay, finds a way to incorporate this account into the psychoanalytical system, but by proposing an alternate reading of the story.

Accordingly, there is nothing particularly uncanny about Olympia the doll, rather the possibility that one’s eyes can be torn out is the source of the feeling (Freud 1997, 202). For Freud, at least in this essay, the uncanny is just an unconsciously formed reminder of the Id, and of its impulses repressed by the Oedipal interference of the super-ego. The story now becomes a full-fledged account of the castration complex. As is customary for Freud, he does not refrain from supporting his psychological

arguments with anthropological observations. Hence, he tells the reader that our individual past shaped by the tension between the familiar (*heimlich*) and the unfamiliar (*unheimlich*), crosses paths with the past of humankind, molded by its pantheistic and animalistic beliefs which repress natural death, thereby making it resurface in supernatural forms. Therefore, the possible relief for this general human condition is best achieved by replacing our “old modes of thought” concerning both the development of the individual and the natural course of dying (1997, 218).

This highly improbable replacement would surely take a lot of speculative effort from Freud’s side. Almost a year after he published “The Uncanny,” he put together a truly interesting study entitled *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*). The treatise has a stunning bipartite structure. In the first half, Freud gives clinical assessments concerning the nature of the psychic repetition of that which should have been repressed. The supposed desire for having pleasant experiences, formulated as the pleasure principle by Freud, turns into its opposite, paving the way for the repetition of the most unpleasant events over and over again. This first section of the work tries to deal with the problem, proposing two opposite drives guiding human desire, namely *Eros* and *Thanatos*. The self-preservative forces of the former are held in check by the self-destructive forces of the latter. But this picture seems to be way too simplistic because it requires yet another instinct to preserve the balance between them. Freud, in the second half of the study, is in the quest for finding an answer to fill this gap and the highly speculative nature of the answer makes him state the following at the end: “I am not convinced myself and that I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them or, more precisely, I do not know how far I believe in them” (1961, 71). This statement acknowledges that his theory addresses a slender link between matter, life, and thought.

Indeed, every new state – life is new, compared to matter, and thought is new, compared to life – is built upon an essential imbalance and it is in their nature to strive for returning to their previous state. Freud describes the primordial instinct in these terms, by saying that it is an “urge” of organic life “to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces” (1961, 43). But what is the mechanism with which the new state resists turning back to its past? Here the story gets more complicated and more interesting. In the first level living organism forms its line of resistance against the exterior material forces by means of “an undifferentiated vesicle” (a small and hollow structure like that of a cell or a bubble) (1961, 28). This, in time, becomes an organ suitable for receiving stimulation without getting harmed by destructive stimuli. And this is how living differentiates itself from the non-living or the inanimate. But there is also a second level where Freud gives an account of how the living vesicle is protected:

But we have more to say of the living vesicle with its receptive cortical layer. This little fragment of living substance is suspended in the middle of an external world charged with the most powerful energies; and it would be killed by the stimulation emanating from these if it were not provided with a protective shield against stimuli. It acquires the shield

in this way: its outermost surface ceases to have the structure proper to living matter, becomes to some degree inorganic and thenceforward functions as a special envelope or membrane resistant to stimuli. (1961, 30)

The definitive separation between the organic and inorganic can only be achieved then, according to Freud, by a protective shield with parts that are inorganic, or to put it more directly, not living or dead. And this special envelope or membrane, the inorganic segment of the living organism, sets the basis for what Freud calls the perception-consciousness system. Briefly put, human thought emerges at that point where the complex living organism protects itself with a highly developed membrane, which is quite literally dead. If we liked to draw a line connecting the ideas that Freud had developed throughout these two essays, one important trajectory would be the one turning back to Jentsch's early article. The indetermination or the uncertainty between the animate and inanimate states comes from the very structure of thinking. Since thought itself is the result of that dangerous closeness of these opposite states, its production will necessarily be bound up with the repetition of the uncanny as a constitutive sentiment.

#### **4. Ushering the Speculative Thought**

In "The Fall of the House of Usher" Poe introduces his famous first-person narrator into a strange world, outwardly defined by the presence of an old mansion overlooking a curious tarn, and inwardly defined by the weird relationship between Roderick and his twin sister Madeline. The narrator immediately starts making observations, even before he gets to meet his friend, Roderick, who invited him over to his mansion. Roderick asked the narrator to help him with a terrible illness that he was in the clutches of. After contemplating the uncertain, yet quite effective qualities of the mansion's façade, the narrator throws one more look at the edifice by focusing on its reflection on the tarn. At the end of the story, the mansion, which was imagined as a living being by Roderick, collapses into this tarn in front of the same observing eyes of the narrator.

The unreliable nature of the narrator, the characteristics of the house, and the portrayal of its inhabitants locate the "The House of Usher" in the Gothic tradition, which led many scholars to focus on the atmosphere of horror and terror. E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Das Majorat" (1817) is cited as one of the sources of "The House of Usher" with its description of an old mansion in a desolate place, its inhabitant called Roderick, and its portrayal of an agitated woman, despite the stylistic differences between the two stories (Perry and Sederholm 2009, 7-8). Furthermore, the indetermination that Freud discusses referring to Hoffmann's "The Sandman" and Jentsch's reading of it can be found in new disguises in Poe's "The House of Usher," once again illustrating the connection between Hoffmann and Poe.

The reality of the characters and events, i.e., their verisimilitude is questionable as it is not easy to trust the narrator who compares his feelings to "the after-dream of the reveller upon opium" (Poe 1992, 263). Therefore, scholars often underline that the reader's hesitation is the most obvious response to the story. Perry and Sederholm's

following description is a good summary of how the uncanny indetermination Hoffmann brought to psychoanalytic literature can be found in Poe's story as well: "Poe creates an infinitely complex matrix of horror best read through the spectral, fantastic, and uncanny, the harbingers of troubling uncertainties between life and death, real and unreal, self and other" (2009, 17). These uncertainties have been attributed not only to Poe's interest in Gothic literature but also to some other sources he drew on. Benjamin F. Fisher, for example, associated Poe's repeating motif of premature burial, which also takes place in "The House of Usher," to his intense engagement in medicine (2008, 22), while Richard Wilbur read the whole story as the narrator's spiritual journey to his inner self (1966, 265), bringing forth his romantic vision.

What is at stake here is that these divergent readings revolve around the tension between the physical and the sensational worlds conveyed by the story. In Fisher's interpretation, Madeline's burial alive symbolizes the repression of the physical, which is a strong element of life. It is so strong that the physically ill Madeline can open the heavy door of her death chamber and ascend to the upper floor (2008, 79). According to Fisher, this can happen only because Madeline is a vampire, i.e., she exists between life and death (79). Becoming a vampire is compensation for Roderick's denial of the physical aspect of life. It guarantees that she can continue living even after the demise of Roderick and the house (80). Wilbur's different reading draws attention to a similar tension by viewing Poe's stories as dealing with the conflict between "the poetic soul and the external world" or between "the poetic soul and the earthly self to which it is bound" (1966, 259). Wilbur argues that in this struggle Poe's imagination looks for ideal beauty while his mortal senses draw him to the material world (259). This magnetic pull to the physical or the material world in Poe's work, which has been pointed out even by divergent readings, opens to the rupture in the Meillassouxian sense, which is akin to the speculative realm of thought described by Freud.

Poe endeavors to keep the tension between animate and inanimate things on by alluding to the possible transformations of one into the other. Roderick's hypersensitivity and his belief concerning there being a hidden sense of life which includes inorganic things next to organic ones, the horrifying fact about Madeline and the shared fate of the twins can all be read as preparatory moves to reach the ending as perfectly as possible, concomitant with Poe's theory of single effect. The tarn as the powerful symbol of the opening and the closing of the story, then, may be likened to the membrane that Freud had gone some distance to describe. It is the crossing point of the animate and the inanimate, with qualities reflecting both of them. Roderick's belief in the influence of "the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down" on "the morale of his existence" (Poe 1992, 267, emphasizes in original) is an example of this tension. He furthermore relates "the sentience of all vegetable things" to the stones of the home, their arrangement, the fungi among the stones, and the decayed trees surrounding them (1992, 270-271). Explaining Poe's "sentience theory," John H. Timmerman indicates, "If indeed all things are willed into being *ex nihilo*, then not only all humanity but also all matter is part and parcel with God. Such a view Poe expresses as his infamous 'sentience theory' in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'"

(2009, 163). Meillassoux's "advent ex nihilo" inspires one to consider the contrary. Although Poe's theory of the cosmos is based on an idea of unity in line with Timmerman's suggestion, the indetermination that lies at the heart of his work and the membranous structure of the things that Poe likes to describe can well be read as the in-between state where emerges thought in its most speculative form.

Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," published four years after the "House of Usher," in 1843, includes a similar membranous structure at the core of the story. The first-person narrator of this story chooses to kill an old man without any apparent reason whatsoever. In the narrator's own words, "Object there was none" (Poe 1984, 555). Yet he feels perfectly justified in killing the man and burying him under the floorboards in pieces. However, the sound of the beating heart of the man continues to haunt the narrator, forcing him to admit his crime in the end. The only threat to the narrator seems to be one of the blue eyes of the old man, which is covered by a film. This film can arguably be the source of that haunting indetermination to which the narrator falls prey. It is a lively reminder of the fact that he thinks, and as long as he does so, he is destined to be in between the animate and the inanimate, in the presence of a perpetual threat of losing the vivacity once and for all.

One of the best explanations of such haunting and indeterminate states in Poe's work might be the opening sentence of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu": "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of human mind to correlate all its contents" (2005b, 167). This inability, which is thoroughly enacted by Lovecraft's short story, shows itself in such objects as the tarn in "The Fall of the House of Usher" and the film that covers the old man's blue eye in "The Tell-Tale Heart." In what follows, the article will explain how this enactment is interpreted by Graham Harman, an American philosopher, who is known as the founder of the newly established speculative philosophy called Object-Oriented Ontology. Harman's concepts of fusion and fission help us see how the indetermination in Poe and Lovecraft bring them to a common ground of crafting the membranes.

## 5. Crafting the Indeterminate Membranes

If we are to choose one author to be the twentieth-century Poe, it will not be surprising at all to name Lovecraft as the prime candidate. Having discovered Poe at the age of eight (Joshi 2008, ix), Lovecraft regarded the weird in terms of the reader's reception thereby adhering to Poe's theory of effect (Perry and Sederholm 2009, 64). The concentrated performance of the first-person narrator, ready to create and abuse an atmosphere of sincerity, and the well-crafted usage of adjectives and adverbs to define some shady things and events are among the most important stylistic traits which Lovecraft does not hesitate to borrow from Poe. There are similarities between the two even as far as the history of their reception is concerned. Both had been looked at with contempt as pulp writers, with the sole concern to attract the easily manipulated attention of some young and inexperienced readers. However, like that of Poe, Lovecraft's literary legacy also led to a series of critical readings in the broadest possible sense. Harman may be the latest link in this chain.

In his book entitled *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy*, Harman states that he

is doing something more than merely putting a great author to a thorough analysis. For him, a close reading of Lovecraft's works will provide a possible object-oriented philosophy with enormous insight. Such a philosophy, according to Harman, is the one that conceptualizes the independence of the objects from each other, and this means that there is no direct interaction among them (and the objects are generally defined as durable entities which can be reduced neither to their components nor to their effects). To understand the interaction of objects with each other Harman introduces the concept of vicarious causation, according to which, there must be a third object (a mediator, an agent which facilitates indirect access) through which the first two can communicate. He claims that "two entities influence one another only by meeting on the interior of a third, where they exist side-by-side until something happens that allows them to interact" (Harman 2007, 174). The foremost example of such a mediator comes to the fore in Lovecraft's story, "The Call of Cthulhu."

The monster in the story, which belongs to a race that had roamed the earth way before humankind, and which is supposed to be in a death-like slumber, first appears in the form of an idol crafted by a sculptor. The sculptor made no direct contact with the great Cthulhu itself, so he just relied upon, as his model, the thing he thought he saw in his dreams, or more accurately put, in his nightmares. The first-person narrator of the story, upon first laying eyes on the object, describes it roughly as an octopus-dragon-humanoid. But he immediately passes on these qualitative judgments to create further confusion and indetermination: "If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing [...] but it was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful..." (Lovecraft 2005b, 169). What Lovecraft accomplishes to evoke here, for Harman, is the sense in which an object, whether real or sensual, is constructed. Objects are inexhaustible in nature, and they can only be expressed in general outlines, which are bound to be weird, simply because of the fact that there is always tension between objects and their qualities.

Therefore, mediating between two objects – in this case, a human subject, and a member of the Older Ones – requires a new object to be formed, which can, in turn, be expressed solely in a general outline. This is what Harman calls the process of fusion. The other process which supplements the first one is called the fission and it is defined as follows: "Rather than bringing qualities together in uneasy relationship with some inaccessible real object, fission splits the usual relationship between an accessible sensual thing and its accessible sensual qualities." (2012, 241). A great example of this strategy is found in one of the longest stories of Lovecraft, entitled "At the Mountain of Madness," written in 1931 and finally published in 1936. The expedition into the Antarctic goes fatally wrong in this story, upon the discovery of a very big city concealed from the eyes for aeons. When the aerial expedition team led by one Dr. Dryer sees the city for the first time, the description they can come up with turns out to be the following:

There were truncated cones, sometimes terraced or fluted, surmounted by tall cylindrical shafts here and there bulbously enlarged and often

capped with tiers of thinnish scalloped discs; and strange, beetling, table-like constructions suggesting piles of multidinous rectangular slabs or circular plates or five-pointed stars with each one overlapping the one beneath. (2005a, 508-9)

According to Harman, many surfaces laid on top of each other here create something like a cubist painting. All these surfaces, although unable to form a meaningful whole, gain a tremendous amount of suggestiveness, by the mediating force performed by the narrator. Roughly speaking, Harman sees in the figure of Lovecraft an artist crafting objects for the sheer purpose of relating them with each other. And if we are justified to consider human thought as a special object letting the animate and the inanimate come into indirect contact, we might as well distinguish in the images of both Lovecraft and Poe two craftsmen who are working to shape the indeterminate membrane which is the thought. Then it is going to be fair to suggest that these two remarkable authors are actually in the same business, that is the thoughtcraft.

## 6. Conclusion

Although Meillassoux's speculative materialism, Freud's psychoanalytical theory, and Harman's object-oriented ontology have entirely different agendas, there seems to be a common ground which can be rendered visible by the intervention of yet another discourse, in this case, a literary one. Thoughtcraft, that is, producing representations of thought production, which will lead to more thinking, is basically offered here as the name of that speculative common thread, thanks to the expressive powers of two extraordinary American storytellers, namely Poe and Lovecraft. These two writers create a tremendous amount of centripetal force towards an indeterminate point of intersection between the animate and the inanimate. Poe's uncanny and Lovecraft's horror both come out of the same maelstrom of life and death. Poe, by obsessively referring to some membranous entities, situated in between the living and the dead, and Lovecraft, by putting a magnifying glass on the same tension through his fantastical creation of indescribable monsters in a death-like sleep, showcase the way in which thought is produced. Ruptures ex nihilo, vesicles with inanimate receptive layers, and special objects with mediating skills can only come together by virtue of such a speculative effort.

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