FILIPE RÓGER VUADEN

THE CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE SUSPENSE IN *CONTOS DO EDGAR*: A NARRATOLOGICAL STUDY

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Dissertação de Mestrado em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa, apresentada como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Orientadora: Professora Doutora Elaine Barros Indrusiak

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Filipe Róger Vuaden

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Harry Clarke's illustration for "The Cask of Amontillado", made for the 1923 edition of *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*

RESUMO

Este trabalho investiga a construção narrativa de *Contos do Edgar* (2013), uma minissérie de televisão brasileira que adapta sete contos de Edgar Allan Poe e os situa na São Paulo atual. Composta por cinco episódios, *Contos do Edgar* gira em torno da rotina diária de trabalho dos dedetizadores Edgar e Fortunato. Ao mesmo tempo, essa estrutura episódica da série também encobre um enredo secundário envolvendo o passado conflituoso dos personagens principais, que se desenvolve do primeiro ao último episódio. Dessa forma, *Contos do Edgar* transpõe para um formato audiovisual a dupla estrutura narrativa do conto literário, conforme propõe Ricardo Piglia (2011), e apresenta um balanço narrativo entre as formas episódica e seriada, remetendo à noção de complexidade narrativa proposta por Jason Mittell (2015). A partir disso, este trabalho objetiva demonstrar que essa adaptação seriada das histórias de Poe recria o suspense narrativo (INDRUSIAK, 2016) que o autor alcançava ao recorrer à dupla estrutura narrativa em suas obras ficcionais. Portanto, como meio de mapear os recursos narrativos empregados por Poe e os produtores de *Contos do Edgar* na criação do suspense, a metodologia deste trabalho apoia-se na Narratologia literária e cinematográfica, de acordo com as proposições de Mieke Bal (2009) e de Peter Verstraten (2009), respectivamente. Em relação à análise do corpus desta dissertação, o capítulo final agrupa em seções específicas cada um dos episódios de *Contos do Edgar* com o(s) conto(s) nele adaptado(s) e destaca os recursos empregados em sua construção narrativa. Desse modo, corrobora-se o diálogo formal entre as obras analisadas e evidencia-se a transposição de recursos narrativos de um meio literário para um audiovisual.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Edgar Allan Poe. *Contos do Edgar*. Adaptação. Narratologia. Suspense narrativo.

ABSTRACT

This work investigates the narrative construction of *Contos do Edgar* (2013), a Brazilian television miniseries that adapts seven short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and sets them in present-day São Paulo. Consisting of five episodes, *Contos do Edgar* revolves around the daily working routine of Edgar and Fortunato as two pest exterminators. At the same time, this episodic structure of the series also conceals a secondary storyline involving the main characters' troubled past, which unfolds from the first episode to the last. That way, *Contos do Edgar* adapts to an audiovisual format the double narrative structure of the short story, as proposed by Ricardo Piglia (2011), and presents a shifting balance between episodic and serialized modes of storytelling, thus recalling the notion of narrative complexity proposed by Jason Mittell (2015). Based on that, this work aims to demonstrate that this serialized adaptation of Poe's stories recreates the narrative suspense (INDRUSIAK, 2016) the author achieved by resorting to a double narrative structure in his fictional works. Therefore, as a means to map the narrative resources employed by Poe and the producers of *Contos do Edgar* in order to create suspense, the methodology of this work relies on literary and film Narratology, according to the propositions of Mieke Bal (2009) and Peter Verstraten (2009), respectively. As for the analysis of the corpus of this thesis, the final chapter groups each episode of *Contos do Edgar* with the short story(ies) it adapts in specific sections, highlighting the resources employed in their narrative construction. That way, the formal dialogue between the works analyzed is reinforced, and the transposition of narrative resources from a literary medium to an audiovisual one is made explicit.

KEYWORDS: Edgar Allan Poe. *Contos do Edgar*. Adaptation. Narratology. Narrative suspense.

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INTRODUCTION

Adaptations, appropriations, and re-imaginings have continuously played a major role in cementing the life of Edgar Allan Poe as an icon of popular culture. Such a permanent presence of Poe-related derivative works can be traced back to the author's death in 1849 and to the reception the accounts of his personal life, in connection to his fiction, have garnered among the public. Consequently, for over 150 years, biographies, stage plays, comic books, fanfiction, rock albums, film and TV adaptations, for example, have been worldwide produced, either loosely or closely related to the life and works of the American writer. The contexts and the ways in which Poe's image and oeuvre have been reshaped are so many and so varied that any attempt to measure them ends up providing, at best, small glimpses of his traces in the numerous approaches our culture has made to his writings. It is worth noting, however, that many of these derivative works usually present a strict bond between the author and his fiction, therefore attaching the appeal of Poe's tragic life and premature death to the obsessiveness and melancholy of his characters and narrators. As a result, the person of Edgar Allan Poe has culturally achieved a status of mythical proportions, a feat addressed by some scholars as *the Poe legend*, which, according to Dennis Perry (2014, p. 1), "gives the public a perfectly archetypical horror writer, one complete with a dramatic life, outrageous fiction, and a mysterious death – in short, a ready-made literary legend".

Accounts of Poe's personal life began to spread right after his unexpected early death on October 7, 1849. In his obituary note published in the *New York Tribune*, Rufus Wilmot Griswold reported Poe's decease with the following words: "Edgar Allan Poe is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will startle many, but few will be grieved by it". This note is what many critics today regard as the starting point of a series of exaggerations and misleading assumptions about Poe's character, especially because that same Griswold was the editor responsible for the first collected edition of Poe's writings after his death, since Maria Clemm, Poe's mother-in-law, handed Griswold the legal publication rights to his works. Griswold's edition of Poe's works, published in 1850 in four volumes, included not only Poe's fiction, but also an extensively revised biographical essay on the author, as well as forgeries made in Poe's personal letters that heavily diminished him. Volume 3, however, was the harshest piece on the writer, for Griswold included his own memoir in it, which led to a complete character assassination of Poe:

> Griswold's distortions – and the presumptions of a number of critics willing to accept easy paradigms – bring up important matters of biographical and historical

> interpretation. What might well be called the "Griswold tradition" mythologizes a rather unpleasant figure, one largely at variance with the facts. Poe is seen as ungenerous and self-absorbed, a backbiter, a debtor, a criminal, a racist, a drunkard, a drug addict, a misogynist, and even a pedophile. (THOMPSON, 2003, p. xlv)

Griswold's lies and exaggerations promptly generated further responses and commentaries by people close to Poe, such as Nathaniel Parker Willis, an American writer famous at the time, and George Rex Graham, one of Poe's former employers. However, their efforts in defense of the author's image and behavior could not compete with the 1500 copies the Griswold's edition of Poe's works reportedly sold per year after its initial publication. As for the reasons why the task of compiling Poe's writings was entrusted to Griswold, there is nothing but speculation. It is known that the two authors first met in 1841 and that they, although initially cordial to each other – Griswold added three of Poe's poems to his *The Poets and Poetry of America* anthology, and Poe wrote praising reviews of it –, developed a rivalry right after George Graham substituted Poe with Griswold as the editor of his magazine. Poe's response to that were public attacks on Griswold in his series of lectures on "American Poetry", whose first delivery was held at the Philadelphia's William Wirt Institute on November 21, 1843. Despite this troubled relationship between the two authors, both Maria Clemm and Rufus Griswold claimed that Poe had left written testimony that Griswold should be responsible for further anthologies and compilations of his works, although no single document signed by Poe has ever been found to confirm such allegations. In this respect, Scott Peeples (2004) speculates that, rivalry aside, Poe was aware of Griswold's reputation as a successful and influent editor, so that he would possibly have better chances of fulfilling what he spent his whole life wishing for: a good publisher able to promote his works. From this point of view, "both Poe and Griswold would have wanted his collected works to sell. The idea of appending a defamatory description of the author to his collected works may sound perverse, but it worked" (ibid., p. 4). Peeples further develops his argument with a personal statement on the effects of Griswold's attitudes on Poe's popularity:

> […] I believe Griswold did more good than harm to Poe's long-term popularity by stimulating a character debate that kept people writing about Poe for decades, keeping prospective readers curious and thereby keeping Poe very much in print. He also helped to separate – just two days after Poe's death – the posthumous, pop-culture Poe from the actual, flesh-and-blood Poe. (ibid., p. 5)

As we can infer from this excerpt, Poe's permanence in the public eye in the first years following his death is, to a large degree, the result of the intense fictionalization of his character fabricated by some of his contemporaries. Yet, it also calls attention the fact that most of the

discussion surrounding the author in the second half of the nineteenth century focuses solely on his controversial biography, so that his fictional and critical writings are left in the background. Consequently, "these early commentators helped make Poe a better-known character than any of his fictional creations" (PEEPLES, 2004, p. 8). Another factor that postponed critical evaluation and commentary of Poe's fictional works was the struggle readers and critics dealt with finding a place for his writings within American literature, for many of his stories set their plots outside the United States or lacked any features that could be deemed "American" or that conveyed any national identity, as G. P. Lathrop defended in an 1876 *Schribner's* essay. On the other hand, late nineteenth century commentators, like Hamilton Wright Mabie, for instance, looked at Poe's lack of American roots in his writings as an indicator of the transcendentalist quality of his fiction, one that is not geographically restricted, so that "he went far to eradicate the provincialism of taste which was the bane of his time and section, – the bane, indeed, of the whole country" (MABIE, apud. PEEPLES, 2004, p. 18). In short, Poe's belonging to American literature seemed, throughout the 19th century, a matter of perspective.

Outside the United States, however, Poe and his fiction found a warmer reception, mainly in France, due to the enthusiasm and obsession of symbolist poet Charles Baudelaire with the life and works of the American writer. From his first contact with Poe's writings in 1847, the poet claimed to find a literary materialization of the artist he had longed to be. Therefore, Baudelaire spent almost twenty years committed to translating Poe's short stories and critical essays into French. Among these texts, "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Poetic Principle" had a great impact on him, notably the latter, for "Baudelaire identified with the second essay to such an extent that he incorporated much of it into his preface without attributing it to Poe and therefore led readers to believe that the ideas expressed were his own" (HAYES, 2003, p. 226). As a direct result of Baudelaire's efforts, Stéphane Mallarmé, a member of the next generation of symbolist poets in France, took on the task of translating Poe's poetry after Baudelaire's death in 1867. By doing so, Mallarmé "influenced the art world in terms of both personal agency – he was close friends with Edouard Manet and Paul Gaugin – and through his translations and critical writings, which also reflect the influence of Poe's aesthetic theory" (ibid.). Consequently, Poe not only achieved a widespread popularity similar to that of a national writer in France in the 1870s – a feat he had not yet accomplished in his home country –, but the influence of his fiction and critical writings had the strength to cross the boundaries of literature, for his aesthetic principles guided many visual artists who would end up inspiring avant-garde movements in the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Expressionism and Surrealism:

> Describing his approach to writing short stories, Poe emphasized his attempts to write in a variety of poetic devices, modes of discourse, and literary genres. Poe's experiments, combined with his obsession with originality, led to his creation of unique verse forms and new literary genres. In so doing, he created works which others could take for inspiration. Poe's various creative efforts allowed artists to pick and choose from his works to find those which suited their tastes and predilections. The wide-ranging work of those who came under Poe's spell indicate the diversity of his influence. The finest artists used Poe's imaginative works as a basis for their aesthetic theories. Redon found in Poe a precedent for his fantastic visions. Gauguin found in "Ligeia" an approach for his depiction of women. Ernst found Egaeu's obsessional behavior inspiration for his *frottage* technique. And Magritte found the spirit of Surrealism present in "The Imp of the Perverse." Put simply, Poe's writings have instigated generations of others in a variety of creative disciplines to advance their art and their aesthetic. (HAYES, 2003, p. 238)

Subsequently, outside the realm of literature, the twentieth century also saw the emergence and rise of a new entertaining medium that would resort to Poe's fiction as a source of inspiration: cinema. By the time the Lumière brothers perfected the cinematograph, and movie theaters began to spread across Europe and the United States, Poe's reputation in his home country went through a slight reevaluation. At the end of the nineteenth century, for example, a series of events held throughout America indicate an effort to memorialize the author: in Baltimore, a burial marker was erected in the cemetery of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in 1875; in New York, a life-size marble bust of Poe was dedicated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1885; the University of Virginia commissioned its own Poe bust in 1899 to commemorate the fifty years since his death; lastly, many ceremonies were held in 1909 to celebrate Poe's birth centenary, mainly at the University of Virginia and in Baltimore. These events not only suggest that critics and institutions started to look at Poe beyond the Griswold tradition, but they also imply that people started to pay attention to his fiction as well, for now he was being treated as an American writer worth memorializing. At the same time, theater and cinema would produce plays and movies that drew inspiration from Poe's life and fiction, thus paving the way for the author's entry into popular culture.

On the stage, a series of plays named after Poe's most famous poem, "The Raven", would be regarded as the first attempts of "middle-brow entertainment derived from Poe" (PEEPLES, 2004, p. 128). They include: George Hazelton Jr.'s The *Raven: A Play in Four Acts and a Tableau*, from 1895; Olive Dargan's *The Raven*, from 1904; and Arthur Ketchum's *The Raven: A Play in Five Acts* (n.d.). All of these plays, however, were more concerned in portraying Poe as a Southern writer – in consonance with scholars and critics of the time – than adapting the story told in the poem. Consequently, they literally turned the author into a character whose biography was open to fictionalization at the playwright's will. In this respect,

the setting of these plays recreates that of a plantation, where slaves are seen or heard singing, and landscapes surround Poe and Virginia's house, only to contrast that pastoral mood with the cold climate of the North when Poe moves to New York. As Peeples (2004, p. 130-131) puts it,

> These plays continue what was already a longstanding tradition of regarding the South as the locus of the nation's past way of life, innocent, agrarian, idealistic, and unchanging, where slavery is represented by innocent clowns and sages (often the same character) and the North is icy in spirit as well as climate. As in the centenary tributes, in these plays Poe is depicted as a refined Southerner to explain and underscore his innocent, ethereal nature, rather than, for instance, characterizing him as the pugnacious publishing insider he quickly became as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* (before moving on to *Burton's* and *Graham's* in Philadelphia), more a representative of a volatile and complex publishing world than a displaced Ashley Wilkes.

On the screen, Poe and his fiction have been adapted and reimagined countless times since the early years of the seventh art. According to Paul Woolf (apud PERRY, 2014, p. 3), "Poe is the most filmed American author of the nineteenth century". As of 2018, for instance, the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) enlists more than 340 film and TV titles in which Poe – who preceded the movie era – is credited as a writer. Of that sum, almost 150 works have been produced since the 2000s, therefore attesting to the permanence of the author's appeal to twenty-first century audiences. Yet, as Neimeyer (2004, p. 216) wisely points out, "due to the various and sometimes partial or unacknowledged ways in which the cinema has made use of him, no list of Poe films can really claim to be definitive". In this scenario, in which there are too many derivative works based on an author's life and fiction, any attempt to measure the impact and influence of these adaptations can only aspire to provide a satisfactory result if it concentrates on a few of these productions. Based on that, it is worth highlighting two groups of film adaptations from the twentieth century that have enjoyed widespread popularity and helped establish what has often been called *the Poe effect*, which corresponds to "the creation and maintenance of Poe's image, the various ways this image interacts with popular culture and with Poe's writing" (PEEPLES, 2004, p. 126).

The first set of adaptations comprises three Universal films made in the 1930s. Catapulting on the success of horror movies *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, both from 1931, leading actors Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff teamed up in the subsequent *The Black Cat* (1934) and *The Raven* (1935). Prior to these two films, Lugosi, alongside Sidney Fox, starred in *Murders in the Rue Morgue* in 1932. These productions, however, are only loosely based on the works they are named after, serving as "good examples of how free and indiscriminate Hollywood can be in exploiting Poe's popularity for its own ends by borrowing titles from his works for movies

with only the slightest relationship with the originals" (HAYES, 2004, p. 217). *The Raven*, for example, portrays Dr. Richard Vollin, played by Lugosi, as a Poe-obsessed surgeon who has a homemade collection of traps and torture devices inspired most notably by Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum". As a result, although Poe is not a character in the film, his image is explicitly evoked by Vollin as that of the godfather of the horror and the macabre, so that "filmmakers, playwrights, graphic artists, and teachers have followed Dr. Vollin's lead in making 'Poe' signify torture, murder, insanity, and perversity" (PEEPLES, 2004, p. 136). In short, this trio of Poe-based movies, along with the sequels to *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, helped establish what is known today as Hollywood's golden age of horror films. Nonetheless, they ended up connecting Poe's image to it.

The second group of Poe adaptations consists of thirteen films produced by the American International Pictures (AIP) in the 1960s and early 1970s. At the core of these productions are the Corman-Poe films, a series of eight movies directed by Roger Corman and starring Vincent Price. Beginning with *House of Usher* in 1960, the series marked a turning point on low budget productions, for Corman convinced the AIP to increase his budget so that he could shoot the films in colour and improve their sets. As a result, the director was able to create colorful images that would evoke the atmosphere of Poe's gothic stories, even if the movies largely deviated from their literary sources in terms of plot. Consequently, "the ambitious yet low-budget feel of the Poe series (and the rest of Corman's oeuvre) anticipated the aesthetic of much independent film of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries" (PEEPLES, 2004, p. 137). In this sense, no wonder *House of Usher* has been selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry in 2005, which means it is considered "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant". Yet, not even Corman's ambitious aesthetics and Price's praised performances could prevent AIP's Poe cycle from following the trend initiated by the Universal films in the 1930s: that of limiting the general idea of Poe's fiction to themes related to the evil and macabre.

The impact of this constant exploitation of Poe's works and image had its pros and cons. On the one hand, these derivative works have secured Poe a permanent place in popular culture, consequently blurring the lines between high and low brow culture. In this respect, the author's image has not only been exploited in plays and movies, for example, but also in everyday products that may have no connection to his life and fiction, such as T-shirts, coffee mugs, dolls, etc. Somehow, all of these appropriations ended up granting Poe the status of a cultural personification of people's idea of literature. As Neimeyer (2004, p. 206) remarks, "The person who buys a Poe coffee mug is also, to a certain extent, procuring a symbolic link or

identification with ‘literature’ and even with ‘culture’ more generally”. Moreover, as scholars and critics devote serious attention to analyze Poe-based derivative works and their cultural impact, they help mediate between what is perceived as high and low brow culture. On the other hand, as the 1930s and the 1960s suggest, the popularity of adaptations and appropriations may lead to partial, or even exaggerated, accounts of an author’s life and works. Therefore, as the Universal and AIP films had openly addressed Poe as their source of inspiration, they also limited the general perception of a writer whose genres range from critical essays to poetry and short story – and whose achievements in the latter include a precise sense of structure and effect – to his preference for the themes related to the gothic tale of horror and mystery, overshadowing his literary pioneering in proto-science and detective fiction, for instance, or his developments in the prose-poem and the satire genres.

Fortunately, the Poe effect generated by these adaptations and appropriations has continuously renewed scholarly interest in the author, his writings and the works derivative from them. Based on that, it is not our focus in this work to outline the amount of different approaches critics have recently taken on Poe, but to concentrate on those that have laid the foundations on which this thesis is structured. As previously mentioned, the relationship between Poe and cinema seems to be far from ending, as the number of adaptations based on him has only increased since the 2000s, thus providing an ample corpus of works for scholars and critics to pay attention to. Therefore, taking into account this long established relationship between Poe and adaptations of his fiction and biography, we propose an intertextual approach to one of these recent derivative works, the Brazilian TV miniseries *Contos do Edgar* (2013), which adapts seven of Poe’s short stories and sets them in contemporary São Paulo.

Originally airing from April 2 to June 11, 2013 on Fox Brasil, *Contos do Edgar* consists of only one season divided into five episodes. Directed by Pedro Morelli, the series was one of the results of a Brazilian law passed on September 2011 that stipulated that every cable network should broadcast in prime time at least 3 and a half hours of national content weekly. Its plot revolves around Edgar and Fortunato, two pest exterminators, and their work routine of visiting houses, department stores and other commercial establishments in run-down neighborhoods in São Paulo in which their services are requested. Every episode is inspired by at least one of Poe’s short stories, which is indicated right after the opening credits, and every establishment visited conceals a tragic story, which is witnessed by Edgar. That way, the character assumes an authorial role, reinforced by his recurrent voice-overs in many of the scenes presented and by his accounts of the events, which he reports to Fortunato at the end of every episode. However, this episodic structure of the series also conceals a secondary storyline involving the

main characters. The unfolding of this second story breaks the limits of a single episode and permeates the whole series. Consequently, it not only provides a sense of unity, but, by being hinted at in every episode, it ends up adding tension to the series, precisely because it is presented in a fragmented way, so that the viewer has to keep on watching the episodes to figure out what the tragic story connecting Edgar and Fortunato is all about.

That said, by presenting an underlying story between the two main characters that is developed from the first episode to the last, *Contos do Edgar* addresses Poe not only thematically, but also structurally, for its storytelling, in its formal aspects, reinforces what Argentinian writer Ricardo Piglia identifies as the core of the short story genre: a double narrative structure in which two accounts of events are told simultaneously. In his "Theses on the short story", Piglia (2011, p. 63) proposes, based on an anecdote found in one of Chekhov's notebooks, that "a short story always tells two stories". The sketch is the following: "A man in Monte Carlo goes to the casino, wins a million, returns home, commits suicide" (ibid.). From this, Piglia attempts to imagine how some of the most notable short story writers – Poe included – would develop the anecdote. According to him, since "The anecdote disconnects the story of the gambling and the story of the suicide" (ibid.), the narrative simultaneously develops two accounts of events, so that every writer deals with encoding the second account within the first.

In this respect, Poe falls into the classic short story category, which "narrates Story One (the tale of the gambling) in the foreground, and constructs Story Two (the tale of the suicide) in secret" (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 63). Through this perspective, Poe's key to encode the second story is to narrate it in a fragmentary way as the first story unfolds clearly on the surface, since this narrative structure enables him to achieve an effect of surprise "when the end of the second story appears on the surface" (ibid.). Interestingly enough, Piglia's rationale resonates with Poe's own concerns regarding his aesthetic principles. In "The Philosophy of Composition", for example, as Poe attempts to trace back all the steps he took in the construction of "The Raven", the author develops the notion of the *unity of effect*, i.e., the idea that the events of a story must unfold so that they will causally lead to a preconceived effect in the end. Thus, although describing the composition of a poem, many of the principles Poe develops in this essay paved the way for short story theories, such as Piglia's.

Given the intertextual approach of this thesis, then, we assume that the double narrative structure of the short story is not restricted to literary texts only. As we propose here, audiovisual texts such as *Contos do Edgar* are also narratively structured on the grounds of Piglia's ideas on the genre. Such an insight has already been developed by Elaine Indrusiak (2016) in her study of the dialogue between the short story and the suspense feature film. In her

work, Indrusiak goes beyond the widely discussed thematic affinities between Poe's stories and Hitchcock's films and sheds some light on the formal similarities both authors shared in their respective media of choice. In this perspective, she argues that Hitchcock's suspense is the result of the transposition of the double narrative structure of the short story to audiovisual works, which means that, at its core, suspense is treated as a narrative device an author can resort to. By employing it, then, the British director was able to add tension to his films and manipulate the viewer in order to achieve the desired effect. In the footsteps of Indrusiak's work, I have also addressed the formal link between the authors by comparatively analyzing the construction of narrative suspense in Poe's "Ligeia" (1838) and "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1960) in my undergraduate monograph (VUADEN, 2016).

Therefore, although the path this work is taking is not at all new, there are still some venues that remain scarcely explored, fortunately providing reasons to justify our endeavor. First, as this introduction attempted to emphasize, the most successful audiovisual works inspired by Poe's fiction usually addresses the author thematically. Our approach, on the other hand, drives off that road a little to highlight the structural bond between *Contos do Edgar* and the stories it adapts. This does not mean, however, that the themes presented in these works are out of our concerns, for "Form always implies content, and content in its turn clarifies the meaning of form" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p.7). Thus, we acknowledge that content and form are not mutually exclusive approaches; yet, by emphasizing the latter, we stress how different media, by their own means, can adapt narrative resources in order to convey content in a particular form. To achieve this goal, the methodology of this work relies primarily on Narratology, which, as Mieke Bal (2009, p. 3) puts it, "is the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that 'tell a story'. Such a theory helps to understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives". In this way, Narratology offers a set of concepts and tools that can describe the formal aspects of a narrative text and, consequently, highlight the mechanisms employed in its composition. In addition, considering that this theoretical background is not widely disseminated in Brazil – as the lack of translated handbooks on Narratology shows –, this work is also an effort to make the area more visible.

Second, by focusing on a TV miniseries, we deal with a medium whose studies are often limited by the "twin paradigms of mass communications and cultural studies, both of which tend to foreground social impacts over aesthetic analysis" (MITTELL, 2006, p. 30). Consequently, little attention has been paid to the medium's episodic and serialized narrative forms. However, as Mittell remarks, American television has, in the last thirty years, innovated

its storytelling through the use of what he calls *narrative complexity*, "a redefinition of episodic forms under the influence of serial narration – not necessarily a complete merger of episodic and serial forms but a shifting balance." (2006, p. 32). In this respect, *Contos do Edgar* seems to be structured around this narrative balance, for although every episode of the series adapts at least one of Poe's stories – a storytelling typical of episodic forms –, the underlying plot revolving around Edgar and Fortunato's past unfolds as the whole series progresses, therefore reinforcing its serialized narration.

Ultimately, in consonance with Bal, we assume that a narrative text is not limited to its linguistic features, so that audiovisual works are also comprehended here as narratives texts. Although liberating, this perspective does not come without its challenges. First and foremost, because the narration in a literary text diverges from that of an audiovisual one. While literature conveys its narrative through the words of its narrator(s), filmic narratives tell their stories through sequences of images usually mixed with sounds and spoken words. Based on this hybrid nature of the audiovisual, Peter Verstraten's *Film Narratology* (2009) proposes a division of the filmic narrator into two agents: a visual narrator and an auditive one. It is clear, then, that our intertextual approach can only succeed if we acknowledge the specifities of each medium considered in this work and, from that, attempt to move towards a comparative narratological analysis. With this task in mind, this thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 focuses on the aesthetic principles Poe advocated for in his critical essays, especially in "The Philosophy of Composition" and in his reviews of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, and how they helped to shape and consolidate the short story genre. After identifying these principles, we briefly highlight how they appear in his gothic stories[1] in order to achieve a preconceived effect, therefore showing the applicability of Poe's formal concerns in relation to his themes of preference. Based on Piglia, then, our attention turns to the double narrative structure of the short story and to how Mieke Bal's *Narratology* offers a set of concepts useful to describe the formal aspects of the genre, with an emphasis on the categories employed in the creation and maintenance of narrative suspense (INDRUSIAK, 2016).

[1] As a literary term, the word *gothic* has been employed in fiction since 1765, when Horace Walpole added the subtitle "A Gothic Story" to his novel *The Castle of Otranto*. In literature, as G. R. Thompson states, "*gothic* connotes sensationalism, violence, madness, terror, horror, fear of the supernatural, a foreboding sense of evil, a perception of awe and sinister mystery" (2004, p. 77). However, since the word has persisted culturally and influenced so many authors and works until today, its meaning is usually hard to define. Therefore, in addition to the propositions of Thompson, our understanding of the gothic in fiction for our analysis of Poe's short stories also approaches the ideas of Professor Jerrold E. Hogle. According to him, "Gothic fictions generally play with and oscillate between the earthly laws of conventional reality and the possibilities of the supernatural […] often siding with one of these over the other in the end, but usually raising the possibility that the boundaries between these may have been crossed, at least psychologically but also physically or both" (2002, p. 2-3).

Chapter 2 discusses the approach *Contos do Edgar* takes on Poe's short stories supported by adaptation studies. Since every episode of the miniseries explicitly addresses the short story it is based on, we deem it an adaptation rather than an appropriation (SANDERS, 2006). However, as the series is set in contemporary São Paulo, it performs a transposition movement identified by Gérard Genette (1997, p. 304) as *proximization*, for "the hypertext transposes the diegesis of its hypotext to bring it up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms)". Therefore, after situating the series within adaptation studies, the mechanisms behind its formal structure are highlighted based on Verstraten's *Film Narratology* and his categories to analyze audiovisual narratives. Moreover, *Contos do Edgar's* episodic and serialized format is discussed based on Jason Mittell's *Complex TV* (2015) and his approach on the medium's narrative form.

Chapter 3 describes the narrative construction of our selected corpus, which consists of *Contos do Edgar*'s five episodes ("Berê", "Priscila", "Íris", "Cecília", and "Lenora") and Poe's "Berenice" (1845), "Metzengerstein" (1836), "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1845), "The Imp of the Perverse" (1845), "The Masque of the Red Death" (1845), "The Black Cat" (1845), and "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846). As we perform a close reading of these literary and audiovisual pieces, their formal aspects are emphasized based on Bal's and Verstraten's narratological categories, with special attention to the ones employed in order to generate and maintain narrative suspense. That way, we corroborate the intertextual link between these works, thus shedding some light on the way different media, through their own specificities and resources, adapt existing narrative principles and devices as a means to tell their stories.

Hopefully, we intend this thesis to be one of many future works dedicated to the unveiling of the rich ways intertextuality can establish dialogues with all kinds of works and media. Similar to Poe's in-between place in literature and in popular culture, between the high and the low brow, this work takes a road scholars usually deviate from and focuses on a medium that, although currently living what some consider its golden age, still struggles for legitimacy within academic studies. In bringing the old and the new side to side, therefore, we do not aim to establish a hierarchy between literature and television, but to explore the narrative possibilities of each medium and the peculiar ways they engage audiences without letting go of scientific rigor.

1. THE SHORT STORY: Poe, suspense, and Narratology

1.1 Poe and the short story genre

Anyone familiar with the works of Edgar Allan Poe is aware that the author, in addition to his fiction, also wrote pieces of literary criticism. In the newly independent and turbulent America of his time, marked by continuous tensions between the North and the South, it was extremely hard for any aspiring writer to live out of his own fiction, unless he was provided with an alternative source of income. In this context, although Poe showed an early inclination towards a writing career and distinguished himself in the study of ancient and modern languages during his university years, he also excelled in the ability to incur debts in gambling, a situation that led his uncle, John Allan, to stop financing his studies at the University of Virginia. As a result, Poe was deprived of his family's financial support to start a career; in this situation, he still managed to publish three volumes of poetry in 1827, 1829, and 1831, respectively. However, these early publications did not grant him the economic security required for an author to solely dedicate himself to the improvement of his literary talent and the pursuing of a writing career. Therefore, Poe attempted to get wider recognition in the beginning of the 1830s by producing prose fiction as well, thus submitting short stories to literary contests and magazines. Despite winning some prizes and eventually having some stories published, Poe saw himself obliged to tread the path other writers of his time, in the same position as his, had stepped into: that of magazine work. As Sandra M. Tomc points out,

> Those who sought a regular income as writers had few options but to take on editorial work, a grueling, feverish labor that in most cases paid subsistence wages. By one estimate, Poe received $624.00 annually as editor of the *Sourthern Literary Messenger*, in addition to which his employer paid him $1.60 per page for the poems, reviews, and short stories he contributed. This income did not place him above the equivalent of the 1981 national poverty level. (2003, p. 23)

These circumstances of editorial work were even worse at the time due to the inexistence of copyright in magazine content, so that an author could have his works reprinted and republished in other journals without getting any income from it and be unaware of that. In this scenario, the path from magazine work to literary recognition required not only getting the chance to have one's work published, but to make that work distinguishable. Nonetheless, authors achieved that "not by drawing attention to their scattered and unidentifiable aesthetic talents but by drawing attention to themselves, by cultivating sensationalism, scandal, and notoriety" (TOMC, 2003, p. 27). Poe apparently learned this lesson fast, as he tried to reach

these qualities in some of his works. “Berenice”, for instance, first published in 1835 in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, was considered too horrible by readers at the time; in his defense, Poe claimed to T. H. White, his editor, that the story was exactly what the readers of the magazine wanted. In this sense, no wonder Poe also ventured in other genres, such as humor and satire, for they enabled him to criticize the literary scene of his time, therefore attracting notoriety to his personality:

> It little mattered whether articles such as “Berenice” were in bad taste, he argued that readers avidly seek such tales. These are “the articles that find their way into other periodicals… and in this manner, taking hold upon the public mind, they augment the reputation of the source where they originated.” (TOMC, 2003, p. 29)

It was not only through his fiction, however, that Poe attempted to get popularity. Part of his magazine work also included the writing of pieces of criticism, manifested in a series of critical reviews about the works of other writers and literary personas of the time. It should not be a surprise, then, that part of the recognition Poe achieved through his reviews was heavily marked by controversy and the making of enemies. According to Thompson (2004), as a critic, Poe defended the idea of a national republic of letters, and that demanded American literary independence from European models. At the same time, the defense of a literary nationalism could not allow critical praise to any work that, for whatever reason, presented a quality some deemed “American”. Lastly, the struggle for a national identity through literature had to be free from the regional bias between the Northern and the Southern traditions. With this hard task in mind, Poe’s critical work could not limit itself to attacks on writers and the literary establishment; it had also to recognize the great authors of the time and emphasize the qualities essential to the evaluation of a good literary work. Based on that, it is our intention here to focus on the aspects of Poe’s critical reviews that present and describe his aesthetic ideas regarding the creation and evaluation of a work of fiction, since they ultimately were of paramount importance in laying the foundations of short story theory.

Throughout his life, Poe constantly moved around the United States, publishing and working as an editor in Richmond, New York, and Philadelphia. The majority of his fiction and practically all of his critical reviews were printed in the magazines he worked for. Following the trend of some of the authors that had some prominence at the time, such as William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) and John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), Poe would demonstrate that “poetic or artistic creation and the critical function could complement one another” (LJUNGQUIST, 2003, p. 8). In this sense, his “Letter to B—”, for example, which appears in the July 1836 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, presents one of the author’s

first attempts to delineate aesthetic principles regarding poetry by opposing it to other sciences and arts: "[…] Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definitiveness" (POE, 2004, p. 593-594).

As Rachel Polonsky wisely points out, "The word 'aesthetic' was still working its way into the English language in Poe's lifetime" (2003, p. 42). Originally attached to the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten and his 1750 work *Aesthetica,* as well as Immanuel Kant and his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (1791), "aesthetic" was, in the 1830s and 1840s, "the designation given by German writers to a branch of philosophical inquiry, the object of which is a philosophical theory of the beautiful" (ibid.). Given this foreign origin of the term, English-speaking commentators in the beginning of the nineteenth century avoided its use, usually regarding it with skepticism or treating it as a pedantic word. Poe himself, in his critical writings, never employed the term "aesthetic", yet his ideas on literary art approached many of the subjects usually discussed by the field of studies that bears its name:

> However, the German philosophical discourse of aesthetics – which had moved discussions of art and beauty onto new ground – provides a looming backdrop to all that Poe has to say about the writer's work. Until the end of the eighteenth century, literary theory had traditionally been modelled on the comparatively manageable terms of ancient rhetoric established in treatises such as Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*; it was essentially a matter of telling artists how to accomplish the task of teaching and delighting their audiences, either with their imitations of what is, or with their improving conceptions of what "may be, should be". (POLONSKY, 2003, p. 43)

As Romanticism reached its peak in the first half of the nineteenth century, poets placed emphasis on their emotions and individualism. Therefore, the artists employed much more effort in the communication of the feelings in their soul through their poetry than in the anticipation of the reaction their work of art could evoke in the public. In this sense, the image of the artist as a genius and the idea of his artistic creation being the product of spontaneous – or even divine – inspiration were largely diffused, and the reader's reception to that abundance of sentimentalism seemed out of analysis. As a result, "This raised new questions about what is intelligible and susceptible to theoretical solution. Poe was inevitably and inextricably caught up in such questions" (POLONSKY, 2003, 43). Therefore, although Poe initially approaches his idea of poetry to the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his "Letter to B—", he shifts his attention to the design and the technique employed in the creation of a work of art in his later reviews, showing concern with the nature of a work of fiction. Such interests would eventually lead him to the conclusion that it is actually the tale that "affords unquestionably the fairest

field for the exercise of the loftiest talent" (POE, 2004, p. 646), thus paving the way for the short story as a literary genre.

It is no news that short fiction genres have long preceded Poe. As Charles May (1991, p. 3) remarks, "Short narratives in the form of folktales, legends, parables, and myths actually predate long narratives in the history of human expression, constituting the original fictional form". However, it was in the context of the nineteenth century, especially from Poe's fictional works and critical writings, that the short form was elevated to a completely new level of sophistication. Considered "a hybrid form combining both the metaphoric mode of the old romance and the metonymic mode of the new realism" (MAY apud PATEA, 2012, p. 2), the short story had its theorization as a genre – and Poe's contributions to it –, neglected until the late 1960s, when Structuralist criticism began developing and critics started paying attention to specific literary forms. Before that, "those who theorized about the genre were not literary critics but practitioners of the form themselves: Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville and Anton Chekhov in the nineteenth century; and Henry James, Flannery O'Connor, Julio Cortázar and Eudora Welty, among others, in the twentieth" (PATEA, 2012, p. 2). In this sense, Poe's contributions to the development of the short story could be summarized as follows:

> Poe's critical comments towards the middle of the nineteenth century are responsible for the birth of the short story as a unique genre. As the first short story theorist, he brought into discussion issues of form, style, length, design, authorial goals, and reader affect, developing the framework within which the short story is discussed even today. Evaluating the status of the short story as a genre, he ranked it very high in the pantheon of arts, second only to the lyric form. His major contribution was to invest the short story with tension and thus to impregnate it with the defining attributes of poetry. Its compact and unified form, which it shares with the lyric, allows the short story to achieve effects unattainable in the novel. He also observed that its brevity and intensity created a strong "undercurrent of suggestion". Poe was the first to consider endings as crucial elements in compositional strategies and defined the short story in terms of reading experience. (PATEA, 2012, p. 3)

The core of Poe's formal ideas regarding literary construction are found in two of his reviews on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, published in 1842 and 1846, respectively, and in his famous "The Philosophy of Composition", also from 1846. All of these articles were initially printed in *Graham's Magazine*, and they highlight a notion of *unity*, both of design and effect, that ultimately pervades all of Poe's works as well. In the second part of the first review on Hawthorne, Poe states that some of the tales in the author's book are actually essays, for "there is no attempt at effect" (POE, 2004, p. 645) in them. As a means to further develop this distinction between the two genres, Poe describes how a writer should design his tale properly:

> A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents – he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided. (POE, 2004, p. 647)

It is evident, then, that Poe develops his rationale around the idea of the *unity of effect*, for all of the other features of the literary work are considered having in mind the outbringing of this preconceived effect. Therefore, every part of the story, every word choice must be employed with the intention of leading towards the effect. As for the events of the story, although organized in a succession that points to a relation of cause and consequence, they are thought out from the end of the story to its beginning, and not the other way around, for it is in the outcome of the story that the effect is generated. This idea had previously been presented by Poe in his 1841 review of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Night and Morning*. In it, he approaches the term *plot* defending that "It may be described as a building so dependently constructed, that to change the position of a single brick is to overthrow the entire fabric" (POE, 2004, p. 624). Poe is modest enough to acknowledge that attaining such a goal is not a widespread practice among authors, given the structural perfection it entails, although it must certainly be desired and pursued by any serious writer. The better way for an author to achieve this unity of design, according to him, is "writing his book backwards" (ibid.). In other words, the events of the plot must be constructed with the effect in mind: "Effect seems to follow cause in the most natural and in the most provident manner, but, in the true construction, the cause (and here we commit no bull) is absolutely brought about by the effect" (ibid.).

This image of the literary work as a building and that of the writer as an architect is also present in Scott Peeples' analysis of "The Fall of the House of Usher". In his article, Peeples addresses Poe's adherence to his own principles by examining the "constructiveness" of the story:

> As critics have long noted, "The Fall of the House of Usher" is carefully structured, with the interpolated (and previously published) poem, "The Haunted Palace," positioned appropriately in the middle to function as a *mise en abyme*, a miniature of the story that contains it. […] Alternatively, one can simply see "The Haunted Palace" dividing the story in two, in keeping with its dominant motif of doubling and reflection. The list of paired characters, events, places, and objects that can be regarded as doubles for their more-than-coincidental resemblance testifies to the density of Poe's construction […] In addition to these (and other) instances of

> doubling, the House of Usher reflects "The Fall of the House of Usher" in the sense that I have already suggested, that Poe uses the house to reflect upon literary structures. (PEEPLES, 2003, p. 179-180)

In "Usher", Poe's level of meticulousness with the construction of the story is also perceived in his word choices, for he often repeats verbal structures and sounds to reinforce the motif of the double that permeates the whole plot. As Peeples remarks, the works Poe published in the late 1830s, such as "Ligeia" and "William Wilson", in 1838 and 1839, respectively, highlight the author's recurring concern with the notions of building and arranging, therefore "supporting the idea that 'Usher' might be read in terms of Poe's own concerns as a builder of literature" (PEEPLES, 2003, p. 179). Consequently, these works indicate that Poe's formulations about literary art were not restricted to his assessment of fellow writers' works, but were applied in his own fictional writings as well. As Charles May stresses, "Poe's rigor as a literary critic and genre theorist is thus as important for understanding his contribution to the short story form as is his skill as a short story writer" (1991, p. 11-12).

In his review of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Night and Morning*, Poe claims that the author succeeded in the designing of the plot of the book, for "Every page bears marks of excessive elaboration, all tending to one point – a perfect adaptation of the very numerous atoms of a very unusually involute story" (POE, 2004, p. 624). However, as he states in his review of Hawthorne, the length of a work of fiction is crucial to the achievement of the effect, since "this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting" (POE, 2004, p. 646). Being a novel, therefore, *Night and Morning*, despite presenting a unified plot, fails in elevating the effect to its fullest potential because of its length, which prevents the reader from gathering it at once. Based on that, Poe states that, next to the poem, the short story is the best literary form able to accomplish this feature:

> We allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. […] In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences – resulting from weariness or interruption. (POE, 2004, p. 646-647)

It should be noted, however, that the notion of length also relies on the reader's ability to dedicate himself to the unfolding of the narrative at one sitting, being therefore a subjective criterium. Although one to two hours of perusal were acceptable when Poe wrote his review, the same period of time would probably not appeal to a contemporary reader, who, surrounded by many alternatives in which to spend his leisure time, may not consider reading as his first

option – and, if he does, there is no guarantee that it will be done in one sitting. Yet, it is worth mentioning the recent appearance and popularity of different forms of flash fiction, which makes a case for contemporary readers' preference for shorter stories. Thus, no wonder Poe stresses that every event of a plot must be thought out from the preconceived effect: on the one hand, they preserve the unit of the story; on the other hand, they prevent it from getting too long.

In addition to the reviews on fellow writers of his time, Poe also devoted himself to commenting on his own fiction. In "The Philosophy of Composition", he attempts to reconstruct the steps he took in the elaboration of his most famous poem, "The Raven", published in the previous year. To do so, he revisits and expands many of the ideas he explored in his earlier reviews, thus attesting to the coherence of his methodological principles. In the essay, he takes a road most of the Romantic writers and poets of the time would avoid, for, as he puts it, they would rather feed readers' common imaginary by "having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy – an ecstatic intuition – and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes" (POE, 2004, p. 676). The American writer, differently from his companions, states that the composition of "The Raven" "proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem" (ibid., p. 677), declaring that his intention was to write a poem that could be praised both by the critics and the public.

Once again, achieving the unity of effect is at the core of his compositional concerns: "I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. […] Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone […] as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect" (POE, 2004, p. 676). In the poem, the combination of incident and tone leads Poe to reinforce the idea that the succession of the events must be designed from their outcome, since "It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention" (ibid, p. 675). Having defined these criteria, the author approaches the extent of the poem by limiting it to be read at one sitting, so that the unity of effect is kept. Here, however, he further develops the notion of length by comparison with longer texts:

> What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones – that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose – a succession of poetical excitements interspersed,

> *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions – the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect. (POE, 2004, p. 677, italics in the original)

As he approaches John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Poe also recalls his first review on Hawthorne, in which he states that "Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more" (POE, 2004, p. 646). In his second review of *Twice-Told Tales*, he expands this idea by mentioning the example of Homer's *Iliad*. Therefore, he concludes that long poems are a paradox, for they do not maintain the unity of effect. In addition to the epic genre, Poe also resorts to the novel, stating, from the example of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, that it demands no unity, thus justifying its longer form. In view of these considerations, Poe's ideal length for the poem was about one hundred lines; "The Raven" ended up with one hundred and eight.

The next steps in the composition of the poem included a series of choices: the effect, which had to be "universally appreciable"; the tone of its highest manifestation; the refrain, marked by a monotone; and the setting to bring it all together. Considering the effect, Poe declares that "Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. […] When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect – they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul – not* of intellect, or of heart […]" (2004, p. 678). In his defense of Beauty, Poe certainly approaches the field of Aesthetics when he speaks of the human experience unleashed in the contemplation of something beautiful, despite not mentioning the word "aesthetic" a single time in the essay. As for the tone of the poem, it has to match Beauty in nature, i.e., the tone must allow Beauty to manifest in its highest form. Poe's choice of tone, then, is that of sadness, for "Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones" (ibid.). Regarding refrain and setting, they relate more closely to the choices that would guarantee the maintenance of the tone and effect in the poem. In this sense, the word "Nevermore", continuously repeated by a raven, keeps the emphasis on sadness, and the setting, restricted to the lover's chamber, which is richly furnished, "has the force of a frame to a picture" (ibid.).

In the essay, Poe also details the rhythm of the poem and its words, the events it narrates, his choice for the raven, the reason for the lover's mourning, and other features associated with the creative process behind its composition. However, it is not our intent to focus on that. What we emphasize, then, is that although "The Philosophy of Composition" deals with the elaboration of a poem, Poe's principles regarding its construction can be transposed to the

understanding of the short story as well, since the notions of unity of effect and length, for instance, are also considered in his analysis of Hawthorne's work. Therefore, based on his reviews, we can argue that Poe is not concerned with defining the short story as a genre, for the aesthetic principles and narrative resources he advocates for extrapolate its limits and apply to both the short tale and the poem. Thus, he is actually concerned with the construction of a literary work able to generate an impactful and lasting effect on the reader. Consequently, such pioneering in describing the way a writer should tread in order to achieve that ended up laying the bases upon which short story theory would eventually develop. In this respect, May argues that Poe resorted to the theoretical ideas of more established literary genres that already had a critical history in order to develop the form of the short prose, especially the gothic tale. According to May,

> The following generic elements are the most important ones Poe made use of: (1) the conventionalized and ritualized structure of the drama; (2) the metaphoric and self-contained unity of the lyric poem; (3) the technique of verisimilitude of the eighteenth-century novel; (4) the point of view and unifying tone of the eighteenth-century essay; and (5) the spiritual undercurrent and projective technique of the old romance and the gothic story. When you add to these the notion of prose assuming the spatial form of painting, which Poe suggested in the 1842 Hawthorne review, you have the basis for a new generic form. (MAY, 1991, p. 14)

From this combination of elements, Poe's fictional and critical legacy influenced new generations of writers that both stuck to and innovated his aesthetical principles. Some of them even dared to deem his formal ideas on literary composition merely a hoax, uncertain of the author's actual adherence to them – most notably T. S. Eliot in his famous "From Poe to Valéry", in which the poet, referring to "The Philosophy of Composition", states that "It is difficult for us to read that essay without reflecting, that if Poe plotted out his poem with such calculation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method" (ELIOT, 1949, p. 333). More importantly, however, is the fact that Poe's legacy, as we will discuss in the next section, led the way for critics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to theorize on the genre he became famous for – the short story – and provide new insights into our understanding of it.

1.2 The short story and narrative suspense

As we have already mentioned, short story writers held most of the critical discussions on the genre before the second half of the twentieth century. Its definition among critics, however, has long been a matter of debate, mostly due to its hybrid form. On the one hand,

because short narratives, such as myths and legends, are at the genesis of human expression; on the other hand, because, since the nineteenth century, the development of the form emphasized that it shared aspects characteristic both of the prose and lyrical genres. As Patea puts it, "The short story blends the brevity and intensity of the lyric with narrative features such as plot, denouement, character, and events" (2012, p. 9-10). No wonder the common perception of the genre usually sticks to the adjective "short" in order to define it in terms of its length, which, as we already addressed, is a very subjective standard. As a result, many of the first critical discussions that attempted to theorize and define the short story have relied on Poe's aesthetical principles:

> A traditional view of the short story is that it is a compressed, unified, and plotted form. Theoretical discussions of the genre explore notions such as totality, brevity, intensity, suggestiveness, unity of effect, closure, and design. Attention to the formal structure of the short story is mainly a twentieth-century critical enterprise. The aesthetics of the genre's form attracted the interest of critics and narrative theorists in the Sixties – the period of the international dissemination of Russian Formalist writings of the 1920s (Boris Éjxenbaum, Viktor Shklovsky), the emergence of structuralism (Vladimir Propp) and anthropology (Claude Lévi-Strauss), and the philosophy of culture (Ernest Cassirer). The rise of the short story theory then also further developed in parallel with the growth of interest in narratology, reader-response criticism, and discourse analysis and cognitive science. (PATEA, 2012, p. 3)

It is commonly accepted that the starting point of a field of studies dedicated to short story theory is Charles May's *Short Story Theories*, from 1976, in which the author addresses the genre as an underrated art form. The influence and increased debates that his work sparked resulted in *The New Short Story Theories* and *The Reality of Artifice*, published in 1994 and 1995, respectively. Both books soon became landmarks for those interested in the analysis and critical history of the short story, thus inspiring a new myriad of critical approaches to it. Consequently, every author or critic that attempted to theorize it ended up providing new insights to its understanding:

> Because the short story is situated at varying crossroads, defining the short story genre has proved problematic. Attempts at definition have been highly diverse: short stories have been approached in terms of unity (Poe, Brander Matthews), brevity, intensity and tension (Oates, Bader, Friedman, Cortázar), lyricism (Lukács, Moravia), theme (O'Connor's "human loneliness"), insight, vision and mystery (Éjxenbaum, May, Rohrberger), hybridity (May, Pratt), fractals (Leslie Marmon Silko), and closure (Lohafer, Gerlach). Nevertheless, it is still difficult to determine which features distinguish it from other genres and account for its unique nature. (PATEA, 2012, p. 8)

Amid this amount of theoretical perspectives on the genre, many are the speculative venues at our disposal. Considering that this work is concerned with the narrative structure of

the short story – more specifically, with the narrative resources employed in the construction and maintenance of suspense – and its transposition to the audiovisual language of television, we have to choose the theoretical framework that can best aid us in our undertaking. In this sense, Ricardo Piglia, an Argentinian short story writer, offers an interesting observation regarding the nature of the genre in his brief "Theses on the Short Story", an essay in which he proposes the idea of a double narrative structure in which two accounts of events are told simultaneously as the basis of the short story:

> In one of his notebooks, Chekhov recorded the following anecdote: 'A man in Monte Carlo goes to the casino, wins a million, returns home, commits suicide.' The classic form of the short story is condensed within the nucleus of that future, unwritten story. Contrary to the predictable and conventional (gamble–lose–commit suicide), the intrigue is presented as a paradox. The anecdote disconnects the story of the gambling and the story of the suicide. That rupture is the key to defining the double character of the story's form. First thesis: a short story always tells two stories. (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 63)

From this rationale, Piglia attempts to describe how some of the most notable short story writers would develop Chekhov's sketch. According to him, the writer's task is to encode the second story, i.e., that of the suicide, within the first, that of the gambling. In this respect, Piglia states there are two main ways of dealing with the tension both accounts of events generate in the narrative, and they are defined based on the way every writer manipulates the relationship between these two stories told simultaneously:

> The classic short story—Poe, Quiroga—narrates Story One (the tale of the gambling) in the foreground, and constructs Story Two (the tale of the suicide) in secret. The art of the short story writer consists in knowing how to encode Story Two in the interstices of Story One. A visible story hides a secret tale, narrated in an elliptical and fragmentary manner. The effect of surprise is produced when the end of the secret story appears on the surface. (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 63)

> The modern version of the short story that descends from Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield, Sherwood Anderson, the Joyce of Dubliners, abandons the surprise ending and the closed structure; it works the tension between the two stories without ever resolving it. The secret story is told in ever more elusive fashion. (ibid., p. 64)

Therefore, these two categories, although they might seem simplistic, actually put the spotlight on the narrative construction of the genre. On that account, the classic and the modern are exclusively conceived for the way the double narrative structure of the short story is built. It is only after this defining feature of the genre is acknowledged that Piglia takes into consideration the stylistic aspects of every author, resorting to the cases of Hemmingway, Kafka, and Borges, for example. In this sense, the Argentinian writer calls our attention to the form of the short story, and not necessarily to its content. Consequently, the secret tale should

not be treated as a deeper level of interpretation of the visible story – in fact, they are two accounts narrated differently. Since Piglia does not refer to the variety of meanings and readings a short story could evoke, what he actually stresses is the structural nature of the genre:

> The short story is a tale that encloses a secret tale. This is not a matter of a hidden meaning which depends on interpretation: the enigma is nothing other than a story which is told in an enigmatic way. The strategy of the tale is placed at the service of that coded narration. How to tell a story while another is being told? This question synthesizes the technical problems of the short story. Second thesis: the secret story is the key to the form of the short story. (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 64)

Although audacious, given their totalizing scope, it is not our intention to attest to the universality of Piglia's two theses. However, at the same time they seem innovative, they also somehow formalize the previous ideas of Poe and those of other writers regarding the short story. It is no coincidence, then, that Piglia recalls Hemmingway's so-called iceberg theory as a means of summarizing the way the classic short story develops the tension between the two stories: "the most important thing is never recounted. The secret story is constructed out of what is not said, out of implication and allusion" (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 65). As for Poe, we can argue that his principle of the unity of effect is the equivalent of the effect of surprise the second story generates when it comes to the surface. If, for Poe, the plot must be elaborated from its outcome, for Piglia it has to be thought from the encoded narration. Comparatively, Piglia's suggestion that the secret story is told elliptically and fragmentarily as the visible one develops parallels Poe's elaboration on the construction of the preconceived effect: "Without a certain continuity, without a certain duration or repetition of the cause, the soul is seldom moved to the effect. There must be the dropping of the water on the rock. There must be the pressing steadily down of the stamp upon the wax" (POE, 2004, p. 691). Therefore, by constantly hinting at this encoded secondary account of events, Poe not only leads the soul of his reader to the effect, but he also manages to generate and maintain suspense.

In his reviews, Poe resorted to the notions of unity of effect and length to comment on poems, short stories and novels, highlighting which genres were capable of best manifesting these criteria. Similarly, by stressing that the double narrative structure of the short story relies on the elaboration of its plot, Piglia paves the way for us to think of the recurrence of the tension between the two stories in different narratives and media as well. Such an insight has been proposed by Elaine Indrusiak (2016) in her study of the dialogue between the short story and the suspense feature film. As she argues, the thematic affinities between Poe and Alfred Hitchcock, especially their preference for gothic themes and motifs, have long been discussed.

However, just like Poe, the British director left us with essays and interviews that, taken together, emphasize formal interests that recall those of the American writer:

> Poe's fictional and critical works set the foundations for the short story as a genre, but his influence may be also felt in other narrative forms, particularly in Hitchcock's cinema. In order to grant unity of effect and to manipulate the reader, Poe builds a double narrative structure which generates and enhances tension. This same structure may be found in some of Hitchcock's most celebrated suspense films, and the analysis of his interviews and essays reveals aesthetic concerns previously addressed by Poe. (INDRUSIAK, 2016, p. 133)

In this sense, Indrusiak's work indicates that the double narrative structure Piglia identifies as the core of the short story is in fact a narrative resource an author can employ in order to produce and increase tension. Therefore, suspense, a word whose meaning ranges from denoting sensations to the labelling of a genre of imprecise boundaries, is actually treated as a narrative resource in her work. Acknowledging that implies that any narrative that makes use of this device, in spite of its medium, is resorting to it in order to generate tension, which, in this perspective, is the result of the elaboration of the narrative, and not necessarily dependent on the content of the story being told. In Hitchcock's case, for instance, the transposition of the double narrative structure of the short story to his most notable suspense films enabled him to manipulate the viewer towards the preconceived effect. Aware of the fact that the articulation of two accounts of events told simultaneously is the key to suspense, the British director, in his famous interview with François Truffaut, elaborates on the differences between suspense and surprise:

> There is a distinct difference between "suspense" and "surprise," and yet many pictures continually confuse the two. I'll explain what I mean. We are now having a very innocent little chat. Let us suppose that there is a bomb underneath this table between us. Nothing happens, and then all of a sudden, "Boom!" There is an explosion. The public is surprised, but prior to this surprise, it has seen an absolutely ordinary scene, of no special consequence. Now, let us take a suspense situation. The bomb is underneath the table and the public knows it, probably because they have seen the anarchist place it there. The public is aware that the bomb is going to explode at one o'clock and there is a clock in the decor. The public can see that it is a quarter to one. In these conditions this same innocuous conversation becomes fascinating because the public is participating in the scene. The audience is longing to warn the characters on the screen: "You shouldn't be talking about such trivial matters. There's a bomb beneath you and it's about to explode!" In the first case we have given the public fifteen seconds of surprise at the moment of the explosion. In the second we have provided them with fifteen minutes of suspense. The conclusion is that whenever possible the public must be informed. Except when the surprise is a twist, that is, when the unexpected ending is, in itself, the highlight of the story. (TRUFFAUT, 1985, p. 73)

With the scene described above in mind, one can clearly anticipate at least two possible outcomes from it: the bomb exploding as the conversation unfolds or Hitchcock and Truffaut

leaving the table before the explosion. Analyzing this narrative according to Piglia's theses, we could argue that the visible story is that of the chat and the secret one, that of the bomb being placed under the table. Although the scene focuses on the conversation, the audience is aware of the possibility the visible story entails, for the viewer knows there is a bomb under the table. In addition to this, having a clock on the set parallels Piglia's idea that the second story is told fragmentarily, for it is a constant remainder of the unfolding of this second account. The tension these two stories generate is enhanced by the duration of the scene, which is prolonged to fifteen minutes. As a result, based on Hitchcock's formulation, his choice for an effect of surprise or suspense does not rely on the content of the story, but on the way its events are narrated.

As for Poe, we could take "Ligeia" as an example of the narrative articulation of parallel accounts of events. In the story, an unnamed narrator finds himself unable to recall the origins of his deceased first wife, Ligeia. What he remembers is that she was extremely beautiful and intelligent, and therefore dedicates long passages to describing these qualities. For unknown causes, Ligeia eventually dies, and the narrator moves to an abbey, where he marries Rowena Trevaine. Their relationship, however, becomes troublesome, and his new wife, just like Ligeia, suddenly falls ill and dies. One night, as the narrator watches over his wife's body, she apparently returns to life. When she uncovers her face and opens her eyes, the narrator realizes, to his surprise, he is staring at Ligeia. The narrative is dispersed, for the narrator suffers from a feeble memory and cannot indicate with certainty where he first met the woman he so ardently loved. At the same time, gothic motifs and allusions to the supernatural permeate the whole story, especially when it is suggested that Ligeia reincarnated in Rowena's deceased body. The emphasis on these passages attract the reader's attention, who may not establish a causal explanation of the events from the brief, but recurrent references to opium the narrator makes throughout his account:

> In beauty of face no maiden ever equaled her. It was the radiance of an opium dream […] (POE, 2004, p. 160)
>
> I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. (ibid., p. 166)
>
> […] I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. – Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted, shadow-like, before me. (ibid., p. 170)

These short excerpts support the idea of a second story being told as a more visible one develops on the surface. In this sense, what points to a supernatural gothic tale may actually be the description of hallucinations unleashed by opium in the mind of a narrator who, in the

beginning of his account, claims to have a faulty memory. The tension between the accounts of seemingly supernatural and ordinary events is then developed up until the end of the narrative, when the suggestion of Ligeia's comeback to life creates an effect of surprise. However, at the same time tales such as "Ligeia" and the previously mentioned "The Fall of the House of Usher" highlight the mathematical precision with which Poe conceived his stories, one could argue that the suspense in these works also has to do with his themes of choice, for they are often repetitive. In this respect, no wonder suspense is usually perceived as a trait of Poe's works associated to their gothic elements. Taking this into consideration, we reinforce that the generation of suspense does not rely on theme, but on narrative construction, as Hitchcock's example implies, for there is no gothic or supernatural element in the scene the film director describes. As for Poe's themes, he himself suggests that their choice is made in view of the literary form that can best accommodate the intended effect: "It may be added, here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points" (POE, 2004, p. 647). In addition to this, we could reinforce that most of Poe's works known today are his gothic stories, although he also ventured himself in proto science-fiction ("The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall"), detective fiction ("The Murders in the Rue Morgue"), satire ("How to Write a Blackwood Article"), and prose-poem ("Eureka"), for example, thus attesting to the diversity of his fictional oeuvre.

As we have seen, based on Poe, the length of a work is of paramount importance to the unity of effect. Consequently, the short story, for its compressed narrative form, succeeds in the achievement of this preconceived effect, and, according to Piglia, it does so because its construction makes use of a double narrative structure, which Indrusiak (2009) identifies as key to the generation and maintenance of suspense. Thus, she coins the phrase "narrative suspense" to address the narrative device employed to generate tension and differentiates it from other uses of the word suspense. This device, however, is not restricted to the short story, being commonly perceived in other forms as well, such as the thriller. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that short narrative forms, especially those related to the visual arts, such as painting and photography, have been traditionally approached with regards to their spatial dimension, whereas longer narrative forms, such as the novel, are commonly perceived by means of their temporality, for they more aptly describe events as they unfold in time. Coincidently, Julio Cortázar, another Argentinian short story writer, addresses the differences between shorter and longer literary forms by comparing them to visual media:

> Julio Cortázar discusses the difference between the novel and the short story through the metaphoric comparison of photography and motion pictures. Whereas the novel, like a film, constitutes "an open order", the short story resembles the photograph, which isolates a fragment from the whole, circumscribes it, and paradoxically uses its limitations in order to open it up to a much more ample reality, presenting "a dynamic vision that spiritually transcends the space reached by the camera". (PATEA, 2012, p. 11)

Taking Cortázar's ideas into consideration, one could argue that the approximation between short stories and films is unreasonable, for the latter is a long form in visual media, while the former is a short one within literary genres. In this regard, Indrusiak (2009), in consonance with Cortázar, highlights that, among the many categories commonly associated with the word "film", the suspense feature-film in particular approaches the short story for its recurrence of analogous narrative devices often employed in this literary genre to generate tension. The comparison between the short story and the photography, however, reinforces the compactness of both forms. To a large degree, such conciseness implies a narrative style that, unlike the novel, is not settled on the ideas of causality and temporality:

> Given the confinement and limitations of the short form, the writer cannot indulge in details. Compactness and conciseness are responsible for the short story's proclivity to fragmentariness, its tendency to describe moments instead of processes, its preference for the outline of events instead of events in their detailed wholeness. The very shortness of the form requires a style that goes against literary conventions based on mimetic artistic principles, that eludes the trivial or the merely decorative, and that avoids causal relationships or sequences of events. (PATEA, 2012, p. 12)

Just like the photograph, the short story breaks away from the mimetic principles that have guided our understanding of narrative since Aristotle's *Poetics* by focusing more on the description of scenes than on the causal or temporal relations that connect them. In "Ligeia", for example, the narrator devotes the first eight paragraphs of the story to the detailing of Ligeia's features and intellect and to the moment she falls ill. In none of them he alludes to the amount of time they have been together or to how their relationship came to be. Suddenly, we are told she died and that the narrator, desolated, spent months wandering around England, until he found and purchased an old abbey where he married his second wife, Rowena. All of these events are told in one paragraph. The following passages focus on the description of the bridal chamber in the abbey. Just like a picture, then, Poe frames his narrative in images which are minutely depicted. Once again, his coherence prevails, for such similarities between his fiction and paintings are suggested in his reviews:

> […] it has always appeared to me that a close circumscription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident – it has the force of a frame to a picture.

> It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place (POE, 2004, p. 681)
>
> And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. (ibid., p. 692)

Since Poe focuses on description rather than temporality, the causal links between the events narrated must be deduced by the reader. The omission of these marks, however, is intentional. Following on the example of "Ligeia", we have the bridal chamber described as presenting a "fantastical display", with the ceiling of a "gloominy-looking oak" from where a "ghastly lustre" hangs. As for Ligeia, her smile is "the triumph of all things heavenly", emanating a "radiant" and "holy light", and she is said to move around "as a shadow". In this sense, the narrator's choice of words strongly reinforces the gothic atmosphere of the story and suggests a supernatural quality surrounding Ligeia. Considering these descriptions cover most of the story, and that temporal marks are predominantly absent from it, the reader may very likely ignore the brief mentions to the narrator's opium addiction – which can provide a causal and logical relationship between the events in the story – and end up reading it as a supernatural tale. Therefore, the tension between a visible story and a secret one is methodically calculated by the author here, and the omission of temporal or causal marks help him manipulate the reader towards the intended effect, for the large descriptions are the only evident thing left to interpret.

As we have discussed, Poe's principles on literature, especially his defense of the unity of effect, paved the way for the development of short story theory, and Piglia's theses are just one example of that. Given the hybrid nature of the short story and the recurrence of similar narrative devices of the genre in different media, suspense, as proposed by Indrusiak in her intertextual approach between the short story and the feature film, is then treated as a resource an author can employ to add tension to a narrative. In this respect, we should emphasize that, although innovative, Poe's principles do not deal with more specific narrative categories, such as narrative voice, focalization, time of narration, and consciousness representation, for example. Such conceptual framework is provided and developed by Narratology, and the analysis of these traits will help us investigate the ways an author can approach Piglia's challenge of telling two stories in one. Thus, considering this work intends to highlight the structural construction and the narrative devices employed in the short stories adapted in *Contos do Edgar*, it seems proper to support our methodology in Narratology and to dedicate a few pages to it in the next section.

1.3 Narratology

Narratives are at the core of human expression. Although people can communicate through means such as words, sounds, drawings, and gestures, for instance, the way we attribute meaning to these different signs often leads to narrative, for our thought and speech is organized narratively. In this perspective, narrating has been a predominant activity throughout human history, so much so that "From the oldest myths and legends to postmodern fabulation, narration has always been central" (HERMAN and VERVAECK, 2005, p. 1). Based on this omnipresence of narratives that have continuously surrounded us, then, we can easily assume that the study of narrative is not only restricted to the analysis of verbal texts. However, by stating that, we are expanding the usual conception most people have regarding narrative texts, which often comprises novels, short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, and so on. Therefore, by broadening the idea of what a narrative text can be, we end up establishing "boundaries with which not everyone would agree" (BAL, 2009, p. 4). With this issue in mind, Mieke Bal highlights the importance of defining the understanding of the concepts one employs to support a point of view. In this sense, Narratology provides a systematic framework of concepts that, once defined, "helps to understand, analyze, and evaluate narratives" (ibid., p. 3).

The development of Narratology dates back to the 1960s and the work of the French structuralists. According to Herman and Vervaeck (2005, p. 41), the eighth issue of the journal *Communications*, out in 1966, is often regarded as the inauguration of this field of studies, for some of its articles presented different concepts and methods to approach narrative texts. Many of these propositions actually resorted to the early works of the Russian formalists, especially Vladimir Propp's *Morfology of the Folktale*, from 1928, a text in which the author enumerates a series of recurring narrative functions he identifies in one hundred Russian fairy tales. However, considering that the first English translation of Propp's work came out only in 1958, and the French one in 1970, it is no wonder that theories of narrative evolved during the 1960s and 1970s. Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, is regarded as the one responsible for the coinage of the term "Narratology" in his *Grammar of the Decameron*, from 1969, to address the narrative structure of Boccaccio's work. In his footsteps, authors such as Gérard Genette, A. J. Greimas, Roland Barthes, and Claude Bremont laid the foundations for this field of studies to thrive.

Although many scholars have contributed to the establishment of Narratology, the field does not comprise a unified theory, in the sense that different authors have proposed different concepts to understand the characteristics intrinsic to narrative and in the sense that every author

interprets some of the recurring theoretical concepts within Narratology distinctively. As Bal (2009, p. 5) wisely points out, a universal understanding of a concept is only an ideal situation, even when we deal with widespread notions such as *literature* and *text*. The way she proposes to solve the problem is through the definition of the concepts she employs in her *Narratology* (2009), since "definitions are like a language: they help to provide the 'dictionary' so that one person understands what another means" (BAL, 2009, p. 5). Thus, by defining the concepts discussed, Bal provides the reader with a series of tools he can employ in order to interpret and describe a narrative text. Yet, even if two readers share a common understanding of the concepts through which they look at a particular narrative, their interpretations of it may end up different:

> The textual description obtained with the help of this theory can by no means be regarded as the only adequate description possible. This is not the point either. Someone else may use the same concepts differently, emphasize other aspects of the text, and, consequently, produce a different description. For reading is an activity of a subjective nature. The point is, if the description of a text is understood as a proposal that can be presented to others, the fact that the description is formulated within the framework of a systematic theory carries with it one important advantage: it facilitates discussion of the proposed description. This is a 'democratic' use of a theory. This is why, even now, I do not relinquish the system of narratology. (BAL, 2009, p. 4)

Taking the excerpt above and the aim of this thesis into consideration, our description of the narrative resources Poe employs in his short stories to generate and enhance suspense will resort to Bal's concepts and propositions. First, because her work has not only become a contemporary reference for those interested in the study of narrative texts, but mostly because it is constantly revised and updated in order to provide new insights within Narratology. Second, because Bal is aware of the works of other authors in the field, since she addresses the ideas of fellow scholars in her own propositions, whether she agrees with or departs from them, thus keeping the reader well-informed of other perspectives on narrative theory. Third, because her definition of a narrative text meets the intertextual approach of this work, for she conceives it as a "finite, structured whole composed of signs. These can be linguistic units, such as words and sentences, but they can also be different signs, such as cinematic shots and sequences, or painted dots, lines, and blots" (2009, p. 5). In this sense, given that we will be analyzing literary and audiovisual narrative texts, her inclusive point of view[2] on text can lead us towards the comparative narratological analysis we intend to carry out here.

[2] Although Bal's *Narratology* is currently in its fourth edition, the third one meets our interests in this work best, since the latest edition "has been trimmed of all examples from film and visual art" (2017, p. xxi).

With her definition of text in mind, Bal establishes what a narrative text is. To do so, she approaches the work of previous authors and proposes a tripartite division to discuss it. According to her,

> A *narrative text* is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee ('tells' the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A s*tory* is the content of that text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and 'colouring' of a fabula; the fabula is presented in a certain manner. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. (BAL, 2009, p. 5, italics in the original)

This layered structure of the narrative text implies there are differences regarding each of its levels. Text and story, for instance, are distinctive in the sense that the same story, such as a famous fairytale, can be told differently in other kinds of texts, such as film. Similarly, story and fabula distinguish themselves in the sense that the former presents events and characters in a sequence that is different from the latter. Therefore, although one can analyze every layer individually, "That does not mean that these layers exist independently of one another. […] That a text can be divided into three layers is, instead, a theoretical supposition based on a process of reasoning […]" (BAL, 2009, p. 7). Of these three layers, that of the text, conveyed through words, images or sounds, for example, "is more or less directly accessible" (ibid.). In addition to this, Bal proposes a series of specific concepts to analyze the text, the story and the fabula of which a narrative is constituted. In order to make such an analysis feasible, however, this work will resort to what Herman and Vervaeck call the "demarcation of units of investigation" (2005, p. 2). Based on that, the text layer, which deals with the narrator and its forms of narration, and that of the story, which looks at focalization and the sequential order of events, are, as we will see, of paramount importance to the construction of narrative suspense, being therefore the center of our attention in what follows.

The concept and status of the narrative agent of a text, i.e., its narrator, is one of the most important and debatable in Narratology. Bal addresses it as a function rather than as a person, for it "expresses itself in the language that constitutes the text" (2009, p. 15), be it linguistic or visual, for example. Implied in this proposition is the separation between author and narrator. Such a distinction "is not to deny authorship but to emancipate both author and reader from the stronghold of a misconceived interpretive authority" (BAL, 2009, p. 16), a perspective that not only usually prevents a text from conveying "unauthorized" ideas, but also often limits one's comprehension of the text by attaching it to extratextual instances. Another distinction Bal marks is that between narrator and focalization, categories she organizes in the text and story layers of her division, respectively. Although both are necessary to the

establishment of a narrative situation, "The fact that 'narration' tends to imply focalization is related to the notion that language shapes vision and world-view, rather than the other way round" (BAL, p. 18). Therefore, focalizing, i.e., seeing or perceiving things and events, precedes what one has to say about them. Yet, since in Narratology the focalizing agent does not necessarily coincide with the narrating agent, the reason why they belong to different layers of narrative texts is justified.

As for the forms of narration, Bal challenges the ideas of first and third-person narrators based on the narrative voice that emanates from the text, for she states that the agent in charge of narration is always a "first person". According to her,

> As soon as there is language, there is a speaker who utters it; as soon as those linguistic utterances constitute a narrative text, there is a narrator, a narrating subject. As soon as there are images that represent figures doing things, there is a form of narration going on. From a grammatical point of view, this narrating subject is always a 'first person'. In fact, the term 'third-person narrator' is absurd: a narrator is not a 'he' or 'she'. (BAL, 2009, p. 21)

Although debatable, Bal's argument does not exclude the differences that the choice of an "I" or a "he/she" narrator entails in the form of narration. Instead, she proposes to think of this distinction based on whether this narrating agent refers to itself or not in its utterances. If it does, then she defines it as a *character-bound narrator* (CN), for "the 'I' is to be identified with a character, hence, also an actor in the fabula" (ibid.); otherwise, if it "never refers explicitly to itself as a character" (ibid.), we have an external narrator (EN). Of all of Poe's short stories to be analyzed in Chapter 3, for example, only "Metzengerstein" and "The Masque of the Red Death" have external narrators; all of the other stories are told by character-bound narrators.

In terms of reliability, Bal (ibid.) states that "A CN usually proclaims that it recounts true facts about her- or him-self. 'It' pretends to be writing 'her' autobiography, even if the fabula is blatantly implausible, fantastic, absurd, metaphysical". Poe's character-bound narrators are typical examples of narrative agents that usually attempt to prove their mental sanity through the account of past events they were allegedly involved in, even if the events narrated suggest a supernatural or fantastical – at least on the surface – explanation for their occurrence. The narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart", for example, although sick, starts his narration claiming to be mentally stable: "I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story" (POE, 2004, p. 317). Similarly, the narrator of "The Black Cat" intends to share with the reader "a series of mere household events" (ibid., p. 349) that led him to be condemned to execution. However, the way he tells these events, especially those

related to his cat, points to a fantastical motivation for their occurrence, an interpretation reinforced by the superstitious belief surrounding black cats and by the fact that the cat's name is Pluto, a reference to the god of the underworld in Roman mythology.

Another aspect considered in the discussion on the narrator is its level of involvement regarding the narrated world, since it can include the roles of narrating, perceiving, and acting. Each of these actions is related to the narrative levels of text, story, and fabula, respectively. Yet, when the narrator acts, "this action may remain limited to testimony" (BAL, 2009, p. 28), thus qualifying it as a witness. In a narrative text, it is important to consider the narrator's level of involvement with the narrated world, especially when a text contains many descriptive passages. In addition to suggest an image of the world in which the narrative takes place, "Description is a privileged site of focalization, and as such it has great impact on the ideological and aesthetic effect of the text" (ibid., p. 35). In "Ligeia", as mentioned in the previous section, Poe resorts to description for most of the passages of the story, so much so that its events are predominantly contained in a few paragraphs. Considering the narrator's site of focalization within the story, which allows it to not only narrate events, but to do so from its alleged perception of them as a character, the descriptive parts dedicated to the detailing of Ligeia's attributes, as well as those that depict the atmosphere of his bridal chamber, aesthetically approach features common to Gothic fiction and suggest a supernatural quality to the story. To sum things up, Bal (2009, p. 36) defines a description as "a textual fragment in which features are attributed to objects. This aspect of attribution is the *descriptive function*. We consider a fragment as descriptive when this function is dominant".

In view of the recurrence of descriptive passages in narrative texts, one can imply that the narrator does not resort to them unintendedly, for "the ways in which descriptions are inserted characterize the rhetorical strategy of the narrator" (ibid., p. 41). Based on that, Bal proposes the concept of *motivation* to justify the narrator's need for the use of the descriptive function in certain parts of a narrative text. In this sense, she argues that motivation is achieved in the three layers of narrative through speaking, looking, and acting, respectively. However,

> The most effective, the most frequent, and the least noticeable form is motivation via looking. Motivation is, then, a function of focalization. A character sees an object. The description is the reproduction of what the character sees. Looking at something requires time, and, in this fashion, the description is incorporated into the time lapse caused by the interruption. But an act of looking must also have its exterior motivation. There must be enough light so that the character is able to observe the object. Hence, there is a window, an open door, an angle of vision which also have to be described and therefore motivated. Furthermore, the character must have both the time to look and a reason to look at an object. Hence the curious characters, the men of leisure, the unemployed, and the Sunday strollers. (BAL, 2009, p. 42)

Once more, Poe's "Ligeia" can be mentioned here, since it illustrates how description and motivation are tied together in the narration. As the unnamed narrator describes the chamber of his abbey, he emphasizes the pentagonal room had only one single window through which "the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within" (POE, 2004, p. 167). It also had a huge gold censer hanging from the ceiling that produced "a continual succession of parti-colored fires" (POE, 2004, p. 168). Additionally, the walls were all covered with tapestry, so that the wind blowing behind them increased the "phantasmagoric effect […] giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole" (ibid.). The complete description of the space comprises two long paragraphs. As the narrative unfolds, we realize these lengthy descriptive passages provide an understanding for the narrator's motivation in the subsequent events. When Rowena falls ill, for example, and the narrator crosses the chamber to get her some wine, he senses a strange presence in the room:

> I had felt that some palpable although invisible object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer, a shadow – a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect – such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade. (POE, 2004, p. 170)

Knowing the architecture and decoration of the chamber, the reader can infer that the shadow the narrator sees is very likely the result of the fires emanating from the censer in the poorly lit room. The way this shadow is perceived by the narrator, however, suggests a supernatural presence in the space – an interpretation which, according to him, is corroborated by Rowena as well. On the text layer of the narrative, therefore, the use of description regarding the chamber was necessary, since it makes the narrator's act of stopping below the censer justifiable. In other words, if we know that the design of the chamber evokes a phantasmagorical feeling, we know anyone entering the place will likely feel surrounded by a ghastly presence. As the narrator remarks, speaking of the arabesque figures in the space,

> To one entering the room, they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and step by step, as the visiter moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk. (POE, 2004, p. 168)

Nonetheless, it should be noted that, in the aforementioned excerpts, motivation is also brought about by looking, for, in the narrator's account of the events, he stops in the middle of the room because of something he allegedly *sees*. In this sense, the narratological concept of focalization must be addressed. Defined as "the relationship between the 'vision', the agent that

sees, and that which is seen" (BAL, 2009, p. 149), focalization belongs to the story layer of analysis, i.e., to the layer that deals with the content of the narrative text. One of the central premises of this idea is that the agent who sees does not necessarily correspond to the one who speaks, that is, the focalizor should not be mistaken for the narrator. Once acknowledged this distinction, Bal (ibid.) describes the subject of focalization as "the point from which the elements are viewed. That point can lie with a character (i.e., an element of the fabula), or outside it". If focalization is attached to a character in the fabula, there is internal focalization, thus configuring a character-bound focalizor (CF). If the view of the elements is presented by an agent outside the fabula, then there is external focalization (EF). With that in mind, Bal stresses that one of the implications of character-bound focalization is that the reader may interpret the narrative according to the CF's bias and limited perception of events.

Character-bound focalizors are recurrent in Poe's stories. As a result, they are biased in the way they present the focalized objects to the reader, especially because what they claim to see may not be perceived by other characters. As Bal (ibid., p. 156) points out, "An object can also be visible only inside the 'head', 'mind', or 'feelings' of the CF. […] And only those who have access to that character's 'inside' can perceive anything". In these cases, Bal presents the idea of 'non-perceptible' objects, as opposed to 'perceptible' objects, to refer to the contents that are only in the CF's mind. In "Ligeia", there are passages in which 'non-perceptible' objects are focalized, for only one of the characters sees them:

> She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear–of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. […] It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle foot-fall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby colored fluid. If this I saw–not so Rowena. (POE, 2004, p. 170, italics in the original)

In the first sentence of this excerpt, the CF focalizes Rowena. The sounds and motions she claims to hear and see, however, are not perceived by this focalizor, therefore making them fit into the category of non-perceptible objects. Similarly, as the narrative progresses, the focalizor perceives something Rowena does not – the large ruby drops. In this sense, they are also non-perceptible objects, because only one of the characters perceives them. According to Bal (2009, p. 157), "Such an inequality in position between characters is obvious in the so-called 'first-person novels', but in other kinds this inequality is not always as clear to the reader. Yet the latter is manipulated by it in forming an opinion about the various characters". In these passages, the narrator suggests the hypothesis that what he sees may be the product of a dream

– an interpretation reinforced by his addiction to opium and feeble memory. As for Rowena, however, since the reader does not have access to either her focalization of objects or to her words, her character seems less reliable, for the reader's interpretation of the events is to a large degree informed by a single focalizor, and this perceiving agent does not attest to what Rowena sees. That way, the reader's opinion of her is inclined to the focalizor's vision. In short, "focalization has a strongly manipulative effect" (BAL, 2009, p. 157).

In this same excerpt, the focalizor coincides with the narrator, i.e., the agent that perceives is also the one that speaks. However, they belong to different levels of the narrative text. In this respect, Bal (ibid., p. 161) states that the focalization in first and third-person narratives is not different, for "In a so-called 'first-person narrative' too an external focalizor, usually the 'I' grown older, gives its vision of a fabula in which it participated earlier as an actor, from the outside". That happens in "Ligeia" as well, for the narrative starts with "I cannot, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. […] Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine" (POE, 2004, p. 159). From this point on, the narrative comprises past events focalized by the younger 'I' of this narrator. According to Bal (2009, p. 161), then, there are different levels of focalization here. The narrator, although a character of the story, focalizes his younger ego externally in the text level. In the story level, the focalization "can present the vision of its younger alter ego, so that a CF is focalizing on the second level". In this sense, "we are dealing with an embedded focalization, because at any moment the narrative may return to the first level" (ibid., p. 162). In "Ligeia", the focalization of the first level shifts to that of the second one when the verb tenses employed in the text shift from present to past. When the narrator claims to be unable to remember the origins of his first wife, he makes use of the present tense. When, however, he says he met Ligeia in a city nearby the Rhine, he makes use of the past tense, indicating that the events to be told have already happened. This shift in the verb tenses, then, also marks a shift in the level of focalization, in the sense that the external focalizor on the level of the text delegates the focalization to an internal focalizor in the level of the story.

This shift of focalization also takes into account the fact that the narrative is built from the memories of the narrator. According to Bal (2009, p. 150), "Memory is an act of 'vision' of the past but, as an act, situated in the present of the memory.[…] Hence, the 'story' the person remembers is not identical to the one she experienced". That way, in "Ligeia", the internal focalization of the narrator's past memories is actually an internal rendering of what he remembers in the present. In the text level, the narrator externally focalizes, through memory,

the actions of his younger ego. In the story level, these actions are focalized internally from the point of view of this character-bound narrator. It is important to emphasize, however, that "memories are unreliable – in relation to the fabula – and when put into words, they are rhetorically overworked so that they can connect to an audience" (ibid.). This overworking, in the level of the story, often implies ordering the events in a way that does not always coincide with their chronological occurrence. Thus, "The fabula is 'treated', and the reader is being manipulated by this treatment" (ibid., p. 76).

In the beginning of this section, we pointed the differences between the story and fabula layers of a narrative text. While the former deals with the events as they are presented to the reader, the latter refers to the chronological order of events. In this sense, the fabula "is a theoretical construction, which we can make on the basis of the laws of everyday logic which govern common reality" (ibid., p. 79). However, "Playing with sequential ordering is not just a literary convention; it is also a means of drawing attention to certain things, to emphasize, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event […]" (ibid., p. 81). In this respect, Bal addresses any differences in the order of events in the story and in the fabula as anachronies or chronological deviations. As a means to approach this common feature of narrative texts, she considers three different aspects of anachrony: direction, distance, and span.

Whenever the chronological order of the fabula is interrupted in the level of the story by an anachronistic event, this interruption is set either in the past or in the future. Bal uses the terms retroversion and anticipation to indicate the direction of these chronological deviations towards the moment of the fabula they interrupt in the level of the story. That means a primary story-time must be considered as the central point from which all of the interruptions will be measured. In "Ligeia", for example, the starting point of the fabula is the moment the narrator and Ligeia first met. The story, however, starts with the narrator's attempt to remember how he and his beloved first wife became acquainted. If we consider that moment, narrated in the present tense, as a central point in the narrative, all of the other events in the story are told retrospectively. This is their direction towards the present of the narration. Many of Poe's stories are usually set in the present, with the narrator providing a reason for the telling of the story it is about to pen. Then, the story shifts to the past and the events are presented predominantly in their chronological order.

Distance, on the other hand, deals with the time interval between a chronological deviation and the present event it interrupted. In this sense, Bal distinguishes three kinds of anachrony:

> Whenever a retroversion takes place completely outside the time span of the primary fabula, we refer to an external analepsis, an external retroversion. […] If the retroversion occurs within the time span of the primary fabula, then we refer to an internal analepsis, an internal retroversion. If the retroversion begins outside the primary time span and ends within it, we refer to a mixed retroversion. (2009, p. 89)

Poe constantly makes use of internal analepsis in his prose. Its distance towards the primary fabula, however, is usually not mentioned. In "Ligeia", the reader is not informed of the temporal gap between the events narrated and the moment the narrator decides to tell them. Temporal information, when provided, is often done diffusely: "I cannot, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering" (POE, 2004, p. 159). The second sentence of the story makes clear how vaguely the narrator treats time, for he not only avoids mentioning the number of years since he first met Ligeia, but he also refers to them as *long*, which points to a subjective perception of the passing of time. In this sense, the absence of a clear distance between events ends up attesting to the unreliability of the narrator and his memory.

As for span, the last aspect of anachrony, Bal (2009, p. 91) states that it indicates the amount of time covered by a chronological deviation. After Ligeia's death, the narrator wanders about for "a few months" (POE, 2004, p. 166) and purchases the old abbey. The span covered in the action, therefore, is a few months; once more, the narrator's treatment of time is vague. As for his marriage to Rowena, the reader is informed that she began to feel ill in the second month of her married life, so that we can infer that the narrator's second marriage spanned about two months.

Another point raised by Bal is that the aspects of anachrony she describes are valid to both retroversions and anticipations. The latter, however, is less frequent in narrative text, for they usually refer to "a single (frequently covert) allusion to the outcome of the fabula – an outcome which one must know, in order to recognize (in retrospect) the anticipations for what they are. They may serve to generate tension or to express a fatalistic vision of life" (BAL, 2009, p. 93). Bal says that a summary of the outcome of the narrative in the beginning of the text "can suggest a sense of fatalism, or predestination: nothing can be done, we can only watch the progression towards the final result" (ibid., p. 93). In "The Black Cat", the narrator claims he will die on the next day, so that his account of past events is intended as a means to relieve his guilty soul. That way, by anticipating his outcome in the beginning of his account, the

narrator instigates the reader to pay careful attention to his narration, for it will provide him with an explanation of this already known outcome.

Regarding time in the level of the story, there are still two aspects to consider: rhythm and frequency. Dealing with the "relationship between the amount of time covered by the events of a fabula and the amount of time involved in presenting those events" (ibid., p. 98), rhythm compares the time an event spans in the fabula with the time and space dedicated to presenting that same event in the story through the number of paragraphs and pages dedicated to it. That way, "The attention paid to the various elements gives us a picture of the vision on the fabula communicated to the reader" (ibid., p. 99). Based on that, Bal proposes a scale in which the relationship between the time of the fabula (TF) and the time of the story (TS) is distinguished with regards to rhythm in five different ways: ellipsis, summary, scene, slow-down, and pause.

Bal defines ellipsis as "an omission in the story of a section of the fabula" (ibid., p. 100). Therefore, this omission has to be deduced by the reader. Then, she presents the idea of summary to indicate the brief way events apparently insignificant to the course of the fabula are presented in the story. Scene, on the other hand, corresponds to a rhythm in which "the duration of the fabula and that of the story are roughly the same" (ibid., p. 104). According to Bal, their duration cannot be equal because "Most scenes are full of retroversions, anticipations, non-narrative fragments such as general observations, or atemporal sections such as descriptions" (ibid.). As for slow-down, it sometimes "occurs within a scene, in such cases often reinforced, by, for instance, a subjective retroversion" (ibid., p. 105). It is the extension of the interruption of the scene that distinguishes this rhythm from scene. Yet, Bal states that the latter hardly ever occurs in narratives. Finally, pause refers to "all narrative sections in which no movement of the fabula-time is implied. A great deal of attention is paid to one element, and in the meantime the fabula remains stationary" (BAL, 2009, p. 106).

With these definitions in mind, we can look at "Ligeia" as a great example of how Poe employs different rhythms in his works. In the first paragraph, the narrator introduces himself and presents Ligeia as his deceased first wife whose origins he cannot remember. The five paragraphs that follow extensively describe her character, and the seventh paragraph resumes the narration when Ligeia falls ill before her death. Considering that their relationship lasted for many years, those five paragraphs summarize that amount of time stretched in the fabula. However, since they are dedicated to the description of Ligeia's features, they end up being a long pause, for the point of attention in the story relies on one element. In addition to this, the time spanned from Ligeia's death to the purchasing of the abbey and the marriage to Rowena is summarized in one paragraph. Then, the description of the abbey and its bridal chamber

comprises two long paragraphs, showing that the rhythm of the narrative shifted from summary to pause. By paying more attention to the detailing of the gloomy characteristics of the chamber, the narrator turns it into the perfect set for supernatural occurrences, as the following events of the story suggest. Therefore, the use of different rhythms throughout the narration deviates the reader's attention to the elements the narrator emphasizes more in his account, thus manipulating the reader's interpretation of the events.

Finally, frequency refers to "the numerical relationship between the events in the fabula and those in the story" (ibid., p. 109). In this sense, frequency deals with the number of times an event of the fabula is presented in the story. If an event happens only once and the story mentions it one time, its frequency is singular. However, "when an event occurs only once and is presented a number of times" (ibid., p. 110), there is repetition. Otherwise, recurring events of the fabula that are presented only once in the story have their frequency iterative. In "Ligeia", the narrator references to his opium addiction are recurrent throughout the narrative, as mentioned in the previous section. Thus, their frequency is repetitive. However, considering these allusions are often briefly provided in the middle of the narrator's extensive descriptions of other elements in the story, the reader may not pay attention to the causal explanation of events these hints entail, for they legitimize an interpretation in which the supernatural suggestions of the story are the product of the narrator's hallucinations induced by his use of opium.

Therefore, Narratology offers a set of categories able to describe and enlighten our understanding of the construction of a narrative text. In Poe's case, they shed some light on the intricacies characteristic of his meticulous sense of composition regarding narratives designed to provoke strong and lasting effects. Yet, Narratology also enables us to see more clearly the devices Poe employs in order to tell two stories in one, in consonance with Piglia's theses, and to generate and enhance suspense, in line with Indrusiak's ideas on narrative suspense. That way, our discussion on "Ligeia" in this section was an example of how Narratology provides the tools for the parallel we intend to make with the narrative construction of *Contos do Edgar*. This formal analysis of the series and the stories it adapts will allow us to conclude whether the producers appropriated the fabula of the tales or actually adapted the story and the narrative resources Poe used, defended and raised to a whole new level of sophistication in his works.

2. *CONTOS DO EDGAR*: adaptation, television, and film Narratology

2.1 *Contos do Edgar* as an adaptation

If, as stated in the previous section, narratives are at the core of human expression, the same statement applies to adaptation. From the old myths transmitted and reimagined through generations in ancient societies to the biological ability – and necessity – of readjustment in face of environmental and social changes, adaptation has been a characteristic central to human history and evolution. In a broad sense, "adaptation has described the capacities for human, cultural, and biological adjustments as a way of surviving, advancing, or simply changing" (CORRIGAN, 2017, p. 25). In this respect, different subjects and areas of knowledge have approached and defined a series of practices and phenomena as adaptations. Based on that, outlining the limits of what is and what is not adaptation is not an easy task, for it implies looking back at History to see how the concept has changed – or adapted – throughout the centuries until it achieved the current implications and meanings it has in our contemporary culture, which usually attach the word to discussions on the relationship between literature and other media.

As a means to summarize the variety of processes the term adaptation has historically described, Timothy Corrigan (ibid.) approaches it "as sociological and scientific forms of adaptation, as theological and mythological activities, and as textual and representational movements". Form a socio-scientific perspective, adaptation dates back to Charles Darwin's work *On the Origin of Species*, from 1859, in which the naturalist defends the idea that biological forms evolve and succeed each other in order to survive to changes in the physical and resourceful conditions of the environment. As a theological and mythological activity, adaptation has been used by ancient societies as a means to convey all that is unknown through images and narratives. That way, adaptation has mediated our intellectual development, in the sense that what we did not know has been approached through advanced forms of thought and abstraction. This form of adaptation, as Corrigan states, has also crossed different cultures, such as the ancient Greek and Roman mythology, and persisted until the modern times, as the examples of Homer's *Odyssey* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* show. Lastly, as textual and representational movements, adaptation refers to the ways readers have engaged with both theological – often regarded as authoritative – and other kinds of texts. According to Corrigan (ibid., 26), our relationship with these texts has been more active since the early modern period, so that adaptation has been redefined "as a more productive critique or more subjective

interpretation that still resonates in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries". Therefore, the ways to express these interpretations are varied and include, for example, linguistic, visual, and audio representational media.

Taking into consideration the amount of approaches made to adaptation, one early conclusion we can draw from them is that it always implies a form of changing, be it social, cultural, or biological. More recently, contemporary scholars have proposed three different perspectives for us to think of adaptation. In her *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon (2013, p. 7-8) describes it as a *product*, i.e., "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works", as a *process of creation*, which "always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation", and as a *process of reception*, as "a form of intertextuality". In this respect, the author calls attention to the fact that, although we can study an adaptation as an autonomous work, analyzing it through the lens of adaptation implies dealing with it in relation to other works as well. However, this point of view often brings up a series of preconceived notions – or fallacies, as Thomas Leitch (2003) has put it – that have to be tackled and clarified first in order for us to treat adaptations as such.

One of the main common assumptions regarding adaptations relies on fidelity as a way to measure the relationship between the adapted text and that which it is based on. Considering that every adaptation has at least one source text behind it, evaluations based on fidelity have usually treated the derivative work as inferior. Corrigan (2017, p. 24) addresses it as a recurring motif of the process of creation of an adaptation. Both he and Hutcheon resort to Spike Jonze's 2002 film *Adaptation* to discuss fidelity. In the movie, Charlie Kaufman struggles in his role as a screenwriter since "he worries about his responsibility as an adapter to an author and a book he respects" (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 18). Consequently, his script of "The Orchid Thief" initially does not come to fruition because he cannot faithfully transpose Susan Orlean's essay to film language. As he notices, "what is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents. Therefore, adapters are first interpreters and then creators" (ibid.). In this respect, the process of adaptation always implies a series of choices: the adapter has to choose what to adapt, what to subtract, contract, extend, and cut, and all of that based on the medium in which the adapted text is going to be produced and the resources it offers for its production. In short, since the act of adapting always implies some level of change, fidelity, as a result of that, "is a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense" (LEITCH, 2003, p. 161).

In addition to the aspects involved in the process of creating a derivative work, thinking of the reception of an adaptation as an intertextual relationship between adapted and source texts is also a challenge not only to the notion of fidelity, but to those of originality and authorship as well. Based on Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on dialogism and polyphony, Julia Kristeva coins the term intertextuality to state that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (1986, p. 37). In this respect, even a text regarded as original is actually a product of the selection and combination of previous words, ideas, and thoughts read and interpreted by its author. As such, every text addresses, whether explicitly or implicitly, other texts. However, since adaptations usually make this relationship with previous texts clear, they are often perceived as secondary and, therefore, inferior, just as if they were somehow in debt with the works they are based on. At the core of these judgments are our subjective expectations about how a different medium will approach a text we already know, and frustrations regarding these expectations may lead to the perception of adaptations as substandard works. Yet, it should be noted that, if the receiver of a specific text were unaware that it is an adaptation, he would not experience it with these biased assumptions, and the notion of fidelity would not even be an issue to interfere in the reception of that work. This attests to the fragility of the concept. Hutcheon, approaching the matter through the lens of intertextuality, defends that "an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary" (2013, p. 9). Therefore, fidelity, or faithfulness to the source, should not be taken as a means to measure the quality of an adaptation; otherwise, we take the risk of not experiencing any work at all, given the intertextual nature of texts.

When dealing with adaptation as a product, i.e., "as openly acknowledged and extended reworkings of particular other texts" (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 16), many are the possibilities of intertextual dialogue between source and adapted works. Linguistically, these forms of intertextuality one has at his disposal may include adaptation "as quotation, as allusion, as embedding, as appropriation, and as palimpsest" (CORRIGAN, 2017, p. 26). Each of these practices, as Corrigan remarks, can be thought out as a scale in which the primary text continuously becomes less authoritative and the derivative one becomes more prominent. Adaptation as quotation, for example, explicitly addresses the source text from which it borrows the excerpts quoted. A palimpsest, on the other hand, is a form of adaptation in which the primary work "may exist only as a trace or an unseen foundation" (ibid.), for the new text replaces the previous one almost completely. Julie Sanders (2006, p. 18) expands these linguistic possibilities of adaptation, arguing that they "mobilize a wide vocabulary of active

terms: version, variation, interpretation, continuation, transformation, imitation, pastiche, parody, forgery, travesty, transposition, revaluation, revision, rewriting, echo". In this respect, each of these forms denotes a different aim and intention when addressing the source text, thus establishing very peculiar kinds of relationship with it.

As Hutcheon (2013, p. 16) points out, as a process, adaptation has often been compared to translation. However, she states that "Just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation", an opinion our discussion of fidelity corroborates. In this sense, the author further develops this comparison by resorting to Susan Bassnett's argument that translation also implies "an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication" (2002, p. 10). Similarly, adaptations often mediate the temporal gap between the source text and the adapted one and make use of new resources to convey an old text to a new audience. Therefore, "In many cases, because adaptations are to a different medium, they are re-mediations, that is, specifically translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images)" (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 16). As a result, our contemporary understanding of adaptation is not restricted to the intertextual relationship between verbal texts. According to Corrigan (2017, p. 27), since the latter half of the twentieth century, "more fluid and pronounced versions of adaptation began to appear in architecture, literature, the visual arts, historiography, politics, and the social sciences". Therefore, relationships between literature and other media, especially film, provide only a small glimpse of the broad scope entailed by adaptation.

As Corrigan points out (ibid., p. 28), cinema has been seen as an adaptive art form from its initial stages, since it encapsulates poetry, theater, music, painting, and sculpture, for example, in one product. Consequently, early discussions on the medium tended to be interdisciplinary. From that point of view, he summarizes how different authors and filmmakers, such as Walter Benjamin, Sergei Eisenstein, George Bluestone, and André Bazin, have approached cinema throughout the twentieth century. While for Benjamin and Eisenstein "cinema provided crucial conceptual and formal structures for adapting new and sometimes more radical politics as a medium for mass communication" (ibid.), for Bazin "a cinematic adaptation of drama—as with adaptations of novels or paintings—should be fully informed by the formal and representational distinctions of the adapting medium" (ibid., p. 30). Corrigan's route ends with Robert Stam's perspectives on adaptation, which approach it with the already discussed notion of intertextuality. Thus, these evolving ideas on adaptation have led twenty-first century perspectives on the subject to see it as phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of art forms and cultural practices:

> These more contemporary definitions of adaptation have opened up the field in a variety of ways, extending its scope well beyond the case-study interactions that link a literary and a cinematic text to include, for example, adaptations of music, television programs, videogames, and the Internet, and concentrating, for instance, on the pressures of different historical periods and different cultural geographies as they shape these new adaptive practices. These recent perspectives have additionally investigated the layering of different adapted textualities as intermedialities, the use of more flexible models of adaptation as translation, and the elaboration of reading and viewing as adapting activities in themselves—all indications of the increasing relevancy and energy in the field. (CORRIGAN, 2017, p. 31)

As a means to attest to the omnipresence of adaptations in our culture, Hutcheon provides a few examples. According to her, "Adaptations are obviously not new to our time, however; Shakespeare transferred his culture's stories from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience. Aeschylus and Racine and Goethe and da Ponte also retold familiar stories in new forms" (2013, p. 2). Thinking of the contemporary presence of adaptations, the author mentions the influence of both the Academy and the Emmy Awards, events that honor the best movies and TV series, respectively. Of all the 90 Oscar-winning Best Pictures, for example, more than 60 are adaptations of literary texts, an even more astonishing number if we consider that the Academy Awards have a separate category devoted to the Best Adapted Screenplay. In addition to cinema, Hutcheon (ibid.) also states that more than 90% of Emmy-winning miniseries are adaptations. Based on these numbers, it is hard to conceive how works many deem as secondary and inferior end up winning important prizes and being so popular. In this sense, she argues that adaptations, when perceived as such, are culturally appealing because they mediate the gap between what we know and what is new: "Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change" (ibid.). However, adaptations are also commercially appealing, and this helps explain why so many film and TV productions are based on successful novels, for instance. In this context, popular literary texts function as safe bets for film studios, for they have already garnered an audience that will be attracted to these new versions of their beloved texts with high expectations. Therefore, in an age marked by the appearance of new forms of media, the ways to commercially exploit a successful work are then multiplied, so that "multinationals who own film studios today often already own the rights to stories in other media, so they can be recycled for videogames, for example, and then marketed by the television stations they also own (THOMPSON apud HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 5). This financial appeal of adaptations is just a small example of how they currently have a cultural impact that goes way beyond the relationship between texts.

When discussing adaptation as a process of reception, Hutcheon proposes three modes through which we engage with stories and adapted texts: telling, showing, and participatory. Each of these modes is immersive to varied degrees and ways, a characteristic that takes into consideration the medium in which an adaptation is produced. In this sense, "the telling mode (a novel) immerses us through imagination in a fictional world; the showing mode (plays and films) immerses us through the perception of the aural and the visual; […] the participatory mode (videogames) immerses us physically and kinesthetically" (2013, p. 22). Based on that, the author argues that only the participatory mode of engagement is deemed interactive. However, reading and watching are not merely passive positions, for they require the act of interpreting in order to convey meaning. Therefore, all the three modes of engagement demand an active attitude on the part of the receiver, and each of them articulates meaning differently:

> The performance mode teaches us that language is not the only way to express meaning or to relate stories. Visual and gestural representations are rich in complex associations; music offers aural "equivalents" for characters' emotions and, in turn, provokes affective responses in the audience; sound, in general, can enhance, reinforce, or even contradict the visual and verbal aspects. On the other hand, however, a *shown* dramatization cannot approximate the complicated verbal play of *told* poetry or the interlinking of description, narration, and explanation that is so easy for prose narrative to accomplish. Telling a story in words, either orally or on paper, is never the same as showing it visually and aurally in any of the many performance media available. (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 23, italics in the original)

As we can see, many are the aspects surrounding the wide range of adaptation. Now that we have covered some of them, it is time to delineate the ways *Contos do Edgar* (2013), the audiovisual work analyzed in this thesis, approaches this field of studies. Although the intertextual relationship between the miniseries and the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe seems obvious, both works are conceived in different media. Therefore, our engagement, or interaction, with them occurs through the telling and showing modes, which imply distinct kinds of immersion with these works. Yet, as previously discussed, there are many ways an adapted text can address former works, so that simply labelling *Contos do Edgar* an adaptation does not convey a clear idea of the kind of relationship it establishes with Poe's stories.

Created by Gabriel Hirschhorn and Pedro Morelli and directed by the latter, *Contos do Edgar* is a Brazilian television miniseries that originally aired from April 2 to June 11, 2013 on FOX Brazil. Produced by O2 Filmes, it is one of the outputs of Brazilian law 12.465, passed in August 2011, according to which every Brazilian cable network should broadcast in prime time at least 3 and a half hours of national content weekly as a means to encourage the production of domestic audiovisual works. As a result of that law, FOX Brazil reached O2 Filmes in 2012, and the development of the series began in the same year. Starring Marcos de Andrade and

Danilo Grangheia as Edgar and Fortunato, two pest exterminators who live in São Paulo, the series revolves around their work routine through run-down neighborhoods of the city as they visit houses, department stores and commercial establishments to get rid of pest infestations. According to a 2013 interview published on O2 Filmes website, Hirschhorn and Morelli initially came up with the idea of creating dramatic stories with a strong visual impact based on a literary classic. Thus, they chose to adapt short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, an author they had already read during their school years. With that idea in mind, the creators decided to transpose his tales to a contemporary Brazilian context, so that the series could be viable in terms of production.

Consisting of only one season, every episode of *Contos do Edgar* presents Edgar and Fortunato attending a different establishment where their services are requested. Each of these places hides a fateful story that unfolds with every visit from the exterminators. However, while Fortunato does not seem to care much about the tragic lives of those who hire his services, Edgar manifests great interest in them, for he is often shown witnessing and paying attention to what is going on with the people around him. That way, his character ends up assuming an authorial role in the series, since many of the scenes presented are introduced by recurring voice-overs of his and because every episode usually ends with him reporting to Fortunato what he witnessed at the place they have just worked at. Although one can approach every episode individually, for each of them presents a single story, watching them all reveals an underlying narrative arc in the series that connects them altogether. This second story is hinted at in every episode and mirrors the fateful stories presented with that of Edgar and Fortunato, for they also share a tragic past, which is only revealed in the season finale. However, the narrative aspects of the series will be further developed in the next section, when we will approach the episodic and serialized natures of television narratives. For now, our focus is to highlight the adaptive approach of the series.

Intertextual relationships between *Contos do Edgar* and Poe's stories abound. One of the most explicit ways in which the series addresses the works of the American writer is through the opening titles of every episode, for they inform the viewer the short story the current episode is based on (see figure 1). Some of the names of the characters in the series are also borrowed from Poe's stories. Fortunato, for example, comes from "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846), a story that also serves as the basis for the conflict between him and Edgar. Fred Mendonça, a character from the second episode, is conceived as the Brazilian correspondent of Frederik, Baron of Metzengerstein, the protagonist of "Metzengerstein" (1832). Poe's "Berenice" (1835) inspires Berê, the title-character of the first episode. Finally, Lenora, Edgar's deceased wife,

addresses three of Poe's works: the short story "Eleonora" (1842) and the poems "Lenore" (1843) and "The Raven" (1845). In all of these three works, the death of a beautiful woman is the central theme, thus corroborating Poe's ideal that this "is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (2004, p. 680). In this sense, no wonder every *Contos do Edgar* episode resorts to this aesthetical principle as well, for they are named after the female character that dies in each one of them: "Berê", "Priscila", "Íris", "Cecília", and "Lenora".

Figure 1 – Opening title for "Berê"

Source: Screen capture of "Berê"

Other elements of the series that address Poe's works include the name of Fortunato's pest control company, *Nunca Mais*, which is the Portuguese translation of "never more", the refrain in "The Raven", and the fact that Edgar is often visited by a dove tapping at the window, which serves as an urban reimagination of the raven from the poem in a Brazilian context. Taking all of these references into consideration, we notice that they dialogue with Poe's works on varying degrees, for some of them are more explicit than others. In addition to this, the viewer's level of involvement and familiarity with Poe's stories also plays an important role in the establishment of links and relations between the series and the works they are based on. In her *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders states that adapting and appropriating "are in many respects a sub-section of the over-arching practice of intertextuality" (2006, p. 17). As she points out, these practices, although distinct, often intersect and interrelate. According to her, an adaptation "signals a relationship with an informing sourcetext or original" (ibid., p. 26). As for appropriation, it "frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the

informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain. […] But the appropriated text or texts are not always as clearly signalled or acknowledged as in the adaptive process" (SANDERS, 2006, p. 26). Based on her propositions, it seems coherent to refer to *Contos do Edgar* as an adaptation, for the series openly points to the works of Poe as its source texts. However, at the same time, by transposing his stories to a Brazilian contemporary context in an audiovisual medium, it also suggests a different kind of approach to adaptation that cannot be ignored and must, therefore, be addressed.

Discussing how narratives have evolved and adapted throughout the centuries, Hutcheon states that sometimes "stories travel to different cultures and different media" (2013, p. 31). The reasons for that are varied, but just like biological adaptation, stories usually evolve as means of survival or of finding conditions that are more favorable in other contexts. Thinking of the different modes of engagement and the variety of media at our disposal nowadays, adapting stories geographically is both economically and culturally appealing. As Hutcheon (ibid., p. 30) puts it,

> Book publishers produce new editions of adapted literary works to coincide with the film version and invariably put photos of the movie's actors or scenes on the cover. General economic issues, such as the financing and distribution of different media and art forms, must be considered in any general theorizing of adaptation. To appeal to a global market or even a very particular one, a television series or a stage musical may have to alter the cultural, regional, or historical specifics of the text being adapted.

At the time of *Contos do Edgar* original airing, FOX Brazil also announced the broadcasting of *The Following* (2013-2015), an American crime drama television series that borrows elements from Poe's stories. Both series were marketed as a double dose of Poe on TV, thus teasing the viewers that were already acquainted with the writer's works. In addition to this, as the creators of *Contos do Edgar* have stated in the 2013 interview, the choice for transposing Poe's stories to contemporary São Paulo took into consideration the commercial viability for the production of the series and the fact that both Hirschhorn and Morelli knew how to best exploit the city, for they lived in it. According to them, turning Berenice into a singer and Metzengerstein's castle into an auto repair shop were some of the ways they found to make the series original and to deviate from the common settings of previous adaptations of Poe's works. The creators' struggle for originality also resulted in Edgar being conceived as a pest exterminator. The character was initially supposed to be a police investigator, but the idea was soon discarded for its lack of novelty in cinema and TV. As a result, turning the protagonist into a pest exterminator allowed the series to have a connection link between the episodes, for, having such an occupation, Edgar could wander around the city and witness the different stories

presented in the episodes. At the same time, revolving the plot around the working routine in a pest control company was the way the producers found to deal with the theme of death through a popular approach.

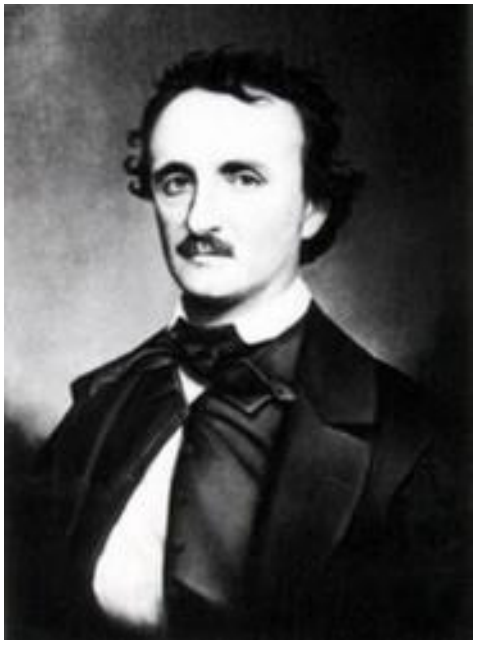
Different scholars have proposed definitions for this kind of adaptation that attempts to update a source text to a context closer to its target audience. In his *Palimpsests,* Gérard Genette employs the term *transtextuality* to refer to "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (1997, p. 1). According to his taxonomy, intertextuality is one possible manifestation of transtextuality, i.e., of the relationship between one text and another. In this sense, he distinguishes *intertextuality*, "the actual presence of one text within another" (ibid., p. 2), often manifested through quoting, plagiarism, or allusion, from *hypertextuality*, which he defines as "any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (ibid., p. 5). One of the possible manifestations of hypertextuality is *proximization*, a term he employs to refer to those cases in which "the hypertext transposes the diegesis of its hypotext to bring it up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms)" (1997, p. 320). In this perspective, *Contos do Edgar*, as a hypertext of Poe's stories, alludes to them by transposing their cultural context to one that is closer to that of Brazilian viewers.

However, more recently, Thomas Leitch has put Genette's taxonomy into question stating that "it does not adequately demarcate the frontiers of adaptation, the places where it shades off into allusion" (2007, p. 94). Based on that, Leitch proposes "a grammar of hypertextual relations as they shade off to the intertextual" (ibid., p. 95). Of all the categories he develops in his text, he identifies *adjustment* as the most common approach to adaptation, encompassing different strategies. Among these, that of *updating*, i.e., "to transpose the setting of a canonical classic to the present in order to show its universality while guaranteeing its relevance to the more immediate concerns of the target audience" (ibid., 100), seems to best fit the case of *Contos do Edgar*. In this sense, although Poe's canonical status may be called into question, there is no denying that his works have a strong popular appeal. As Kevin Hayes puts it, "In the United States, virtually all students read some Poe during their newscarrier years, and Poe, perhaps more than any other author taught in middle schools and high schools today, functions as a catalyst for teaching students the magic of reading" (2003, p. 2). Such popularity, therefore, is reinforced by the amount of Poe-inspired adaptations continuously produced since the twentieth century. As an example of updating, Leitch mentions Gil Junger's 1999 film *10 Things I Hate about You*, which sets Shakespeare's sixteenth century play *The Taming of the*

Shrew in a 1990s American high school. Among the many Shakespeare references in the film, the sisters Bianca and Katarina Stratford are named after the characters in the play, while their last name is a homage to the playwright's birthplace. As we previously highlighted, *Contos do Edgar* also refers to Poe's works through the names of characters and sets his stories in a new geographic, temporal and cultural context. Therefore, according to Leitch's taxonomy, the series can be also termed as an updating kind of adaptation.

One last particular aspect to consider in *Contos do Edgar* is the casting of Marcos de Andrade in the series' leading role. According to Hirschhorn and Morelli, Edgar was conceived as an alter ego of the American writer responsible for telling the stories he witnesses. In the series, the character not only performs this authorial role by reporting what he sees to Fortunato and by introducing scenes of the episodes with his voice-overs, but he also physically resembles Edgar Allan Poe, as the images below suggest:

Figure 2 – Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe



Source: Goodreads

Figure 3 – Marcos de Andrade as Edgar

Source: FOX Brazil / Promo

In this respect, anyone familiar with the image of Edgar Allan Poe, which usually illustrates editions of his writings or anthologies of American literature, may identify traces of the author in Marcos de Andrade's portrayal of Edgar. The series also reinforces these connections by constantly presenting pictures of Poe in the episodes, just as if they were a reminder of this authorial figure behind it. In his thought-provoking essay "Literature and Film", Gerald Mast points out how the casting of famous actors and actresses for audiovisual works influence their reception. From the example of Humphrey Bogart's role as Harry "Steve" Morgan in the 1944 film adaptation of Ernest Hemmingway's *To Have and Have Not* (1937),

Mast states that Bogart is “one of the great archetypes of twentieth-century culture, more familiar spiritually (and not just facially) to the citizens of our planet than all the Nick Adamses, Nick Carraways, Sutpens, Marlowes, Marcels, even Kurtzes and Gatsbys put together” (1982, p. 283). In this respect, Mast argues that Bogart, just like Hemingway’s novel, is a “text”, for he functions as “a mask, an archetype, a persona, a symbol of human behavior that will last, like our notions of Oedipus, and Achilles, and Hector, as long as the physical material that is capable of transmitting that mask” (ibid., p. 284). Similarly, Jason Mittell, when discussing characters in television narratives, states that “actors serve as sites of intertextuality, merging viewer memories of previous characters and knowledge about off-screen lives to color our understanding of a role” (2015, p. 122). In serialized narratives such as *Contos do Edgar*, this intertextuality is reinforced by the fact that our engagement with the series is stretched over time, for the episodes are aired on a weekly basis. Therefore, although Marcos de Andrade is not considered a movie or a TV star, his performance in the series ends up establishing an intertextual dialogue as well, for both his physical features and his role address the image of Edgar Allan Poe.

2.2 Television narratives

Discussions on television narratives are often limited to the features they share with the film medium. As audiovisual media, both tell stories through moving images and make use of photography, editing, sound, and staging as some of their technical means. However, TV and cinema also “diverge from each other regarding plot structure and viewer engagement” (MITTELL, 2007, p. 156). Unfortunately, these differences have long been ignored by many critics and scholars, and, as a result, television has hardly been analyzed and thought of on its own terms. Part of this avoidance in tackling the characteristics of the medium rely on the common perception that the stories it tells are simplistic, usually marked by formulaic and repetitive motifs that, due to their easy comprehension, demand no particular attention. Still, a closer look at TV narratives reveals how they challenge thematic and structural conventions by developing stories through multiple plot lines and a variety of characters and situations that need to be accommodated in strict time limits usually interrupted by commercials, weekly gaps, and seasons breaks – and still be able to engage viewers. Based on that, these peculiarities should be enough for us to make an argument for the approaching of television on its own format. In this respect, considering that we are dealing with a TV miniseries in this work, this section will address the main characteristics of this medium regarding the ways it organizes and

structures stories within its constraints and how *Contos do Edgar* is conceived as both an episodic and serialized television narrative.

In *Storytelling in Film and Television* (2003), Kristin Thompson argues that TV, just like any other medium, is able to produce both bad and good art. Nonetheless, most television studies do not look at the aesthetics of the format. Among the many excuses behind such neglect, Thompson (ibid., p. 3) maps three main arguments as an attempt to understand this lack of critical attention to the good art that has sprung from television:

> There seem to be at least three general reasons for this dearth of close analysis. Some hold a lingering prejudice against taking television seriously as an art form. Alternatively, some scholars would subsume individual programs into the broader field of cultural production, encompassing many media. And third, many scholars have relied—extensively, I shall suggest—on the televisual "flow," or overall scheduling, rather than on single programs.

As a young medium, television initially demanded the attention from scholars and critics of other areas to theorize its narrative format. However, cinema scholars, for instance, who deal with a medium that, just like television, tells stories through moving images and sound, paid little to no consideration to the new format and to the development of a methodology to analyze it. In addition to this, "Scholars of literature tended to dismiss television or to consider it an actual threat to cultural standards and to education" (ibid., p. 4). Consequently, television was at first seen as an inferior medium when compared to literature, the visual arts, and cinema, for example, so that most of the academic writings on it initially leaned towards a derogatory and often biased approach to it. In this respect, Thompson argues that these degrading judgments on television were also reinforced by the fact that cinema, as a young form as well, struggled to establish itself within the academy and to be noticed as a distinctive art form, so that any ties with more popular media such as TV could affect its recognition among scholars. Besides that, by the 1970s, with the emergence of the field of cultural studies, television, when approached by critics and academics, was not discussed for its distinctive formal qualities, but for its impact on culture and society, and these debates often dealt with TV alongside other media.

The last and most prominent challenge for the aesthetic analysis of the television format in the twentieth century was the idea of flow. It was proposed in 1974 by cultural critic Raymond Williams and, according to Thompson (2003, p. 6), "most basically means the scheduling of programs and the advertising breaks within and between them considered as a continuum. (The term *flow* is not actually used within the television industry.) The result is intended to keep the viewer tuned to a single station". Although certainly a characteristic of television, the idea of flow is misleading for the understanding of the medium's mechanics.

First and foremost, the scheduling of advertising and breaks in the content conveyed is not exclusive to TV. As Thompson (2003, p. 7) remarks, "since at least the nineteenth century, several popular entertainment forms had juxtaposed small units, often including advertisements: serial novels, music hall shows, and fiction magazines, for instance". Williams' idea, however, suggests that the flow influences the way the viewer receives the television content in the sense that these breaks are interpreted as parts of the program one is watching. Such an idea is hard to maintain, for what the commercial intervals present has usually nothing to do with the content of the TV show being broadcast. Yet, virtually every viewer distinguishes the boundaries between the show he is watching and the interval breaks. Most of the time, they are understood as moments in which one can go to the toilet or prepare a fast meal without having to miss any part of the show. The influence of these intervals, as we will discuss in this section, is actually more attached to the structure of television narratives, for the creators of TV content have to take into consideration that their stories will have to be interrupted a specific number of times that varies according to the show's duration, so that these narratives are strategically structured with these breaks in mind. Yet, for the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century, the concept of flow has been largely regarded as the feature that distinguishes television from other media:

> Perhaps scholars embraced the idea of flow because it provided a convenient solution to the problem they wanted to answer in order to define their new field of study: What is the specificity of the television medium? Perhaps assuming simply that television narrative derived directly from traditional drama and film, they dismissed the idea that the medium's specificity could be found by studying individual programs. (THOMPSON, 2003, p. 8)

Thinking of television in terms of flow not only underestimates the viewer's role in the way he receives TV content, but also often overlooks the variety of programs broadcast and how they present their own peculiarities. As the medium developed and new technologies affected it, the viewer gained continuous autonomy on how he receives and responds to the flow. The remote control and the rise and popularity of cable networks, for example, expanded the possibilities of TV entertainment and allowed viewers to easily switch among channels. These changes consequently multiplied the segments of programming one has access to when watching television. As a result, the infinite number of viewing strips, i.e., "units of television created by viewers switching among channels" (ibid., p. 10), made it even harder to analyze television overall. Based on that, Thompson proposes that the theoretical approaches to the TV format should concentrate on specific programs as a means to understand how it differentiates

from other media. In this sense, she opts for a comparative procedure and contrasts between television and film modes of storytelling to highlight the specificities of the former.

The closest correspondent in film that Thompson finds to analyze mainstream commercial TV fiction is classical Hollywood cinema. As she puts it, many of Hollywood norms for telling straightforward and easily comprehensible stories, especially those from its so-called Golden Age – which comprises films before the 1960s –, were adapted to the TV medium as a way to produce entertaining and unified stories. The author describes this classical mode of storytelling as follows:

> Hollywood favors unified narratives, which means most fundamentally that a cause should lead to an effect and that effect in turn should become a cause, for another effect, in an unbroken chain across the film. That is not to say that each effect follows immediately from its cause. On the contrary, one of the main sources of clarity and forward impetus in a plot is the "dangling cause," information or action which leads to no effect or resolution until later in the film. (THOMPSON, 1999, p. 12)

As we can see, at the basis of these narrative conventions are Aristotelian principles of unity, which demands stories to have beginnings, middles, and ends, and the idea of causality, according to which events are organized in a sense that one can lead to the other. Part of this narrative unity and clarity is obtained through the sense that events have to be motivated, i.e., the information provided and presented must interfere somehow in the development of the story, even if it is conceived as a dangling cause, a narrative line that is temporarily suspended. In the beginning of "Berê", the first episode of *Contos do Edgar*, for example, as Edgar and Fortunato spread rattraps around Dona Ivonete's club, Cícero borrows Edgar's pliers. Although this scene may seem ordinary and irrelevant to the unfolding of the events, it illustrates how the notion of motivation is applied in the episode, for Edgar's pliers are the tool Cícero will eventually use to remove Berê's teeth. In addition to this, considering that Fortunato saw Edgar lending his pliers to Cícero, this scene ends up providing more credibility to Edgar's report of the events he claims to have witnessed in the episode. In this respect, motivation not only helps establishing Aristotle's idea of plot unity, but it also recalls Poe's principle that the events of a story have to be somehow connected to its preconceived effect.

Another narrative principle employed by Hollywood cinema and adapted to television is what Thompson calls the *goal-oriented protagonist*. In audiovisual works, the characters' traits usually move stories forward through their actions and abilities and, therefore, delineates the main plotline, while other chains of events simultaneously unfold. According to Thompson, it is very common for Hollywood cinema to have a double plotline. As she puts it, "romance is central to nearly all Hollywood films, and typically one line of action involves a romance, while

the other concerns some other goal of the protagonist. These two goals are usually causally linked" (THOMPSON, 2001, p. 22-23). Based on that, we could argue that *Contos do Edgar* also adapts the idea of the goal-oriented protagonist, since, from the very first episode, we know that Edgar seeks revenge on Fortunato. In this sense, their work routine presented in every episode could be understood as secondary plotlines causally connected to Edgar's main goal, since his work with Fortunato provides a chance for him to get closer to his enemy and elaborate on his revenge plan. However, the series, as we will discuss later, inverts the logic of these plotlines, for every episode presents the main characters' work routine as a primary storyline, while Edgar's plot to take revenge on Fortunato, although being his main goal, is only hinted at. Other devices TV borrowed from Hollywood in order to facilitate our comprehension of the story presented and causally connect the scenes as they succeed each other include *dialogue hooks*, "a line spoken at the end of one scene that prepares us for what happens next" (ibid., p. 24), *deadlines*, "a device that often serves to build suspense" (ibid.) in the sense that the viewer knows how much time the characters have to complete an action in the storyworld, and *motifs*, which are visual indications that remind us of the importance of specific elements to the unfolding of actions and causes.

As has been pointed out here based on Thompson's arguments, film and television storytelling share similar narrative devices, but it was only recently that scholars focused on the format and aesthetics of the latter. Prior to these recent studies, much of the theoretical work on TV narratives came from the manuals on how to write teleplays, the scripts for television programs. As Thompson remarks, "Although such manuals are certainly not high-level theory, on a practical level they can tell us much about the aesthetic norms of commercial television. They often lay out primary conventions very explicitly" (2001, p. 36). In these handbooks, just like the ones devoted to Hollywood cinema, Aristotelian principles are fundamental on the way a narrative is structured. Evan S. Smith, in his *Writing Television Sitcoms*, for example, states that "a *beginning* introduces a complication to a character's life, launching the story. The *middle* section presents developing action, a series of *revolutions* and *discoveries*, which drives the story forward. The *end* resolves the story conflict, often through a reversal of fortune for the main character" (SMITH, 1999, p. 93). When transposed to television, however, these principles need to be adjusted to the medium's constraints, especially those regarding the screen time available. While the length of a feature film may be between 80 to more than 180 minutes, for instance, half-hour TV shows are limited to 22 to 24 minutes, and one-hour programs last for about 45 minutes, as the remaining time is devoted to commercials. Consequently, most of TV narratives follow an act structure, so that an episode is divided into two or more parts that

usually end with a cliffhanger, so that viewers will remain engaged and willing to keep on watching the show after every interval. Such constraints, however, often lead writers to a crossroads: on one hand, they may create a tendency for television to rely on formulaic and repetitive structures; on the other hand, they challenge writers to think of ways to creatively take advantage of these limitations and, thus, innovate on television storytelling. As we enter the twenty-first century, most of the successful narratives on TV have trodden this second way, thus getting a long-awaited attention from scholars to acknowledge their merits as artworks and particular narrative structure.

From the examples of American TV shows from the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), *The Wire* (2002-2008), and *Lost* (2004-2010), among others, Jason Mittell (2015) states that new possibilities of television storytelling have emerged in the last two decades. Some of these changes include the blurring of the lines between the episodic and serialized conventional narratives, the way these shows are distributed, and the viewers' role and expectations when receiving them. They have been so influential that, although the majority of the programs on TV today still resort to the traditional approaches in the way they tell stories, these new narrative developments have become popular and widespread, thus highlighting that innovative shows can thrive critically and economically. Taking Mittell's argument and the purpose of this work into consideration, *Contos do Edgar*, as we have previously mentioned, presents characteristics of both episodic and serialized storytelling. Therefore, it is important to define these two narrative formats before we discuss the ways in which they overlap in the miniseries. According to Mittell,

> The main structural difference between episodic and serial narratives is the status of events at the end of a given episode. Serial programs refuse full resolution of plots, typically ending episodes with an unresolved cliffhanger designed to stimulate viewers to tune in for the next episode. When serial storylines do resolve, they are often replaced with even more suspenseful or engrossing narrative enigmas to keep viewers watching. In contrast, episodic programs typically wrap-up major plot points by the end of each episode, enabling them to be viewed in any order. Core narrative conflicts that define the series usually remain across episodes […] but the particular plots that such situations create are introduced and wrapped up within the confines of a single episode. A mixture of serial and episodic forms results in narrative arcs, multi-episode plotlines that run across a series, but eventually are resolved. (2007, p. 164-165)

In light of these two conventional narrative formats, and the way recent programs have redefined them, Mittell coins the expression *narrative complexity* to address these innovations on TV storytelling. He proposes this concept as a new *narrational mode*, as introduced by David Bordwell in his analysis of the film medium to refer to the "distinct set of norms of narrational

construction and comprehension" (BORDWELL, 1985, p. 155). However, aiming to treat television structure on its own terms and to develop a specific vocabulary for the analysis of the medium, Mittell attempts to distance his approach from cross-media comparisons as much as possible. In this sense, he initially borrows the all-encompassing idea of poetics, which he defines "as a focus on the specific ways that texts make meaning, concerned with formal aspects of media more than issues of cultural forces" (MITTELL, 2015, p. 5), to deal with the narrative format of television. He acknowledges that such an approach is very similar to that of Narratology, but he opts to invest on poetics as a way to not limit himself to the strict textual analysis most narratologists usually do. Likewise, this thesis assumes that Narratology is of no use for our interpretation of the works analyzed if we lose track of how the form of literary and audiovisual media influence the way they convey content and how we understand it. For Mittell, his approach to poetics "is influenced by a model of cultural circulation, in which practices of the television industry, audiences, critics, and creators all work to shape storytelling practices, and thus questions about form are not restricted to the realm of the text but deeply connected to contexts" (ibid.). Therefore, it is both the formal structure and the cultural practices of contemporary television that shape narrative complexity, which he defines as follows:

> At its most basic level, narrative complexity redefines episodic forms under the influence of serial narration — not necessarily a complete merger of episodic and serial forms but a shifting balance. Rejecting the need for plot closure within every episode that typifies conventional episodic form, narrative complexity foregrounds ongoing stories across a range of genres. Complex television employs a range of serial techniques, with the underlying assumption that a series is a cumulative narrative that builds over time, rather than resetting back to a steady-state equilibrium at the end of every episode. (ibid., p. 18)

In *Contos do Edgar*, every episode focuses on the main characters' work as pest exterminators at a specific house or establishment and on the tragic story of that place. In this sense, the narrative employs a structure typical of episodic shows, for each episode introduces a new place, new characters, and a new fateful story surrounding them, which is witnessed or learned by Edgar and then reported to Fortuanto. That way, the plot revolving around the lives of the people who hire the services of Nunca Mais pest control company is presented, from its exposition to its outcome, in a single episode, even if the events last for a few days or weeks in the story. However, the show also employs a serialized storytelling that unfolds throughout the sequence of the episodes. According to Mittell (ibid., p.22), there are four main constituent elements in serial narratives: storyworld, characters, events, and temporality. If we focus on these components individually, even episodic narratives are somehow serialized, for they often maintain a set of characters and a storyworld across episodes. Yet, our understanding of serial

programs is usually attached to their events and how they accumulate and reflect on the fixed characters and storyworld as the episodes succeed each other:

> Programs whose narrative events do accumulate serially usually articulate this buildup through the memories of characters — people reference previous occurrences such as a romantic connection or personal discovery, expressing continuity through dialogue and character actions […] A challenge for serial television is conveying consistent norms for how much narrative continuity viewers should expect in a given program, which is generally established by the degree to which characters reference previous events and the storyworld displays the impacts — the more a series reminds us that narrative events have a cumulative impact, the more we expect strict continuity and consistency. (MITTELL, 2015, p. 23)

Every episode of *Contos do Edgar*, except the last one, ends with Edgar giving Fortunato his account of the events presented in the episode. The subject of Lenora, Edgar's missing wife, is constantly brought up, by either Edgar or Fortunato, in these final dialogues, and it is usually motivated by the fact that every story reported by Edgar introduces a woman that dies in it. However, the relationship between Lenora's disappearance and Edgar's revenge plan on Fortunato is not clear to the viewer, although it is implied. That way, by constantly referencing this unknown past event in the lives of the main characters, the series articulates a buildup, in the sense that every episode adds some information that is going to be relevant for our understanding of the outcome of the events. In the first episode, for example, we know that, although Edgar works with Fortunato, he intends to take revenge on him. In the second episode, Fortunato asks Edgar why he does not sell his abandoned bar, to which he replies that the place serves as a reminder of Lenora. In the third episode, Fortunato accidently finds a locket necklace with photos of Edgar and Lenora, and Edgar reacts aggressively to that. These events are all causally connected in the last episode: as Edgar feels guilty for murdering Lenora, which happened during an argument they had because Lenora's cat was intoxicated by some of the pesticide Fortunato had spread around their bar, Edgar decides to get rid of his guilt by blaming Fortunato for the death of his wife, and therefore he executes his revenge plan in his abandoned bar, so that it could go unnoticed. Therefore, these fragmented references to this tragic story presented at the end of every episode end up establishing the amount of narrative continuity the series provides viewers and, as such, function as what Mittell calls *narrative enigmas*, since they raise "uncertainty as to what precisely happened, who was involved, why they did what they did, how this came to be, or even whether it actually happened at all" (2015, p. 24-25). This narrative device serves as cliffhangers that aim to keep viewers engaged with the show as the season unfolds, given that the causal relations between these pieces of information are not so easily discernible in the first episodes.

As we can see, the shifting balance between episodic and serialized modes of storytelling achieved by the narrative structure of *Contos do Edgar* somehow provides an example of how an audiovisual work can transpose Piglia's thesis that "a short story always tells two stories" (2011, p. 63). If, as Piglia puts it, the short story writer faces the challenge of encoding a second, fragmented story in the interstices of a visible one, *Contos do Edgar* succeeds in that by inserting narrative enigmas at the end of every episode, thus alluding to a secondary plotline that only reveals itself completely in the season finale. The visible story, in the series, changes with every episode, for each one of them is set at a different place with new characters; the underlying one, on the other hand, is always the same, but it is only hinted at. If, in the classic short story, "The effect of surprise is produced when the end of the secret story appears on the surface" (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 63), in *Contos do Edgar*, the revealing of this second plotline establishes the causal relations of the fragmented pieces previously presented. As Mittell (2015, p. 26) remarks, the use of narrative enigmas influences the way viewers engage and receive the story, for they prompt "various forms of suspense, surprise, curiosity, and theorizing. All of these events highlight the importance of temporality in grounding seriality, as viewers and creators alike aim to manage the multiple time frames of narrative past, present, and future in making sense of ongoing storyworlds". Thus, the mode of storytelling in the series somehow creates narrative suspense, as proposed by Indrusiak (2009), for the parallel account of different events, told – or shown – both visibly and fragmentarily, ends up generating tension in the narrative. As we watch the events that led to the tragic fate of Berê in the first episode, for example, we also wonder why Edgar wants to take revenge on his coworker. Since this second story, differently from that of Berenice, is not elucidated in a single episode, we are induced to return to the series for the next piece of information about the past events revolving around the main characters. In this sense, the series creates a narrative tension, for, on one hand, we see Edgar and Fortunato working together; at the same time, however, we know Edgar is plotting a revenge plan against his partner, whose motivation is only alluded to.

In Chapter 1, we discussed how the length of a work of fiction influences the unity of the preconceived effect. For Poe, short prose narratives should be as long as they can be read in one sitting, for interruptions and external influences may interfere in the achievement of the effect. In television, however, presenting a story without interruption is practically impossible, for the narratives are most of the time interrupted by commercials, and, in the case of serialized narratives, by weekly and seasonal gaps. Based on that, I want to argue, based on *Contos do Edgar* and on television's new ways of storytelling, marked by the Mittell's concept of narrative complexity, that TV narratives still manage to maintain a unity of effect and generate the tension

characteristic of narrative suspense, even if they are interrupted. In fact, the changes experienced by the format in the last two decades actually expanded the ways effects and suspense can be generated and maintained.

When discussing the length of literary works in "The Philosophy of Composition", Poe states that "What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones – that is to say, of brief poetical effects" (2004, p. 677). From the example of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the author suggests that the poem is "a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions" (ibid., italics in the original). If we attempt to transpose this rationale to television series, we could argue that episodes, when approached individually, also evoke brief effects. In *Contos do Edgar*, although the storyline of the main characters is cumulative, in the sense that it is developed as the episodes succeed each other, every episode also presents a bounded storyline that begins and ends in it, which corresponds to the fateful story revolving around the establishment Edgar and Fortunato are working at. In this respect, this story is provided with the totality required for the achievement of a preconceived effect, which, in *Contos do Edgar*, corresponds to the tragic way a female character dies in every episode. As for the commercials that interrupt the narrative, Thompson (2001, p. 42) argues that, because of them, both half and one-hour television shows are structured following an act division. That way, every act contains its own climax and ends with hooks or cliffhangers, so that viewers will return to them after the interruption. In serialized narratives, the cliffhangers are commonly used at the end of every episode as well. Yet, as we have already discussed, viewers are aware that the content of the commercials is not a part of the show they are watching, for they do not influence the course of the events. In addition to this, considering that these breaks are usually short, they should not have a great impact in the way we engage and receive the story. Therefore, even when approached individually, episodes can provide a sense of unity and thus evoke a brief effect.

In this context of narrative complexity, it is also important to address the cultural changes that affected the ways television narratives are produced and consumed nowadays. First of all, the 1990s and early 2000s saw notable film directors and screenwriters migrating to the TV format, such as David Lynch (*Twin Peaks*), Alan Ball (*Six Feet Under* and *True Blood*), and J. J. Abrams (*Alias* and *Lost*). *Contos do Edgar* is no exception to this trend, since Pedro Morelli, the series' director and one of its creators, has also worked on feature films. As Mittell (2015, p. 32) highlights, part of the appeal generated by television relied on the medium's reputation as a place for producers, whereas film offered a more director-centered model. As a result of this, "Many television writers embrace the broader challenges and

possibilities for creativity in long-form series, as extended character depth, ongoing plotting, and episodic variations are simply unavailable options within a two-hour film" (MITTELL, 2015, p. 32). Such possibilities also demanded that these writers faced the constraints of television, which include not only structuring narratives in view of TV's strict time limits, but also having a group of actors available for a longer period. Considering this, no wonder many programs have long privileged episodic formats and stories with little or no continuity. However, the 1990s also saw the rising of commercial internet and the expanding of available channel networks, which significantly affected the number of viewers a program could attract. As one of the effects of these changes, "networks and channels have recognized that a consistent cult following of a small but dedicated audience can suffice to make a series economically viable." (ibid., p. 34), so that writers invested on means to keep their audience more engaged with their shows, thus paving the way for the innovation of storytelling typical of narrative complexity:

> The Internet's ubiquity has enabled fans to embrace a "collective intelligence" for information, interpretations, and discussions of complex narratives that invite participatory engagement […] Videogames, blogs, online role-playing sites, Twitter, fan websites, and other digital technologies enable viewers to extend their participation in these rich storyworlds beyond the one-way flow of traditional television viewing […] (MITTELL, 2015, p. 35)

This participatory culture incited by complex narratives and made possible with the internet also draws the viewers' attention to the series' form, in the sense that they are stimulated to focus on the narrative structure of their favorite shows. The weekly or seasonal gaps between episodes, which often end with enigmas or cliffhangers, propel active discussions among viewers on how a story will unfold based on what happened in the previous episodes. Consequently, "these programs convert many viewers into amateur narratologists, noting patterns and violations of convention, chronicling chronologies, and highlighting both inconsistencies and continuities across episodes and even series" (ibid., p. 52).

Other significant change that impacted television profoundly was the availability of TV-on-DVD sets and TV-on-demand via streaming, for it provided viewers with more control on how they consume – and how much they consume – television. As DVD box sets can compile a complete series, viewers are able to rewatch episodes as many times as they want to and according to their personal schedules. This new mode of consumption also emphasizes a series' sense of unity across episodes, as the causal relations between the events are more easily apprehensible when the viewer is in control of the pace with which he accompanies them. As Mittell (ibid., p. 38) summarizes,

> If most television storytelling for its first few decades was designed to be viewed in any order by a presumably distracted and undiscriminating viewer — a strategy that many programs and viewers challenged but was certainly encouraged by the industry — today's complex narratives are designed for a discerning viewer not only to pay close attention to once but to rewatch in order to notice the depth of references, to marvel at displays of craft and continuities, and to appreciate details that require the liberal use of pause and rewind.

When we take this facilitated availability of TV series into consideration, we can also rethink on how they can maintain the unity of effect and generate narrative suspense. If, as we stated earlier, *Contos do Edgar* manages to present a unified storyline in each of its episodes, having the whole season at our disposal enables us to keep up with the developing of the second storyline involving Edgar and Fortunato across episodes without any interruption – unless we pause the episodes willingly. Although *Contos do Edgar* was not officially released on DVD, the series was available for streaming on Netflix Brazil from 2015 to 2017 and can be currently watched on YouTube, since its episodes are uploaded in the accounts of different users. Considering that every episode lasts for about 25 minutes, watching the whole season takes as much time as a feature film, which may be easily done in one sitting. Therefore, as we binge-watch the episodes, we can see more clearly how two stories are simultaneously told in each of them, as well as connect the narrative enigmas between them, up until the point they come to the surface in the last episode. As every episode adds a bit of information regarding Edgar and Fortunato's past, they serve as cliffhangers that stimulate viewers to jump onto the next one, thus maintaining the tension created in the series and manipulating the viewer.

It should also be noted that, even taken individually, the episodes are still able to generate suspense with a simultaneous account of events. Whenever Edgar reports a story to Fortunato, his account of events usually suggests a supernatural explanation to the outcome of the story he tells – he claims, for instance, that Berê resurrected, when the scenes presented informed the viewer that she suffered from catalepsy. Fortunato, on the other hand, does not give much credibility to his partner's stories. However, the episodes of the series are introduced with voice-overs by Edgar, which end up framing the events presented, in the sense that what the camera shows is interpreted as a visual representation of what Edgar claims to have witnessed. Nonetheless, Edgar is absent in many of the scenes presented, thus invalidating the possibility of him eye-witnessing everything he reports. In addition to this, many of the subjective shots of the camera present not Edgar's point of view, but that of other characters. In this sense, a tension is established between Edgar's report and what the camera shows, for their accounts of events is usually conflicting. These elements of audiovisual storytelling will

be further developed in the next section, in which we approach film Narratology, and the way they generate tension will be further discussed in Chapter 3. What is important to highlight now is how television storytelling, with its shifting balance between episodic and serialized narration, innovates on the complexity with which a story can be narrated.

As we close this section, we hope to have succeeded not only in inserting *Contos do Edgar* within the realm of possibilities of television storytelling, but also in shedding some light on the narrative richness entailed by this medium that has, for long a time, struggled to have its legitimacy academically recognized. As we have shown, the specificities of television present a variety of constraints that other media do not, and writers and producers have continuously found ways to overcome them creatively, up to point that, sometimes, watching a single episode is not enough to comprehend the mechanics behind its aesthetics, thus demanding a more attentive eye both on the part of the viewer and that of the critic. Therefore, by approaching television through scholars that attempt to think of it on its own terms, we intend to have provided a small glimpse of some of the wide field of television narrative studies that remains scarcely explored.

2.3 Film Narratology

Anyone who attempts to deal with different media must be aware of, at least, the basic specificities of each medium analyzed. Fortunately, Narratology, the methodology we have appointed to guide our intertextual approach between Poe's short stories and *Contos do Edgar*, is "a flexible tool, useful for analyzing elements of storytelling common across a wide range of media" (MITTELL, 2007, p. 156). In Chapter 1, the last section discussed literary Narratology based on Bal's theorization of the field and focused on the narrative resources employed by Poe to generate and enhance tension in his stories, thus reinforcing his aesthetic principles examined in the previous sections. Now, since we have inserted *Contos do Edgar* in the field of adaptation studies and discussed the characteristics of the television format in which the series was conceived, it is time to address the principles of audiovisual narrativity, so that we can proceed with our comparative narratological analysis intended in this work. Therefore, this section will approach audiovisual narration based on Peter Verstraten's *Film Narratology* (2009) and the categories he develops in his work for the analysis of film language.

In his approach to film Narratology, Verstraten states that the recent development of new media, such as television and videogames, makes room for a rethinking of filmic narrativity, especially "because the new media have inherited much from cinema" (ibid., p. 5).

In this sense, he argues that the works of previous scholars, such as David Bordwell and Seymour Chatman, although authoritative in film studies, "remain overly faithful to structuralist narrative analysis, whereas the need has risen for a poststructuralist approach to the matter at hand" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 6). With these concerns in mind, Verstraten appoints Mieke Bal's work within Narratology as a starting point for his idea of film Narratology, for the revisions she constantly makes in her theory have allowed her to move away from a strictly structuralist approach, since Bal also deals with the reader's role and the different contexts in which texts circulate in her discussion. In addition to this, as Bal's definition of text does not limit itself to verbal narratives, she paves the way for authors to feed on her ideas and methodology and attempt to apply them to other fields – which is what Verstraten ends up doing regarding film studies. In this respect, since our approach to literary Narratology in this work is based on Bal's ideas, it seems suitable to resort to Verstraten's *Film Narratology* to analyze the audiovisual texts considered in this thesis, as he reworks Bal's theory to examine film techniques.

In his work, Verstraten also adopts the tripartite structure of text, story, and fabula to theorize on audiovisual narratives. According to him, "the filmic text consists of a series of moving images onscreen that are (usually) accompanied by sound. The story concerns the specific way in which plot elements are ordered. The fabula, finally, is the chronological reconstruction of the events according to causal logic" (ibid., p. 13). Differently from the literary narrator, which expresses itself through verbal language, the film narrator does so by presenting moving images. Just like the literary one, however, this expression always conveys a specific perspective or ideology. As Verstraten (ibid., p. 8) puts it, "Filmic showing is never a neutral narrative act […] but always already an interpretation by the visual narrator". As for focalization, on the other hand, the focalizor in film is primarily an external one, so that it coincides with the narrator. It can, however, focalize events and scenes internally by presenting the perspective of a character, in which case it is defined as a second focalizor embedded in the primary external focalization.

By presenting a series of moving images, Verstraten argues that film suggests the idea of unfolding time, situates scenes spatially, and triggers viewers to establish causal relations between the images presented in the order they are presented. In this sense, "The triad of time, space, and causality is therefore a basic ingredient of narratively inclined cinema" (ibid., p. 16). To achieve this narrative nature, film also heavily relies on editing, which is responsible for marking the transitions between shots. This feature distinguishes the majority of films from the early experiments in cinema, in which the moving images were usually shot with a static

camera, and actors would perform in front of it. Editing, on the other hand, "allows time to be manipulated, for instance by omitting a certain time span. Second, space can be framed (time and again). Third, causal relations can take shape because of the way in which images are juxtaposed" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 16). Based on these main principles of audiovisual narratives, Verstraten (ibid., p.22) states that their manipulation depends on the interaction between content and form:

> Formal features inevitably distort content as well. One could envisage an experiment in which a man is filmed as he is visiting a museum and looking around. If cheerful music accompanied the images, the pleasure of the visit would be emphasized. If ominous music was used, however, the viewer might get the idea that the man is being pursued. Thus, a formal adjustment can greatly influence the content of a film.

In addition to the choice of the music that accompanies the scenes, the camera positions, the order in which the shots are presented, or the objects focalized, for instance, can alter our perception of what is going on, for each of these decisions manipulates time, space, and causal relations in particular ways that end up influencing the interpretation of what we see. In this sense, the interaction between content and form in audiovisual language leads to the interaction between the narrative agent and the viewer in order for film to be understood as narrative. Classic cinema has trained us to identify some patterns and conventions of narration, such as the use of dialogue hooks and motifs discussed in the previous section, so that we can easily follow the story presented by the narrator and make sense of what is going on. However, "When this often psychologically motivated pattern becomes less obvious, the viewer can accept the invitation to put in some effort himself" (ibid., p. 25). Abstract or art films are examples of audiovisual narratives in which what the narrator presents – and the way it presents scenes – is usually not so straightforward for our comprehension, for they break with the conventions by which time, space, and causal relations are traditionally rendered in film language. Consequently, the interaction between the narrative agent and the viewer is emphasized, as well as our intertextual attitude as we attempt to fill in the blanks presented by films that deviate from the narrative patterns of the previous audiovisual works we know:

> When watching a film, we always set it off against a background of other films. In a movie theatre, we automatically bring an entire visual package as baggage. In short, we always watch intertextually. Concerning this issue, I concur with the view put forward by Julia Kristeva and Maaike Meijer that intertextuality is an interpretative frame that one can choose to employ. Intertextuality is a way of reading or viewing. It does not adhere to a prescribed trajectory and has an impromptu nature. The reason is that the viewer is not a part of the representation but its addressee. (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 26)

Although the narrator, both in literature and film, is the agent responsible for conveying a specific story, telling it by presenting sequences of moving images accompanied by sound is different from doing it by means of verbal languages. With these differences in mind, Verstraten resorts to André Gaudreault's concept of *monstration* to address this basic function of showing moving images attributed to the narrator in film. As he puts it, "monstration indicates a first level of narrativity and limits the level of narration to the so-called framed image or shot" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 56). One of the implications of this expository feature of film language is that shots often present too many details at once, so that the viewer's attention is offered a lot of elements to deal with in a short period of time. While Poe's narrator dedicated two long paragraphs to describe Ligeia's physical features and the beauty of her eyes, a filmic representation of her could be easily done in a single shot in which we see the character from head to toe, for example. The minute description we are given by the literary narrator of the story, focusing on one feature at a time, can, in film, be fully rendered by a single shot of Ligeia. In this sense, considering that "an average shot immediately reveals a whole range of details, cinema always involves implicit description: it reveals but does explicitly describe" (ibid., p. 52). One of the ways film can concentrate on more distinct qualities of a character or an object is by means of selective framing – even though every frame in film is selective, and, therefore, manipulative. A close-up on Ligeia's face, for instance, could be a way to direct the viewer's look to the wonder of her eyes. However, such a shot would be extremely detailed as well, for her mouth, nose, hair, and skin, for example, would probably compete with her eyes for the viewer's attention. At the same time, despite the fact that we would have more information about the looks of her eyes, we would not be able to tell what is so meaningful for the narrator in them, whether the color, the brightness, the shape, or their resemblance to someone else's, for instance. Therefore, the visual image may inform a lot more about the object focalized, but it conveys very little about the focalizor.

Another specificity of film is that it "automatically fleshes out mental images: the appearance of characters is immediately clear" (ibid., p. 55). Unlike literature, in which sometimes extensive paragraphs are necessary for readers to create a mental image of a character – an image that will probably differ from that of other readers, we might add –, film presents characters by showing them. As such, "The implicit filmic description characterizes itself by such an excess of visual details that specific qualities of those details are in danger of going unnoticed. It can also be seen as an invitation to the viewer to create his own emphasis" (ibid.). As we can see, both literature and film are able to describe. Nonetheless, given the differences between the two media and the resources each of them have at its disposal, this

feature is rendered contrastingly. Whereas literature describes characters, objects, and settings explicitly, by focusing on one aspect at a time, film does it implicitly, for its showing nature provides many elements at a time for the viewer to consider. Based on that, Mittell (2007) argues that film is limited in the way it describes what it presents, for the cinematic language cannot provide, for instance, adjectives and narrative voice, unless a character explicitly refers to a specific quality or voice-over narration is employed. In addition to this, "films are also limited as to how much of the diegetic world can be presented or withheld" (MITTEL, 2007, p. 160). According to him, this becomes more evident in the visual rendition of the setting:

> Filmmakers cannot choose to leave visual details ambiguous, however; if a film shows a scene, all elements in the storyworld must be included in the image or they will be assumed not to exist in the diegesis. A film must typically represent every last detail within the portion of the storyworld that is visually presented […] Thus a film's visual and auditory representation of a storyworld generally contains all of the elements that comprise that setting, while a novel will selectively present details that convey necessary narrative information and set an effective tone. (MITTELL, 2007, p. 161)

In his discussion of monstration, Verstraten (2009) proposes a theoretical distinction between mise en scène and cinematography, although they "are hardly strictly distinct aspects of film in practice" (ibid., p. 56). In this sense, the former deals with *what* or *who* is shown in a frame or shot, whereas the latter refers to *how* characters, objects, and settings are shown. Therefore, mise en scène "encompasses everything that has been constructed within the image frame, such as the choice of actors, their acting style and position in front of the camera, costumes and make-up, the scenery, the location, the lighting and the colours" (ibid. p. 56). Taking the choice of actors into consideration, the author argues that many film directors often cast actors whose physical traits somehow recall the character they are supposed to play, which consists in typecasting. We could easily add the casting of Marcos de Andrade in *Contos de Edgar* as an example of that, for, as previously discussed, he physically resembles Edgar Allan Poe. Consequently, "casting has a narrative impact" (ibid., p.57).

As for cinematography, or filmic writing, it "encompasses matters such as how we record the scene (on what material and at what speed); from what angle we film the scene and with what lenses; what optical effects we apply and how long we hold the shots" (ibid., p. 65). In this respect, many are the possibilities film directors can choose from when conceiving the way their audiovisual narratives are going to be shown, for each of them can result in a different effect. The choice of camera lenses, for instance, manipulates the perspective of an image by determining its level of focus: "If both foreground and background can be seen, the focus is either on both (deep focus), or on one (shallow focus), or it shifts from one to the other (rack

focus)" (ibid., p. 72). Framing, on the other hand, defines what is going to be part of the image and what will be left out of it, so that it is responsible for how much of the setting or of a group of characters is going to be shown, and that has a lot to do with the camera angles chosen to film scenes. The way a character is framed is also important, for "a character who often appears in close-ups tends to build up narrative 'credit': there is a good chance that his or her vision will become known to the viewer. However, the reverse is also possible" (ibid., p. 71). In this sense, the camera movements are also important to convey the reaction of the characters and the distance the narrator keeps from them. A movement towards the face of a character can highlight his facial expressions, whereas a movement backwards, distancing itself from a specific character, for example, may imply that the narrator does not intend to have his point of view attached to the character previously in focus. Other cinematographic choices that can create different effects in audiovisual narratives include the manipulation of color, such as the one made in Victor Fleming's 1939 *The Wizard of Oz* to highlight the wonders of Oz and our admiration with it, and the film stock in which images will be recorded, for it can determine their texture. Even though digital technologies are predominantly used in cinema nowadays, especially for recording, they also attempt to emulate some of the effects film stocks can create.

At a second level of audiovisual narrativity is editing, which refers to the ways different shots are organized in a film. According to Verstraten (2009, p. 79), editing disconnects the story from the fabula, for it allows film directors to manipulate time and space. To illustrate how this mechanism works and how it differs from monstration, he states the following:

> An uncut shot narrates in the present tense and temporality cannot be manipulated in any way other than by altering the image, for instance by slowing or accelerating the take (on the level of the framed image) or by showing the images backward. A cut, however, marks the length of a shot and makes it possible to revise the order of shots. Moreover, the frequency can be increased: a single shot can be repeated as often as necessary and a single event can be approached from all sorts of different angles. These options make it possible to cut to a shot of another space, a technique that forms the basis of cross-cutting: 'meanwhile, at the same time, somewhere else.' A cut can also transfer us to another temporal slot: 'at the same place, some hour earlier/later.' Finally, of course, a cut can do both: 'at another location, some hours earlier/later.'

With the possibility of intercutting different shots and create filmic sequences from them, the role of the narrator becomes more visible, for its interventions are more explicit. Cross-cutting enables audiovisual narratives to take place at different locations, and the events presented in each of them do not necessarily need to be ordered chronologically or unfold one after the other. Through editing, the development of a scene can be interrupted at any time, and its progress or outcome can be postponed as long as the narrator wants by inserting different shots in between the one that is interrupted. As a means to explore the possibilities of editing

without making narratives too hard for viewers' comprehension, cinema has established some conventions that help us make sense of the continuous sequence of different shots. In terms of space, for example, a shot that presents a street sign or a house from the outside before setting a scene in an internal space can indicate where characters are at the moment and situate them in the story. As for time, a technique such as dissolve between shots is commonly understood as a resource film can employ to indicate a temporal ellipsis.

As we have discussed so far, frames always limit what is presented on screen. However, "The importance of off-screen space cannot be underestimated" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 70). Through monstration, the camera may move around sets and provide a wider sense of space; through editing, shots can present the setting from different camera angles, also expanding our understanding of the setting and the limit of the frame. Yet, editing also allows us to integrate more deeply with audiovisual narratives whenever the point of view of characters is presented by the camera:

> Each of the characters in the film is looking at other characters and things: this is the diegetic level. The linking of two shots by means of the eyeline match, in which the reverse shot either shows the character looking or the thing he is looking at, is crucial for the filmic process of narrativization. In this way, the character can function as a stand-in for the viewer who seeks to identify with him or her. (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 87-88)

Although the camera may present a panoramic view of a setting, what it shows is restricted to a single perspective, unless a reverse shot or a cross-cutting to a different camera angle is employed. Because of that, "Since the late 1960s, film theoreticians have used the term *suture* to indicate that the limited frame of a shot is cancelled out by a reverse shot that considerably widens the camera's range" (ibid., p. 88-89). In this sense, reverse shots are largely used to compensate for missing perspectives in film. If a character is shown looking at another during a conversation, for instance, editing allows the scene to be cut by a shot in which the point of view of one of the characters is shown. However, this limited perspective creates a void, for the point of view of the other character is missing. Then, a reverse shot could compensate for this absence. Yet, at the same time, this reverse shot ends up creating a void once again, for showing one perspective at a time implies leaving the other(s) absent. As a result, "Suture refers to the ongoing process of supplementation in which each reverse shot presents itself as the answer to a missing perspective while at the same time summoning a new absence" (ibid., p. 89). No wonder this ongoing cycle of shots usually comes to a close only when words like "The End" or film credits are presented on screen to indicate that the narrative ends at that point.

In film, shots can be either impersonal or subjective. Sometimes, however, it is hard for the viewer to recognize if the focalization within a shot is external or internal. According to Verstraten, "there is no 'prohibition' on camera positions as long as the rule that every point-of-view shot requires a reverse shot is adhered to" (ibid., p. 97). In this sense, if, in a scene, the camera presents the interior of a room, for example, and a reverse shot presents a character on that same room, we can infer that the previous shot was a subjective one, in which the camera aligned with the perspective of that character; however, in the absence of that reverse shot, one cannot decide whether what he sees is impersonal or subjective. Films, however, have continuously presented variations of this reverse shot principle. It is very for common for murder mysteries, for example, to postpone a reverse shot and keep the identity of the murderer suspended until the end of the film. In addition to this, establishing shots, which usually provide a voyeuristic point of view in the sense that they "position characters within a certain space" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 100), may leave the viewer confused regarding their level of involvement in relation to the story. In the absence of a reverse shot, an establishing shot may be either situating characters in space or presenting the perspective of someone spying on them. As a result, this potentially secretive nature of the shot "generates apprehension and creates a desire for reverse shots" (ibid., p. 101) in order to clarify its status.

One of Verstraten's more enlightening ideas regarding film Narratology is his conception of the filmic narrator. According to him, "The main function of a filmic narrator is to show moving images (possibly with printed text) and to produce sound (possibly in the guise of spoken text)" (ibid., p. 7). Therefore, film narration is the result of the combination of a visual track and an auditive one. However, considering that both image and sound can each tell a particular story, Verstraten speaks of visual and auditive narrators and proposes that they do not operate on a hierarchical relation:

> The filmic narrator is the agent responsible for the interaction of two other types of narrators. The first type controls the auditive track, which contains external and internal voice-overs, dialogue, voices, music, and all other kinds of sound. […] Like the auditive narrator, the visual narrator is a subcategory of the filmic narrator. The visual narrator limits itself to the sequence of images and can be defined in relation to Gaudreault's terminology. It is Gardreault's *monstrator*, except that the visual narrator's domain also extends to the transitions between images. (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 130, italics in the original)

By conceiving an agent that mediates the relation between image and sound, Verstraten distances from Seymour Chatman's idea of the implied author, which refers to a theoretical agent responsible for the meaning and intention of a text, be it verbal or audiovisual. In his rationale, the implied author is projected by readers and viewers and serves as "the protector of

the context in which a novel or film is supposed to be read" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 128). However, considering that the contexts in which texts circulate are as varied as possible and, as such, pave the way for different meanings and interpretation, Verstraten casts the implied author aside and summons the filmic narrator instead, stating that it is not responsible for textual intention, but for the interaction between two narrators hierarchically inferior to it, the visual and the auditive, which operate on an equal level of importance. Therefore, "This interaction takes place on a sliding scale that runs from exact correlation between the auditive and visual tracks to the complete divergence of those tracks" (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 131). Based on this interplay between image and sound in filmic narratives, the author further elaborates on narrative resources such as voice-over, internal narration, and flashback.

A common example of the interaction between the auditive and visual tracks in film is the use of flashback to present past events in a story. When characters introduce them, the words they spoke usually allude to the time and place of the event they are about to remember. Triggered by this spoken narration, the next shot may consist of an attempt to visualize the narrative initiated by the auditive narrator. However, if a character starts telling something he experienced in the past, and the visual narrator attempts to render this event visually, it does not necessarily present the images through an internal point of view. In this sense, "even though the visual narrator in fact renders the perspective of the narrating character, the scenes shown do not coincide exactly with the character's perception" (ibid., p. 135). In *Contos do Edgar*, for example, the tragic stories of the establishments visited are often introduced by Edgar through voice-over; their visual representation, on the other hand, does not always coincide with his point of view. Based on that, the tension between the visual and auditive narrators, which Verstraten considers a distinction of film narratives, is highlighted, for each of them focalizes the same event through different perspectives: while the auditive track focalizes a past event internally, the visual track renders this internal narration externally. Verstraten further problematizes this clash between narrators by comparing the visual narrator to a sketch artist:

> The role of visual narrator can be compared to that of a police sketch artist. […] The sketch artist attempts to render the witness's verbal description visually. If the witness gives a false statement, in order to protect the real perpetrator, for instance, the sketch would automatically be incorrect. The sketch artist must comply with, and depends on, the witness, just as the visual narrator depends on the narrating character. It is not necessarily the case, however, that the visual narrator functions as a police sketch artist. That is one possible role that can be accorded to the visual narrator by the filmic narrator. A potential effect of that function may be to confirm the tension between the visual and auditive tracks: if words can lie and images can comply with untruthful words, where does the true version of events reside? (VERSTRATEN, 2009, p. 138)

As we can see, the filmic narrator manipulates the synchronization between the auditive and visual tracks. Verstraten (2009, p. 147) calls it an *audiovisual contract*. Addressing the example of the use of flashbacks in film again, this contract has made "quite usual to resort to the split principle of internal narration with external focalization on the visual track" (ibid., p. 135). However, flashback narration of a specific character can also count with internal focalization of the narrating character in the visual track, or even with embedded subjective shots of characters that are actually the object of narration, as long as these shots are consistent and coherent with the words of this character. Therefore, audiovisual narratives, through the manipulation of the filmic narrator, highlight the different ways image and sound can interact. Since both the auditive and the visual tracks are considered narrators, they are able to focalize events and characters internally or externally. Thus, as the filmic narrator negotiates between them, the focalization between the auditive and visual tracks can either coincide or not.

In this section, we attempted to provide an overview of the wide range of possibilities audiovisual narratives can resort to in order to tell stories. The basic principles of film Narratology proposed by Verstraten have been exposed as a means for us to understand how this hybrid medium works. The more specific ways the narrative techniques of film can be employed will be discussed in the next chapter, in our analysis of the episodes of *Contos do Edgar*. For now, keeping the aim of this thesis in mind, we hope to have succeeded at highlighting how important it is to know Narratology and the resources available to a particular medium for its formal analysis. By attempting to rework Bal's methodology and theorization, Verstraten shows us that film, just like literature, is a challenging medium for one to dissect. Nonetheless, the challenges both literary and audiovisual narratives pose are different, given their own specificities. Yet, the more we delve into them and into their mechanics, the more fascinating they become.

3. NARRATIVE SUSPENSE IN POE AND *CONTOS DO EDGAR*: an analysis

In this chapter, the narrative construction of the corpus of this thesis, which comprises the five episodes of *Contos do Edgar* and the seven short stories by Poe the TV series adapts, will be analyzed. Our intention is to highlight the narrative resources employed in both media to generate and enhance suspense, based on the categories proposed by Mieke Bal and Peter Verstraten discussed in the previous chapters. With this task in mind, this chapter is divided into five sections, each devoted to one episode of *Contos do Edgar* and to the short story(ies) it adapts. In each of these sections, the literary works are approached first, so that we can also emphasize how the series addresses the source texts it is based on. Through this analysis, we intend to corroborate the formal dialogue between these literary and audiovisual works, thus shedding some light on how different media, through their own specificities and resources, are able to adapt existing narrative principles and devices.

3.1 "BERENICE" AND "BERÊ"

3.1.1 "Berenice"

First published in 1835, "Berenice" is considered one of Poe's most appalling stories for its depiction of violence and brutality. At the time of its initial publication, readers were so shocked that Poe had to censor a passage of it in further printings. Unlike the majority of Poe's gothic tales, the narrator of the story has a name, Egaeus, who seeks to justify his actual state of mind by recollecting past events. The story opens with the narrator stating that misery presents itself in a variety of ways and compares its reach to that of a rainbow:

> Misery is manifold. The wretchedness of earth is multiform. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow, its hues are as various as the hues of that arch. – as distinct too, yet as intimately blended. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow! How is it that from beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness? – from the covenant of peace a simile of sorrow? But as, in ethics, evil is a consequence of good, so, in fact, out of joy is sorrow born. Either the memory of past bliss is the anguish of to-day, or the agonies which *are* have their origin in the ecstasies which *might have been*. (POE, 2004, p. 140-141, italics in the original)

From this first excerpt, we can already acknowledge that the story is told from an internal perspective, since the narrator is part of the world narrated; therefore, he is a character-bound narrator (CN). Although he initially attempts to conceive evil as a consequence of good through the comparison between misery and the rainbow, his choice of verbs and their

respective tenses puts into question if there was ever any good in his actions. As he describes his current agonies, i.e., the evil he alludes to, he uses the present tense (*are*), and as he approaches the good that generated such evil, i.e., his memories of "past bliss", he shifts to a conditional construction (*might have been*). This shift suggests that what Egaeus believes to be the cause of his sorrow actually inhabits the realm of possibility. No wonder such verbs are italicized in the passage.

Egaeus' reliability is constantly called into question as his account unfolds. As he addresses his lineage, he calls it a "race of visionaries". Such inherited quality affects his perception of the material world that surrounds him, up to the point that he seems unable to distinguish what he thinks from what he sees: "The realities of the world affected me as visions, and as visions only, while the wild ideas of the land of dreams became, in turn, – not the material of my everyday existence – but in very deed that existence utterly and solely in itself" (POE, 2004, p. 141). The character's mental health reinforces his disturbed mind, since the narrator suffers from monomania, a condition that has occupied his mind, for long periods, with "the contemplation of even the most ordinary objects of the universe" (POE, 2004, p. 142).

As a counterpart of his contemplative and quiet nature, the narrator suddenly introduces, in the beginning of the second section of the story, Berenice, a cousin that grew in the same house as his. As Arthur A. Brown puts it, thinking of how the reader becomes acquainted with the story's title character, "Berenice is literally brought into existence out of a blank space" (1996, p. 453). Unlike Egaeus, who spent most of his time in the library chamber buried in all sorts of books, Berenice is described as an active person, usually roaming around full of energy. As he recalls her image, he shifts the narration from past to present: "Berenice! – I call upon her name – Berenice! – and from the gray ruins of memory a thousand tumultuous recollections are startled at the sound! Ah! vividly is her image before me now, as in the early days of her light-heartedness and joy" (POE, 2004, p. 142). In addition to the words employed in this brief excerpt, it is implicit, then, that by the time of Egaeus' narration, Berenice is gone. However, as abruptly as the narration shifts to present, it is once again set in the past, so that the reader may not wonder how come the recollection of Berenice's vivid and joyful spirit is addressed as part of the "gray ruins of memory". Although the narrator employs different verb tenses in his narration, the period of time covered by the story is never mentioned. We know that Egaeus and Berenice grew together, but the amount of years of their relationship is absent from the account. Yet, we also have no idea of the distance between the time of the narration and that of the events told, which reinforces the unreliability of the narrator and of his memory.

Berenice, like the narrator, suffered from a disease; unlike him, however, hers was not a mental, but a physical one. Her epilepsy would constantly put her in a trance state, so that her physical expression would be similar to that of a dead person, and her trance would usually be interrupted in an abrupt way. The narrator, for the most part of the story, avoids detailing his relationship with his cousin. Instead, he details his own monomania, thus dedicating long paragraphs to his contemplative behavior. In these passages, therefore, he makes use of deceleration in his narration. On the other hand, there is no indication of how many years his account of events covers, so that Egaeus also accelerates the time of narration in relation to the events it comprises. Thus, for the descriptive passages, the rhythm of narration is that of pause, whereas the span covered by the events narrated could be classified as summary, for they certainly took more time on the level of the fabula (TF) than on the level of the story (TS).

On the few passages in which the narrator describes his feelings for Berenice, he says he had never loved her, but constantly felt deeply sorry for her condition in his few moments of lucidity; nonetheless, he proposes to her. It should be also noted that it is only after the reader knows that Berenice is sick that Egaeus provides a more detailed description of her traits, for he affirms the disease changed her physical frame:

> I sat, (and sat, as I thought, alone) in the inner apartment of the library. But uplifting my eyes I saw that Berenice stood before me.
>
> Was it my own excited imagination – or the misty influence of the atmosphere – or the uncertain twilight of the chamber – or the gray draperies which fell around her figure – that caused in it so vacillating and indistinct an outline? I could not tell. She spoke no word, and I – not for worlds could I have uttered a syllable. […]
>
> The forehead was high, and very pale, and singularly placid; and the once jetty hair fell partially over it, and overshadowed the hollow temples with innumerable ringlets now of a vivid yellow, and jarring discordantly, in their fantastic character, with the reigning melancholy of the countenance. The eyes were lifeless, and lusterless, and seemingly pupil-less, and I shrank involuntarily from their glassy stare to the contemplation of the thin and shrunken lips. They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, *the teeth* of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. (POE, 2004, p.144-5)

It is evident that the narrator is unable to tell whether this meeting with Berenice actually took place or happened just in his mind. Along the story, he never sets himself outside the library chamber, thus reinforcing his reclusive nature. As the narrator suggests, the library's environment itself could have influenced the vision of Berenice he describes in the passage. Also, Egaeus's description of Berenice's countenance seems to fit that of a dead person, for she suddenly appears to him pale, with her lips shrunken and her eyes lifeless. Just before this more detailed depiction of hers, the narrator suggests that Berenice is actually a disembodied image that, similar to the sudden way she is introduced in the story, constantly appears to him just like

a ghost – for she "flits" by his eyes "not as the living and breathing Berenice, but as the Berenice of a dream" (POE, 2004, p. 144) – and suddenly departs from the chamber.

Following this encounter with Berenice in the library, the narrator's monomania leaves him extremely obsessed with her teeth, which end up occupying all of his thoughts after that event. As a result, he seems unable to distinguish anything from the external world, for the contemplation of the teeth, even if just a product of his mind, is his sole concern. As he recalls, "They – they alone were present to the mental eye, and they, in their sole individuality, became the essence of my mental life. I held them in every light. I turned them in every attitude. I surveyed their characteristics. I dwelt upon their peculiarities. I pondered upon their conformation" (POE, 2004, p. 145). Although Egaeus describes his obsession with the teeth as the result of his disturbed mind, his actions are depicted as if he actually possesses them. As he later concludes, it is only through this possession that he may have peace of mind.

As the days pass by, the narrator does not leave the library, for he finds himself still absorbed in his dreams of Berenice's white teeth. One night, as he stands at the library doors, a maiden informs him that his cousin is dead and that the burial had already been prepared. Then, a break is introduced between paragraphs, and as the next one starts, Egaeus is still sitting in the library alone: "It seemed that I had newly awakened from a confused and exciting dream. I knew it was now midnight, and I was well aware that since the setting of the sun Berenice had been interred" (POE, 2004, p. 146-7). Although aware of his bride's death, the narrator avoids telling the reader his reaction to the news. All we know is that some time has elapsed since the maiden told him about Berenice's death and his waking up in the library. He then attempts to recall what happened in between these events, but fails: "But of that dreary period which intervened I had no positive – at least no definite comprehension. Yet its memory was replete with horror – horror more horrible from being vague, and terror more terrible from ambiguity" (POE, 2004, p. 147).

Unable to tell what happened since he took note of his cousin's death, he suddenly sees a little box on his table. As he stares at it, a feeling of horror invades him, but he has no actual explanation to it. In the meantime, a menial enters the library and tells Egaeus that, hearing a loud cry, the servants of the house got together and found that the Berenice's grave had been violated. As they approached the burial site, they saw the corpse was actually alive, and Berenice was still breathing, for her presumed death was actually a manifestation of her epilepsy. Staring at Egaeus, the menial points to his garments, which are muddy, and notices that his lord's hands carry the marks of human scratches. Egaeus reaction is to hold the little box he had just seen on his table, but he cannot open it. The story ends with the character

dropping the box on the floor, only to realize that it contained thirty-two human teeth, revealing the atrocity he committed against his cousin.

Therefore, in “Berenice”, Poe manages to manipulate the reader by having a mentally disturbed character in charge of the story’s narration. Since Egaeus is the only focalizor in the story – a character-bound focalizor (CF) –, the reader is unable to confront his account of events with the perspective of a different character. The narrator’s monomania leaves the reader constantly in doubt about the truthfulness of the events of the story, for one cannot tell whether they are the product of his mind or an occurrence in the external world. The vague depiction of Berenice also calls into question the reliability of Egaeus’ account. As a result, the common reader can hardly anticipate the outcome of the story. On the other hand, there are brief indications that somehow hint at the story’s conclusion, thus highlighting how a second account of events is encoded within the first and most visible one. In the first paragraph, for example, the narrator alludes to the evil that, being a consequence of something originally good, led to his current sadness. Such allusion parallels his perception of Berenice, for he believes that her disease changed the physical frame of someone usually known for her active soul. In addition to this, in the beginning of the story, the hues of misery, as well as its reach, are compared to the hues of a rainbow and its long arch. As the narrator says, although distinct, these hues are “yet as intimately blended” (POE, 2004, p. 141). Based on that comparison, if we consider that the blending of the seven colors of the rainbow turns into white, we have a metaphor for Berenice’s “extremely white” teeth. Thus, out of the good of her smile, the narrator’s evil is born. The comparison that opens the story, therefore, is not random and serves as a motif that alludes to the tragic story about to unfold, which reinforces the impact of the preconceived effect.

It should be also noted that, as Egaeus calls upon Berenice’s name from the “gray ruins of his memory” – and does so by making use of the present tense –, he suggests that the character is already dead. However, as he dedicates long paragraphs to the description of his monomania, these early and fragmentary hints to the story’s outcome go unnoticed. Consequently, the deceleration employed in Egaeus’s account of his mental condition is counterbalanced by the acceleration employed in the last two paragraphs, which focus on the fact that Berenice was actually alive and on Egaeus’s realization that he violated her grave in order to possess her teeth, the objects of his monomania. This, along with the absence of temporal marks in the story, which could provide a sense of causality to the events narrated, ends up intensifying the surprise effect the story evokes on the reader.

3.1.2 "Berê"

In the first episode of the series, Edgar and Fortunato are called to deal with a rat infestation at a small nightclub in a run-down neighborhood of São Paulo. The episode opens with Cícero, who usually assists Dona Ivonete, the nightclub's owner, finding a split electric wire outside the club. He assumes the wire was gnawed by a rat, and suddenly notices something moving among trash bags. As he pushes the bags aside, he realizes there is a pipe behind them. At this point, the camera's external focalization shifts to an internal one, thus providing Cícero's point of view of the pipe. This internal shot is blurred, and as the camera approaches the pipe, the focalization shifts to an external point of view. Cícero then inserts his hand in the pipe and, to his surprise, takes what appears to be a human tooth out of it. The scene is followed by the episode's opening credits.

The next scene is set on the following day, with Edgar and Fortunato spreading rat baits outside the nightclub. Cícero borrows Edgar's pliers in order to fix the split electric wire, but he is interrupted by Dona Ivonete, who asks him to help her fix a dripping faucet. Before he leaves, Cícero invites Edgar and Fortunato to watch his cousin, Berenice, sing at the nightclub that night. When the two pest exterminators finish their job, they see a poster announcing Berenice's show at the nightclub. As Edgar stares at it, a voice-over of his can be heard, stating that he will tell the story of Berenice's tragic end:

> EDGAR: It was that day, behind the nightclub, that I saw her for the first time. Berê Bitoca. She was beautiful, except for a few flaws. I don't even know if I should, but I'll tell you the story of how Berê Bitoca turned and unturned into Berê Smile.[3] (my translation)

Edgar's voice-over is a good example of how the filmic narrator regulates the interaction between sound and image. As Verstraten (2009) argues, the auditive and visual narrators, although different, operate on an equal level, and their synchronization is regulated by the filmic narrator, which is hierarchically superior to them. Based on these propositions, the filmic narrator of the scene analyzed synchronizes an auditive track whose temporality does not coincide with the visual track that accompanies it, since the voice-over informs the viewer that the story about to be told has already happened, but what the viewer sees is a scene of Edgar before he even knew the tragic story of Berenice. Therefore, Edgar's voice-over is an indication

[3] From the original: "Foi naquele dia, lá atrás da boate mesmo, que eu vi ela pela primeira vez. Berê Bitoca. Era linda mesmo, a não ser por alguns defeitinhos. Eu nem sei se eu devia, mas eu vou te contar a história de como a Berê Bitoca virou e desvirou a Berê Sorriso.

that what we are seeing is actually part of a long flashback that attempts to tell a past event through his perspective.

Figure 4 – As Edgar looks at the poster, his first voice-over is introduced

Source: Screen capture of “Berê”

Another issue regarding the rendition of a flashback appointed by Verstraten refers to the fact that “It is quite usual to resort to the split principle of internal narration with external focalization on the visual track in flashback scenes” (2009, p. 135). In this sense, as Edgar’s voice-over indicates, the scenes presented relate to events the character probably witnessed, but the focalization of them correspond to his actual point of view only to some extent, since there are few internal shots that actually render his perspective. Whenever we see Edgar in a scene, the visual track is focalizing the scene either externally or from another character’s point of view. However, since the sequence of shots attempt to represent what he has seen or witnessed, as his voice-over suggests, its narration can be considered internal.

The next scene shows one of Berenice’s presentations at the nightclub. Although admired by the audience for her beauty and her singing, she is rejected by the people when she smiles at them, for her mouth is full of rotten teeth. As Cícero watches his cousin’s presentation, he eats a portion of nuts. At some point, one of the nuts he picks from his bowl is actually a human tooth. The next shot is an internal one, and we see the bowl of nuts from Cícero’s perspective. The internal shot is once again blurred, and the bowl is filled with human teeth instead of nuts. Angry due to the people’s reaction to Berenice’s smile, Cícero promises her they will go see a dentist the next day.

Figure 5 – Cícero's point of view of the bowl

Source: Screen capture of "Berê"

During their visit to the dentist, Cícero is obsessed with the dental prosthetics he sees at the clinic and decides he will pay for Berenice's dental implant. Berê worries about how her cousin will get the money, but, to her joy, he grants her he will find a way. In the next scene, Cícero counts all the money he has kept in an aluminum can. At the same time, he drinks a bottle of *cachaça* and, as he finishes it, he leaves it among other empty bottles near one of the rat baits, thus indicating he is a heavy-drinker. At night, Cícero roams around the cemetery nearby and breaks into the grave of a man whose service he attended earlier that day. As he approaches the corpse, Cícero removes the man's jewelry, which he intends to sell in order to have money to pay for Berenice's dental implant. The scenes at the cemetery are merged with the ones at the dental clinic: as Cícero struggles to remove the man's golden ring with Edgar's pliers, the dentist removes Berenice's rotten teeth.

Berê's surgery is successful, and her next show at the nightclub is met with great enthusiasm from the audience. This is the first presentation in which the viewer sees Edgar at the club at a night show; all of the previous scenes are not seen or witnessed by him, although they are supposedly the visual rendition of a story he is telling. After the show, Cícero approaches Berê holding a bottle of liquor, visibly drunk, and harasses her. She tries in vain to get rid of him. Obsessed with his cousin's teeth, Cícero asks her to bite him, and when she does it, she feels some pain in her teeth.

On another visit to the dentist, Berê finds out she got a mouth infection and that she needs to have her dental implant removed in order to treat it. Cícero explodes in fury at the possibility of having his cousin's teeth removed and prevents the dentist from treating her infection, even after he warns them it could develop into catalepsy. On the following days, Berê's condition gets worse, but Cícero insists on treating it by giving her painkillers, which prove ineffective. During her next presentation at the club, Berê interrupts her show, unable to keep singing because of the pain she feels in her teeth. She asks Cícero to take her to a hospital, but Dona Ivonete intervenes and insists that she finish her show. Berê agrees, but as she goes back on stage, she faints. Cícero attempts to reanimate her, but the scene blends directly into Berê's funeral, in which Cícero blames himself for her death, an information that is renderer through a voice-over of his. The next day, Edgar finishes his job at the nightclub and witnesses a depressed and silent Cícero. He approaches him and tells him he knows how he feels, but Cícero's reaction is to drink a shot and leave the bar.

In the next scene, Cícero is seen laying on the ground, having most certainly fallen drunk. He is awakened by Dona Ivonete, who tells him Berê is alive and that she had been presumed dead when, in fact, she suffered from catalepsy. Cícero, happy to hear the news, hugs Dona Ivonete. However, she also tells him that Berê's grave had been violated. Cícero's expression changes all of a sudden, and he is struck with horror. The next shot is an internal one, and the viewer sees Dona Ivonete through Cícero's perspective. The scene is once again blurred, and Ivonete, scared by his reaction, flees. The following shot is external, and Cícero, looking around him, finds evidence that trigger scenes of him roaming around the cemetery again. This time, however, we see him breaking into Berenice's grave and removing her teeth with Edgar's pliers. The scene ends with Cícero opening the aluminum can where he used to keep his money and finding it full of human teeth used in dental implants, thus acknowledging the atrocity he committed. As the camera distances from the scene, Edgar' narration is heard through a voice-over, and the next scene shows him and Fortunato discussing the events the visual and audio tracks have just presented:

> EDGAR: In cold blood, she woke up, but even then the guy went all the way. He plucked them one by one.
> FORTUNATO: I see... One by one, just like that, with the pliers?
> EDGAR: One by one, just like that, with my pliers.
> FORTUNATO: Oh, with your pliers.
> EDGAR: With the pliers I lent him.
> FORTUNATO: I see... and the woman is resurrected ... Hm.
> EDGAR: I'm telling you, Fortunato. That was it. I kept up with everything.
> FORTUNATO: You didn't keep up with anything, man. That's a likely story! What psychomaniac would do that to a woman?

> EDGAR: I don't know. I too think it's weird. Would you hurt a woman like that?[4] (my translation)

Here, the temporality of the audio track matches that of the visual track as soon as Edgar's voice-over turns into a dialogue with Fortunato and the next scene is set in their office. Although we assume the long flashback telling the tragic story of Berenice is an audiovisual rendition of Edgar's internal narration, since his voice-over frames the narrative told in flashback, his reliability is constantly called into question in the episode. First, as previously mentioned, the flashback comprises scenes which Edgar did not witness, such as Cícero and Berenice's visits to the dentist and the scenes in which Cícero wanders through the cemetery. Also, although the flashback scenes are an external focalization of Edgar's internal narration, most of the internal shots they eventually convey are actually Cícero's and not Edgar's.

In addition to this, if we consider the whole episode, Edgar and Fortunato's last dialogue shows more evidence of the inconsistencies in the rendition of the story. When Fortunato dubiously implies that, based on Edgar's story, Berenice came back from the dead, Edgar does not deny this supernatural hypothesis; he actually confirms it, saying it happened that way, since he claims to have witnessed everything. As the flashback showed, however, there is a logical explanation for Berenice's reanimation, for she suffered from catalepsy, and Edgar did not witness all of the events. Therefore, even if Fortunato saw Edgar lending his pliers to Cícero, a fact that could reinforce the veracity of the events told by his partner, their supernatural explanation does not convince him that it actually happened that way. It should be also noted that, although both Edgar and Fortunato were called to deal with the rat infestation at the nightclub, only Edgar was aware of the tragic story that took place there.

Lastly, the long flashback that constitutes the episode presents a few hints of Cícero's obsession with teeth, somehow inciting the horrible outcome of the story. In the episode's first scene, for instance, we see him removing a tooth out of a pipe. During one of Berê's shows, his bowl of nuts turns into a bowl of teeth as soon as the camera assumes an internal point of view.

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[4] From the original:
EDGAR: A sangue frio, ela acordou, mas mesmo assim o cara foi até o fim. Arrancou um por um.
FORTUNATO: Sei... Um por um, assim, com o alicate?
EDGAR: Um por um, assim, com o meu alicate.
FORTUNATO: Ah, com o teu alicate.
EDGAR: Com o alicate que emprestei pra ele.
FORTUNATO: Sei... e a mulher ressuscita... Hm.
EDGAR: Tô te falando, Fortunato. Foi assim. Acompanhei tudo.
FORTUNATO: Acompanhou nada, rapaz. Isso tudo é história pra boi dormir. Que psicopata maníaco faria isso com uma mulher?
EDGAR: Sei lá, também acho estranho. Cê faria mal assim pra uma mulher?

Considering that the scene is always blurred whenever his perspective is presented through a subjective shot, this indicates that he is not seeing things clearly. Such diffuse perception of things is reinforced by his alcohol addiction, which, although briefly suggested throughout the episode, as the images below show, is of paramount importance to the horrible deed he commits at the end of the story.

Figure 6 - As he finishes a bottle of *cachaça*, Cícero puts it among other empty bottles

Source: Screen capture of “Berê”

Figure 7 – Cícero approaches Berê drunk

Source: Screen capture of “Berê”

After their final dialogue, as Fortunato leaves the office of Nunca Mais, Edgar approaches the window, for a dove is pecking at the glass. As he feeds it, he says Fortunato is to blame for screwing things up, and, because of that, his time will soon come. Edgar's words imply that something happened between him and his partner and that he is plotting a revenge plan. In addition to this, since the viewer does not know what this past event between the main characters is about, Edgar's final lines serve as a dialogue – or monologue – hook that aims to keep the show's audience tuned in to the next episode for an extra piece of information about this yet unrevealed story.

3.2 "METZENGERSTEIN" AND "PRISCILA"

3.2.1 "Metzengerstein"

Submitted along with four other stories to a literary contest held by the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, "Metzengerstein" was Poe's first published work in prose fiction. Although he did not win the prize contest, the *Courier* published all of the stories he submitted in 1832. In an 1836 revised edition of "Metzengerstein", Poe added a subtitle to it, stating that it was "A Tale in Imitation of the German". As both Charles May (1991) and G. R. Thompson (2004) have observed, this subtitle led readers to interpret the story either as a tale inspired by the fantastic and gothic horror elements of German writers such as Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) and E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), contemporaries of Poe, or as a satire of the works of these writers, for the subtitle claims the story is an "imitation". Nevertheless, whether one sees "Metzengerstein" as inspired by or as satirical of German writers famous at the time of its publication, the story introduces many of the elements Poe would later on constantly refine and develop in his further works of gothic fiction.

Four breaks divide "Metzengerstein" into five parts. The first of them is the one in which the narrator most explicitly refers to itself as "I"; in the subsequent parts, in which the story between the two rival families is told, it is not a character in the fabula. In this sense, based on Bal's terminology, the narrator in the story is external (EN). However, considering that it focalizes the majority of the events told, Bal terms this kind of narrator a perceptible (p) one. In the first paragraph, the story about to unfold is situated geographically, but not temporally:

> Horror and Fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages. Why then give a date to the story I have to tell? I will not. Besides, I have other reasons for concealment. Let it suffice to say, that at the period of which I speak, there existed, in the interior of

> Hungary, a settled although hidden belief in the doctrines of Metempsychosis. (POE, 2004, p. 81)

The initial sentence of the story presents the themes with which it will deal. Horror and fatality are treated like entities by the narrator, since they are written with capital letters and are said to constantly stalk abroad. Their alleged omnipresent nature is used by the narrator as an explanation for not setting the story at a specific time. As a result, Jerome DeNuccio (1997, p. 72) states that, "In freeing himself from temporal and spatial specificity, the narrator creates a site into which an alien experience can irrupt that will suspend the conventions and relations with which his readers are familiar". The allusion to Metempsychosis, a belief in the transmigration and interpenetration of souls, is an early indication of the alien experience told in the story. The narrator avoids attesting to the probability of the belief – and even refers to it as a superstition. Besides, the name of the doctrine is only mentioned in this first paragraph. However, the narrator says that the Hungarian followers of Metempsychosis believed that the soul inhabited a sensate body, be it human or animal, only once; in subsequent transmigrations, the soul became, in other sensate beings, just a resemblance of its original bearer.

The beginning of the second part of the story parallels that of the first. Here, however, Horror and Fatality are embodied by "The families of Berlifitzing and Metzengerstein", which "had been at varience for centuries" (POE, 2004, p. 82). The narrator poses two reasons for this hatred between the families. The first one alludes to an ancient prophecy of unknown origins, according to which "A lofty name shall have a fearful fall when, like the rider over his horse, the mortality of Metzengerstein shall triumph over the immortality of Berlifitzing" (ibid.). The narrator says the prophecy conveyed silly words that "had little to no meaning", and, taken seriously, they implied "a final triumph on the part of the already more powerful house", i.e., the Metzengerstein. As a different motivation for the animosity between the families, the narrator presents "more trivial causes", such as the proximity of their estates, the rival influence they exercised in the affairs of the government and the envy resulted from it. In this sense, by diminishing the meaning of the prophecy and inclining the conflict of the story towards a more rational explanation, the narrator somehow directs our interpretation of the events told.

In his analysis of "Metzengerstein", May states that the prophecy is the sole motivation and unifying force of the story, for "once a prophecy has been announced there is nowhere else for a story to go except toward its fulfillment" (MAY, 1991, p. 17). If we pay attention to the words the prophecy conveys, they pose a cryptic challenge, for it is not clear who is the "lofty name" in risk of "a fearful fall". What we know is that this fall will happen as soon as one family triumphs over another. However, when the narrator points to the sociopolitical context

of the two families, the reader is not only offered a new explanation to the conflict, but the prophecy, even if not taken seriously, is also read in light of this new cause, for the triumphant family is pointed based on its wealth. Consequently, as DeNuccio (1997, p. 73) calls attention to, "This reading instantiates the narrator's authorial power, for it arbitrarily constrains the prophecy's meaning by neutralizing its linguistic ambiguity". Therefore, on the one hand, the narrator manipulates the reader by, early in the story, suggesting that the Metzengerstein family is the one destined to end victorious. On the other hand, as the plot of the story unfolds, it does so motivated by the prophecy, suggesting, as May puts it, that it is "this gothic convention that unifies the story rather than the narrator's own generalized suggestions of plausible external causes" (MAY, 1991, p. 18).

As the third part of the story begins, the narrator dedicates one short paragraph to describe Wilhelm, Count Berlifitzing, as an "infirm and doting old man" (POE, 2004, p. 82) known for his hatred of the rival family and for being fond of horses. As for Frederick, Baron Metzengerstein, he is described as a fifteen-year old boy, whose father, Minister G——, and mother, Lady Mary, died young. Without any living relatives, Frederick, depicted as "Heartless, self-willed, and impetuous from his childhood" (ibid., p. 83), inherits his family possessions, which include vast, boundless estates with innumerable castles, of which the main one was the "Chateau Metzengerstein". From the fourth part of the story forward, the narrator presents events in which Frederick takes part in, thus inserting itself close to the character its story is named after. In the same week he inherits his family wealth, Frederick assumes a dreadful behavior and, as the narrator suggests, attacks the Berlifitzing family:

> Upon the succession of a proprietor so young – with a character so well known – to a fortune so unparalleled – little speculation was afloat in regard to his probable course of conduct. And, indeed, for the space of three days the behavior of the heir out-heroded Herod, and fairly surpassed the expectations of his most enthusiastic admirers. Shameful debaucheries – flagrant treacheries – unheard-of atrocities – gave his trembling vassals quickly to understand that no servile submission on their part – no punctilios of conscience on his own – were thenceforward to prove any security against the remorseless and bloody fangs of a petty Caligula. On the night of the fourth day, the stables of the Castle Berlifitzing were discovered to be on fire: and the unanimous opinion of the neighborhood instantaneously added the crime of the incendiary to the already hideous list of the Baron's misdemeanors and enormities. (POE, 2004, p. 83-84)

While the property of Berlifitzing is on fire, Frederick finds himself secluded in an upper apartment of his castle, absorbed by the images represented on the tapestry that covered the walls of the room. His long lineage of ancestors was embroidered on it, and the scenes that surrounded the room were part of the history of the family. In one of these historical episodes,

Frederick finds a parallel to the tragedy falling upon his rival at that same moment: an enormous horse of the Berlifitzings and one member of each of the two families. In this representation, "The horse itself, in the foreground of the design, stood motionless and statue-like — while farther back its discomfited rider perished by the dagger of a Metzengerstein" (POE, 2004, p. 84). As he looks at the scene, the more fascinated by it he becomes, just as if caught up in a spell. Frederick's trance state is reinforced by the narrator, who says "It was with difficulty that he reconciled his dreamy and incoherent feelings with the certainty of being awake" (POE, 2004, p. 84). At this moment, his attention is shortly deviated to the light of the flaming stables of his neighbor. As he looks back at the tapestry, however, the horse changed its position, facing the Baron directly: "The eyes, before invisible, now were an energetic and human expression, while they gleamed with a fiery and unusual red: and the distended lips of the apparently enraged horse left in full view his sepulchral and disgusting teeth" (ibid., p. 85). Although the narrator does not comment on this change in the representation of the horse, the description of its expression suggests a case of Metempsychosis has just happened. As the narrator informs us, Count Berlifitzing dies in the fire of his property. At the same time the stables are burning down, the horse in the tapestry of the Castle Metzengerstein assumes a human expression, with his red eyes a reference to the fire, and his sepulchral teeth an allusion to the man that just died.

Frederick, terrified, leaves the room. As he opens the door, however, a flash of red light invades the chamber and casts his shadow against the tapestry, "precisely filling up the contour of the relentless and triumphant murderer of the Saracen Berlifitzing" (ibid., p. 85). That way, present and past somehow intermingle, for the Baron is paired with one of his ancestors, thus suggesting that the historical rivalry between the families has just gotten a new episode. Besides, it should be noted that the scene represented on the tapestry, with a member of each of the families foregrounded by a horse, is a clear reminder of the prophecy disregarded by the narrator in the beginning of the story. In this respect, May (1991, p. 19) suggests that "If the present Metzengerstein is superimposed over the past, the reverse of this action – the activation of the past in the present – is effected when the baron goes outside and sees his men trying to restrain a gigantic horse with the letters W. V. B. branded on its forehead". The "gigantic and fiery-colored" horse is said to have been found in the surroundings of the Berlifitzing stables during the fire. The grooms, however, said it did not belong to the family, even if the initials branded on it seem to refer to Wilhelm Von Berlifitzing. The Baron, convinced that the horse was of property of his rival, decides to stay with it, saying that "perhaps a rider like Frederick of Metzengerstein may tame even the devil from the stables of Berlifitzing" (POE, 2004, p. 85). At this point of the story, a page tells the Baron that part of the tapestry has disappeared in the

upper room of the castle. Frederick orders him to lock the room and keep the key in his possession.

After the incident, Baron Metzengerstein finds out that the Count Berlifitzing died in an attempt to save his hunting stud, another evidence that the unclaimed horse in fact belonged to his enemy. From that day forward, Frederick's behavior changes, for he rejects the company of everyone except the horse and ignores every invitation on the part of his neighborhood, even when that results in repeated insults from his people. One of these replies to his lack of sociability comes from the widow of Count Berlifitzing, who expresses the hope "that the Baron might be at home when he did not wish to be at home, since he disdained the company of his equals: and ride when he did not wish to ride, since he preferred the society of a horse" (POE, 2004, p. 87). The way she conveys her expectations sounds like a prophecy, for they allude to a future moment in which Frederick will be at home and ride his horse unwillingly. Just like the ancient prophecy referred to in the beginning of the story, however, the narrator disregards the widow's words, stating that they were "a very silly explosion of hereditary pique" and "unmeaning" (ibid.). As for the Baron, the only activity he engaged with consisted in riding the horse. Nonetheless, despite the "extraordinary affection which existed on the part of the young nobleman for the fiery qualities of his horse" (ibid., p. 88), Frederick avoids naming it. In this sense, although very fond of the animal, "an insignificant and misshapen" little page observed that the Baron always approached the horse with a shudder and returned from every ride with "an expression of triumphant malignity". Yet, the narrator deems the page's opinions "were of the least possible importance" (ibid.).

One night, Frederick suddenly wakes up and rushes out for a riding in the forest. While he is absent, "a dense and livid mass of ungovernable fire" takes over his castle, thus attracting everyone in the neighborhood. When it becomes clear that the building was doomed to its ruin, "a steed, bearing an unbonneted and disordered rider" is seen leaping around "with an impetuosity which outstripped the very Demon of the Tempest" (ibid.). The people surrounding the burning castle noticed that Frederick was in agony, unable to control the horse. As the winds shriek and the fire roars, the horse, with the Baron on its back, all of a sudden rushes to the staircases of the castle and disappears in the middle of the flames. When it does so, the fire immediately dies away, and the cloud of smoke that settles over the ruins of the building form the figure of a horse in the sky, thus indicating that the lofty one in the ancient prophecy to have a fearful fall is Metzengerstein, for Frederick had no living relatives. Thus, as the horse enters the burning castle, the prophecy is fulfilled.

Therefore, in “Metzengerstein”, Poe presents some of the elements that would become recurring in his later works. In the story, the narrator constantly manipulates the reader by downplaying the influence of the prophecy to the development of the events, stating that it was silly and conveyed no meaning. That way, it subdues the ambiguity characteristic of this kind of charade. Instead, it suggests a more trivial and less supernatural explanation to the conflict between the families. In this sense, whenever a character in the story presents an opinion that reinforces the saying of the prophecy, such as the Count’s widow or the Baron’s little page, the narrator disregards his words. Yet, as the tale unfolds, it suggests, as May (1991) points out, that the prophecy is the unifying force of the story, for the events described, such as the image on the tapestry, the appearance of the Berlifitzing’s horse, and Frederick’s attempt to tame it, seem to follow the ancient presage. The early reference to Metempsychosis, although regarded as a mere superstition by the narrator, is not random, for the events imply that Wilhelm’s soul presumably inhabited the horse after he died, and Frederick’s recurring rides are attempts to dominate his rival, as the prophecy indicates. However, his failure to triumph over Berlifitzing is hinted at in different passages of the story: when Frederick avoids giving the horse a *name*, the word is italicized, thus calling our attention to it; and when the little page says that Frederick approaches the horse shuddering and finishes his ride with a triumphant expression, he suggests that the character believes he is finally taming the animal. Nonetheless, the narrator diminishes the page’s words.

Lastly, considering that the narrator is not a character in the story, we are inclined to give its opinion more credit, for it seems to be less limited than that of a character-bound narrator. No wonder external narrators have been traditionally regarded as “omniscient” ones. However, as Bal wisely remarks, “as soon as there is language, there is a speaker who utters it” (2009, p. 21). In this sense, the narrator is always an “I” whose level of involvement with the events it narrates varies. As the narrator suggests early in the story, if taken seriously, the words of the prophecy imply the triumph of Metzengerstein. Thus, we are led to believe that nothing bad will happen to him. Besides, as the narrator sets itself close to the main character and is the major point of focalization in the tale, the reader can hardly anticipate Frederick’s tragic outcome in the story, even if the events constantly suggest that the prophecy is being fulfilled.

3.2.2 “Priscila”

The episode opens inside a locked and abandoned auto repair shop. As the camera moves and focuses on the front door, two men, Fred and Raimundo, open it. Their dialogue

implies that Fred intends to reinaugurate the place. When they start cleaning it, the camera focuses on two spiders in the junk, and Fred asks Raimundo whether he can get him the contact of a pest control company. Suddenly, Guilherme Bernardes, the neighbor just across the street who also runs an auto repair shop, appears and, staring at Fred, says that the prodigal son has returned. As Fred introduces himself as the son of Mendonça, we learn that his father is already dead. Guilherme, on the other hand, walks around and calls the place a pigpen, saying that, after the death of Fred's father, it should never be open again. As Guilherme leaves, Fred does not seem to be bothered by his words and goes back to cleaning his shop. When Raimundo moves a ladder, he ends up revealing a wall covered by an old and large graffiti depicting Bernardes, running with his arms stretched in a defense position, and another man coming up to him on a big motorcycle. Raimundo proposes to cover the graffiti with paint, but Fred says that it should remain there and orders his partner to clean the wall. The camera initially stays behind Fred, framing him and the image on the screen. The next shot shows Fred's face in close-up, and we see his eyes moving. A subjective reverse shot is then inserted, and the camera moves through the graffiti before the episode's opening credits.

Figure 8 – Fred staring at the large graffiti

Source: Screen capture of "Priscila"

In the next scene, Edgar and Fortunato are at the shop to spread pesticides. Fortunato tells Fred that spiders are hard to get rid of, for they always come back. He even jokes that they might reincarnate and suggests that it would be better off to set the place on fire to exterminate the spiders. Fred gets into the joke and, borrowing a lighter from Edgar, turns a flame torch on,

scaring Fortunato. When Fred holds the lighter, he sees a sticker from *Esportivo Poense* on it, and, looking at the graffiti on the wall, remembers it is the same soccer team his father supported. That way, he suggests that the man riding the motorcycle is his father. Edgar's attention is then called to the image. The camera focuses on him externally, and a subjective reverse shot presents his point of view of the graffiti. As the camera shows him again from an external perspective, we see him focused on the image, and a new reverse shot shows us that the motorcycle's front wheel is now on fire. Further external shots also show the flame on the wheel, thus indicating that the image changed.

Figure 9 – A subjective shot shows the motorcycle's front wheel on fire

Source: Screen capture of "Priscila"

At this point, a voice-over of Edgar is introduced in the scene: "That graffiti caught people's eyes. There was something otherworldly about it. And the worst thing was that you could see that the boy had already been bewitched by the drawing"[5] (my translation). Edgar's words imply the graffiti had a mesmerizing nature and, because of that, Fred had already been caught in its spell. Outside the shop, Fred sees Priscila, Guilherme's daughter, sweeping the floor in front of her father's shop. He approaches her and they start talking. Fred says he had thought that, at this point, with his father dead, the rivalry between their families would be over, but Priscila claims it will last forever. Nonetheless, he invites her to come over later and drink some beer. Priscila says she has to attend church that night, but Fred insists on the invitation.

[5] From the original: "Aquele grafite prendia o olhar da gente. Tinha alguma coisa de outro mundo nele. E o pior é que dava pra ver que o moleque já tinha sido enfeitiçado pelo desenho".

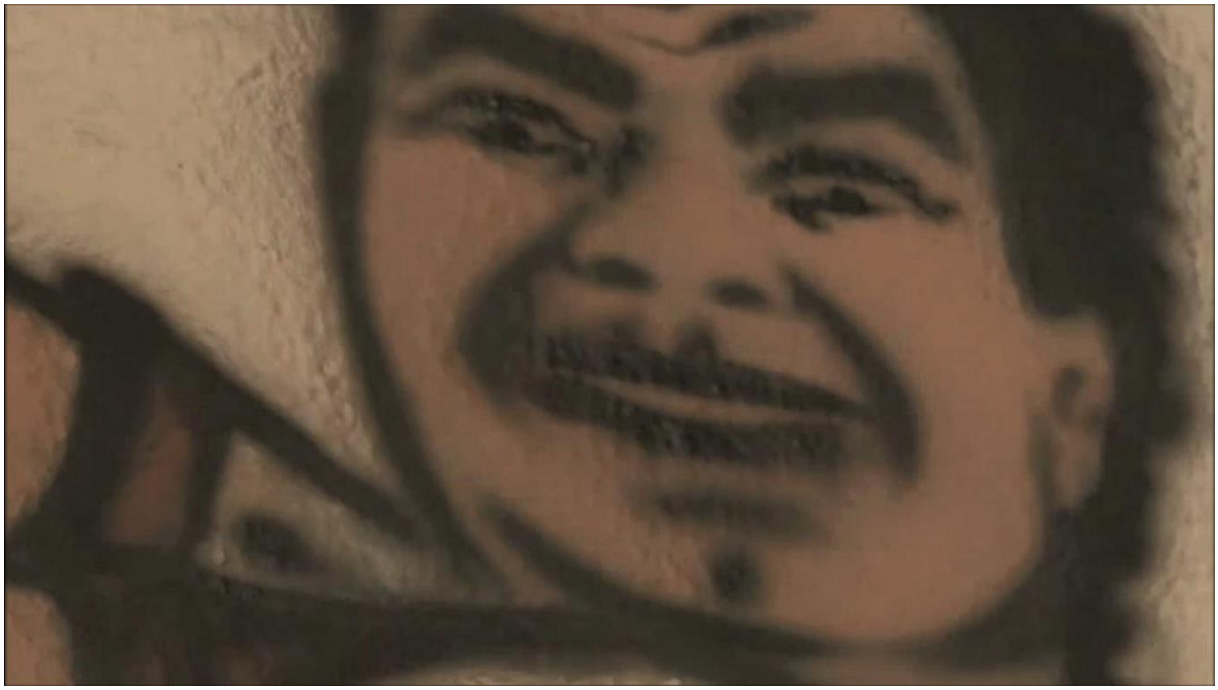
The next scene shows them engaged in intercourse at his shop, indicating she accepted his proposal. As they finish sex, she notices the graffiti on the wall. Looking at it, she says that the motorcycle is the origin of the rivalry between her father and Fred's. According to her, that was the one and only motorcycle her father ever set up, so that he was always very fond of it and deeply lamented when he had to sell it, especially when he found out it was a Mendonça who bought it. At this moment, Fred and Priscila start exchanging accusations against each other's fathers: Fred says his father was a rascal, to which Priscila replies that he was actually deceitful and, as such, ordered the graffiti to be painted on his wall as a mockery of her father after Mendonça got his motorcycle. Fred, on the other hand, remembers that the motorcycle was stolen from his father some time later and implies Guilherme did it. She claims her father is not a thief, but Fred calls him a motherfucker. Priscila slaps him in the face, and Fred says his father was right when he used to say that "a nice Bernardes is a dead Bernardes". Before she leaves, Priscila reminds Fred that his father is actually the dead one, and not hers.

The next day, as Raimundo responds to a customer at Mendonça's shop, reluctant to give him a discount, Fred intervenes and assures the man that they will beat Bernardes's price for whichever services the customer orders. At this moment, Guilherme enters the shop and attacks Fred, angry because he found out his rival's son was with his daughter the night before. Guilherme pushes Fred to the floor and says he knew that, as soon as the boy reopened the place, he would pull his tricks off, for "the Mendonças are no good". He calls Fred a wimp and, as he looks at the graffiti, becomes even angrier. Staring at Fred sitting on the floor, Guilherme recites lines from the Book of Numbers 22:6, just as if casting a curse on his rival: "Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed". Before he leaves, Guilherme tells Fred to stay away from his daughter. Exploding in fury, Fred starts kicking boxes and throwing things against the wall with the graffiti, calling Guilherme a motherfucker. The transition between shots is fast, and we see Fred either angry or sitting against the wall hiding his face with his hands. At some point, he pays attention to the painted image. The camera shows him looking at the wall, and a subjective reverse shot shows us the face of Fred's father turning in his direction (see Figure 9). Then, the shots start to succeed each other fast again, and we hear Fred apologizing to his father, implying that he interpreted the image as an intimidating message from his father for not having been able to stand up against Guilherme.

That night, someone wearing a hood sneaks into Bernardes's shop carrying two gallons of gasoline. Guilherme is in his office watching porn movies and masturbating. The hooded

figure locks him in the room and starts spilling the gas in front of it. As he picks up a lighter to set the place on fire, we see that there is an *Esportivo Poense* stamp on it, indicating that the person in question is Fred, who still carries Edgar's lighter with him. The next morning, as Fred arrives at his shop, he sees Priscila desperately crying across the street, for her father died in the fire. As Fred approaches Raimundo to talk about the tragedy, however, his partner calls his attention to the fact that his father's motorcycle mysteriously appeared in the shop that day. According to him, none of the neighbors knew or saw anything that could help explain how the motorcycle appeared there. As Raimundo uncovers the vehicle, Fred looks at it a bit surprised, but he does not say a word to express his reaction.

Figure 10 – A subjective shot shows the face of Fred's father turning in his direction



Source: Screen capture of "Priscila"

From that moment forward, Fred spends night and day attempting to make the motorcycle work again, up to point he refuses to meet any customer that comes at his shop. When Edgar and Fortunato appear there to finish their services, Edgar sees Bernardes's shop closed and asks Raimundo what happened, to which he replies that an unknown fire consumed the place and, despite the tragic incident, it was time for Guilherme to go, for he was a bad man. The camera then focuses on Fred obsessively engaged with the motorcycle, and we can see Edgar in the background watching him work before leaving. Late at night, Fred is still self-involved in making his father's bike work. The audio track introduces lines in which we can hear how desperate he is to fix it, stating that he will find a way to ride it that same night. An external shot above the eyeline showing the entrance of the shop follows, and we can see Fred

in the background as Priscila, holding a big four-way key, silently approaches him. The next shot is set inside the shop and focuses on Fred in the foreground, while Priscila slowly walks in his direction in the background. A reverse shot shows her approaching Fred, holding the key high, ready to attack him. However, as she recognizes the motorcycle, she hesitates and drops the key to the floor. Still shaken by her father's death, she accuses Fred of murdering him. Her reaction is to pick up the key and hit the bike, but Fred stops her just before she does it. Her change of target somehow implies that she considers the motorcycle as the motivation for what happened to his father. As Fred holds Priscila, he says the bike is a symbol of the superiority of the Mendonça family over the name of the Bernardes, so that, as long as the motorcycle exists, his family will triumph over his rival one.

Fred kicks Priscila out of the shop and devotes his attention back to the bike. As he sees a sticker of the coat of arms of the Bernardes family on it, he removes it, thus uncovering the initials G. B. (Guilherme Bernardes) marked on it. He spray paints them as a means to erase the name of the vehicle's original owner, and, turning the key, the motorcycle finally ignites. The next shot shows Priscila spying on him behind the door of her father's shop. When Fred leaves riding on the bike, she enters his shop carrying two gallons of gasoline.

Figure 11 – Priscila touches the image of her father on the wall

Source: Screen capture of "Priscila"

The next sequence of shots alternate between images of Fred riding the bike around the city and Priscila spilling gasoline all over his shop. In one of the scenes, she approaches the graffiti and touches the image of Guilherme with one hand, indicating that the revenge she is

taking is a way to honor her father. Just like Guilherme, she casts a curse on the place, reciting lines from the Book of Ezekiel 21:31-32, which says: "I will pour out my wrath on you and breathe out my fiery anger against you; I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, men skilled in destruction. You will be fuel for the fire, your blood will be shed in your land, you will be remembered no more; for I the Lord have spoken". On a table, she finds Edgar's lighter, which she uses to eventually set the place on fire.

As the fire starts consuming the shop, the motorcycle stops working when Fred is almost back at his place. Looking ahead, he sees his auto repair shop at the end of the street caught in flames. Suddenly, the bike ignites again and starts the ride against Fred's will, setting itself in the direction of the burning building in high speed. Subsequent shots alternate between Fred's attempts to stop the bike and Priscila reciting the words of the Bible surrounded by the flames. Unable to control the motorcycle, Fred rides into the burning shop. The next shot shows that, as the flames melted the paint Fred sprayed on the bike, the G. B. initials are visible again, indicating that the Bernardes family took revenge over the Mendonças. At this moment, the audio track introduces a voice-over of Edgar, and the next scene shows him telling Fortunato his account of the events just presented by the visual track:

> EDGAR: When they were alive, one was the plague of the other. Then when one died, he took the other with him.
> FORTUNATO: What do you want? You want me to believe the spirit of the deceased was in the bike, is that it?
> EDGAR: The boy shouldn't have come back. He should have left that shop there.
> FORTUNATO: You yourself have that bar there, all crappy and sealed. Why don't you sell that shithole?
> EDGAR: It helps me remember Lenora.[6] (my translation)

Considering that Edgar's last voice-over is introduced just before the scene shifts to him and Fortunato at Nunca Mais, we can interpret the previous scenes as an audiovisual rendition of the story he is telling his partner. Once again, the veracity of his account of events is called into question when he is asked if Guilherme's soul indeed transmigrated to the motorcycle. Unlike "Berê", however, in which Edgar's supernatural explanation to Berenice's reanimation is countered by the fact that she suffered from catalepsy, in "Priscila", the visual narrator assumes a more compliant role when rendering Edgar's account of events. According to

[6] From the original:
EDGAR: Quando eles tavam vivos, um era a praga do outro. Aí quando um morreu, levou o outro junto.
FORTUNATO: O que é que cê quer? Quer que eu acredite que a moto tava com o espírito do falecido, é isso?
EDGAR: O moleque não devia ter voltado. Devia era ter largado aquela oficina lá.
FORTUNATO: Você mesmo tem aquele boteco lá, tudo cagado, lacrado. Por que que tu não vende aquela merda?
EDGAR: Serve pra eu não esquecer da Lenora.

Verstraten, flashback scenes introduced by voice-over are commonly understood as internal narration with external focalization, for the visual track corresponds only to some extent to the point of view of the narrating character. Even so, the visual track usually offers an acceptable impression of the account introduced by the flashback. That way, most of the scenes presented in "Priscila" reinforce a supernatural explanation of events. When Edgar first looks at the graffiti, for example, a subjective shot shows that the motorcycle's front wheel is now on fire. As further external shots always present the wheel with the flame, we are inclined to accept that the image indeed changed. In addition to this, after Fred is attacked in his shop by Guilherme, he explodes in fury and notices that the image of his father on the wall altered, for his face is now turned to him. As further shots do not show the whole image, we are left with no clue to attest if the graffiti indeed changed again or if it was just a subjective perception.

The episode, however, eventually hints at different explanations for some of the events. Although no shot presents how the motorcycle ended up in Fred's shop, we learn, from his first dialogue with Priscila, that the bike was the origin for the rivalry between their families. Based on that dialogue, we can assume that the motorcycle's last owner was Guilherme. After his death, as soon as Priscila approaches Fred to attack him, she hesitates when she sees the vehicle and suggests that the motorcycle is to blame for her father's death. Considering that Fred sneaked into his rival's shop the night before he set it on fire, we could raise the hypothesis that he took advantage of the opportunity to reclaim the motorcycle. He also does not say a word of surprise when Raimundo tells him that the vehicle mysteriously appeared on the shop the night after the fire. However, since the visual track does not show how the bike ends up in Fred's shop, we can only speculate on this more logical and less supernatural explanation. Yet, considering that it had been a long time since someone last rode the motorcycle, and that Fred struggled hard to make it work, that could lead to a rational explanation for why he could not set its brakes or even lost control of it in view of his family business being consumed by fire. Nonetheless, the visual narrator does not comply with these causal explanations, for we see the bike stopping and then igniting again against Fred's will, thus reinforcing Edgar's supernatural account of events.

Some motifs are also introduced in the episode. When Fortunato jokingly suggests spiders probably reincarnate, due to the difficulty of getting rid of them, and says that Fred better set his shop on fire to exterminate them, his speech somehow foreshadows the events about to unfold in the story. Just like in "Berê", in "Priscila" Edgar also lends a key item for the forthcoming tragedy, since it is his lighter that sets both auto repair shops on fire. The religious faith of the Bernardes family is also exploited in the episode, for the excerpts of the Bible both

Guilherme and Priscila recite suggest they are casting a curse on the Mendonça family, which is reinforced by the way the events unfold. Nonetheless, their faith is constantly called into question during the episode. When Raimundo describes Guilherme to Fred, he says that the man, although religious, would not hesitate to use the Bible to justify murdering, even if it consists in a violation of the commandment that orders believers not to kill. As Fred is about to set Guilherme's shop on fire, the man is in his office masturbating and watching a porn film, which also calls his religious morality into question. As for Priscila, although initially declining Fred's invitation to drink beer because she had to attend church, she accepts his proposal later on and says she goes to church only to satisfy her father. Based on that, even if the events of the story somehow parallel the biblical words father and daughter cast on their enemy, it is hard to think of a god that would comply with the wishes of believers that do not behave according to its teachings.

At the end of the episode, another piece of information concerning Edgar and Fortunato's past is added. When Edgar says he did not sell his closed bar as a means to remember Lenora, he not only introduces a new and yet unknown character, but also alludes to a past event that happened in that bar. When Fortunato hears that answer, he remains silent, which suggests that he also knows what happened there and avoids bringing the subject back. By referring to a character the viewer does not know yet, the episode further complicates the yet untold story between its main characters, thus prompting viewers to return to the series in the next episode.

3.3 "THE TELL-TALE HEART", "THE IMP OF THE PERVERSE", AND "ÍRIS"

3.3.1 "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Initially published in the *Boston Pioneer* in 1843, "The Tell-Tale Heart" is the account made by an unnamed narrator of how he carefully planned and carried out the murder of an old man under his care. In the first paragraph of the story, we learn that the narrator's intention is to convince the reader of his mental sanity, despite his nervousness to begin the report:

> True! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses – not destroyed – not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (POE, 2004, p. 317, italics in the original)

In this first excerpt of the story, the narrator refers to itself as “I”, thus indicating that it is a character-bound narrator (CN), for it is also a character in the story it tells. Therefore, for this analysis, we will refer to this CN as “he”. Before the narrator starts his account of past events, he informs us that he suffers from an unidentified disease, which consequently sharpened his senses, especially his hearing. In addition to this, he mentions he has been extremely nervous. Ironically, however, he claims to be able to tell his story calmly, and thus his report of how he planned and executed the murder of the old man begins. The narrator says that, once conceived, the idea of killing the man under his care haunted him day and night. According to him, he loved the old man and had no desire for his fortune. The man, on his part, had never done anything bad to the narrator. Yet, as a means to justify his mortal deed, the narrator alludes to the impression the old man’s eye caused on him whenever he stared at it: “I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture – a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees – very gradually – I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever” (POE, 2004, p. 317). Although the narrator does not mention it, his description of the old man’s “pale blue” eye suggests that he suffered from cataract.

In the next paragraphs, the narrator describes how he meticulously proceeded with his murder plan. Every night, he slowly and carefully entered the old man’s room with a covered lantern while his victim was asleep. Then, he uncovered the lantern just enough for him to see the man’s eye. However, since the man was always sleeping, the narrator felt unable to kill him and thus get rid of his devilish look. In every subsequent day, the narrator would always ask the old man how he had spent the previous night, just to avoid any suspicion. In these passages, the narrator constantly alludes to his state of mind to reinforce he is not mad, as well as suggests a supernatural quality to the old man’s eye. When describing the caution with which he proceeded every night, he claims a mad man would not be as wise and precautious as he was. As for the old man’s eye, the narrator states it was a vulture, Evil Eye. That description, along with the fact that he repeated the ritual of entering the man’s room for seven consecutive nights, starting always at midnight, adds to this otherworldly atmosphere revolving around the old man’s eye that the narrator alludes to.

On the eighth night, the narrator enters the old man’s room again. Although more cautious this time, he could not help slipping his thumb on the tin fastening of his lantern. As a result, the old man woke up and, sitting on his bed, asked who had just come into his room. A whole hour passed, but neither the narrator nor the old man moved. The only sound to break the silence was that of the deathwatches, a species of beetle known for gnawing at old furniture,

in the walls. Though aware that the old man was still awake, the narrator decided to open a little crevice of his lantern, thus shedding some light directly upon the eye. Gazing at it, the narrator feels his bones chill and reinforces once again that his current disease has increased the acuteness of his senses:

> And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses? – now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew *that* sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage. (POE, 2004, p. 319, italics in the original)

Claiming to hear the beating of the man's heart, the narrator says once more that he is not mad. As he held the lantern with the light pointed to the eye, he states that the beating of the heart grew quicker and louder at every instant. However, the old man's terror mirrors the narrator's nervousness at that moment, so that we cannot decide whether the growing beat heard is that of the man's heart or the narrator's. Fearing that a neighbor could hear the sound of the beating heart – or hearts –, the murder plan is finally executed: "The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once – once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done" (POE, 2004, p. 319). After killing the old man, the narrator says he silently dismembered his body and hid it under three planks on the floor, deeming such care in cleaning the crime scene as another act of wise precaution a mad man would not take at all.

To the narrator's misfortune, however, the old man's sole shriek before being killed was heard by a neighbor; as a result, three police officers arrive at his place at 4 a.m. Since the narrator had already hidden the corpse, he welcomes the men into the house. Guiding them through the rooms, he tells the officers the old man was not in the country and that the loud scream the neighbor heard was his own in a dream. As they enter the old man's room, the narrator invites the policemen to sit there to rest, while he, as a sign of personal triumph, places his own seat "upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim" (ibid., 320). Initially convinced that no one suspects anything, the narrator thinks his plan succeeded, but as the officers linger there speaking of trivial things, his nervousness manifests again and he feels pale. Suddenly, a sound starts ringing, which makes him more agitated when he considers that the noise may not be only within his ears: "No doubt I grew *very* pale;– but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased – and what could I do? It was a *low, dull, quick sound – much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I

gasped for breath – and yet the officers heard it not" (ibid., italics in the original). Unable to cope with his nervousness and with that fact that the officers did not leave, the narrator interprets it as a sign that the police men not only know he committed a crime, but that they can also hear the ringing noise. In a desperate act to end his suffering, the narrator tells the men to remove the planks from the floor, thus admitting his terrible deed against the old man.

Therefore, in "The Tell-Tale Heart", Poe manipulates the reader by leaving the account of the events told in charge of a character-bound narrator who is also the sole point of focalization in the story, being thus a character-focalizor (CF). Although this narrator constantly claims he is not a mad man, we know, from the beginning of his report, that he has been nervous up to the time of his narration. The two short paragraphs that open the story are key to the understanding of the reasons why he committed his crime. We know that the narrator suffered from an unnamed disease that sharpened his senses, especially his hearing, and that the old man under his care had a pale blue eye, characteristic of people that suffer from cataract. Just like the narrator, the old man also has a very acute hearing, for the mere touch of the narrator's finger on the fastening of the lantern was able to wake the old man up in the middle of the night and leave him alert for more than an hour. Based on this, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the narrator, just like the old man, was in the early stages of cataract, as visual impairment usually leads to the sharpening of other senses. Therefore, no wonder the narrator would feel his blood get cold whenever he stared at the eye, for he might be foreseeing his future in the old man. In addition to this, considering he had to take care of the man every day, facing his eye was a constant source of anguish.

However, by omitting the name of his own disease and briefly mentioning it only twice throughout the story, the narrator shifts our attention to the devilish nature he claims the eye possesses. For instance, he addresses the eye as a vulture three times, calls it an Evil Eye once and says it was covered by a "hideous veil". That way, the frequency with which the narrator makes all of these constant references to the eye, the fact that he always entered the old man's room at midnight, as well as the mention to the deathwatches, whose sound is superstitiously understood as the foretelling of someone's death, reinforces the supernatural atmosphere with which he embeds his report, even if no supernatural events take place in the story. Yet, as long paragraphs are dedicated to the elaboration and execution of his murder plan, the brief references to the narrator's own disease and the fact that he avoids telling how he first though of killing the man can easily go unnoticed to the reader. Nonetheless, the fact that he dismembered the old man's body before hiding it under the planks makes it impossible for the ringing noise he hears in the presence of the police officers be that of the old man's heart, as he

suggests when he finally surrenders. Therefore, the only possible explanations for the sound are that it comes either from his own heart or from the deathwatches in the walls. Whichever the origin of the sound is, however, the fact that the narrator thinks it comes from the old man's heart only attests to his insanity, despite his constant attempts to convince the reader he is not a mad man.

3.3.2 "The Imp of the Perverse"

First published in the July 1845 edition of *Graham's Magazine*, "The Imp of the Perverse" is an important piece within Poe's essay and fiction work. In it, the author develops his concept of the perverse, which, according to G. R. Thompson (2004, p. xiv), refers to a "universal impulse to act in irrational opposition to one's own best interests". This idea is recurrent is stories such as "William Wilson" (1839), "The Black Cat" (1843), and the just analyzed "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), for instance. In terms of structure, the story begins as an essay in which the narrator develops the notion of the imp of the perverse and the self-destructive impulse it entails. The second part of it consists of a first-person narration in which the narrator gives an account of how the imp of the perverse acted upon him, thus justifying why he is a condemned prisoner at the time of his narration.

In the first part of the text, the narrator's concern in theorizing "an innate and primitive principle of human action" (POE, 2004, p. 403) that has been long overlooked by scholars is evident. Thus, he resorts to Phrenology – a pseudoscience famous at the time which proposed a link between the shape of one's brain and one's mental faculties – to state that its proponents have failed in considering this natural trace of human behavior, although it has always accompanied humanity throughout its course. As a means to elaborate on this intrinsic propensity, the narrator employs many technical and philosophical terms in his rationale, such as the Latin expressions *prima mobilia, primum mobile, à priori, principia, à posteriori,* and *motivirt,* thus embedding his writing with the style characteristic of theoretical essays. He also differentiates between an intellectual or logical man and an understanding or observant one to claim that the former type, characteristic of the phrenologists, has "set himself to imagine designs – to dictate purposes to God" (ibid., 402). That way, according to the narrator, Phrenology has assigned, through deductive reasoning, a specific organ for every human propensity or sentiment, such as the organs of Alimentiveness and Combativeness for the needs for food and self-defense, respectively, as a divine design. However, the narrator states that "It would have been safer – if classify we must – to classify upon the basis of what man usually or

occasionally did, and was always occasionally doing, rather than upon the basis of what we took it for granted the Deity intended him to do" (ibid., p. 403). Based on that, he proposes to think of the neglected propensity he is calling attention to through inductive reasoning:

> Induction *à posteriori* would have brought Phrenology to admit, as an innate and primitive principle of human action, a paradoxical something which for want of a better term, we may call *Perverseness*. In the sense I intend, it is, in fact, a *mobile* without motive – a motive not *motivirt*. Through its promptings we act without comprehensible object. Or if this shall be understood as a contradiction in terms, we may so far modify the proposition as to say that through its promptings we act for the reasons that we should *not*. In theory, no reason can be more unreasonable, but in reality there is none so strong. […] Nor will this overwhelming tendency to do wrong for the wrong's sake, admit of analysis, or resolution into ulterior elements. It is a radical, a primitive impulse – elementary. (POE, 2004, p. 403, italics in the original)

In order to further develop on the nature of what he calls Perverseness, the narrator differentiates it from Combativeness: while the latter has for its essence the principle of well-being and the necessity of self-defense, the former does not evoke in man the desire to be well, "but a strongly antagonistical sentiment [that] prevails" (POE, 2004, p. 403). Then, the narrator presents some examples of situations in which people act according to the spirit of the Perverse. The first is when, during a conversation, one of the speakers is suddenly invaded by a wish to annoy his listener, even aware that this action will be perceived as displeasing. Another example happens whenever we have a deadline to finish a task and, although anticipating how happy we will feel once it is done, we keep delaying it as its due date approaches, sometimes even letting the deadline arrive and pass. The last case described is when, at the edge of a precipice, we keep peering into the abyss, even if our reason would impel us to stay away from the brink. Suddenly, our mind is occupied by a mortal thought, for we start imagining how we would feel if we fell from such a great height. According to the narrator, all of these are circumstances in which the imp of the Perverse takes over our acts. As he puts it, we perform such actions "merely because we feel that we should *not*" (ibid., 405, italics in the original). Lastly, he claims that the only aspect that distinguishes this impulse from "a direct instigation of the Arch-fiend" is that it is "occasionally known to operate in furtherance of good" (ibid.).

After having thoroughly explained his idea of Perverseness in essay format, the narrator changes his argumentative style into a fictional narrative. From this point of the text on, he refers to himself as "I" more often and provides a personal account of the reasons that have led him to be imprisoned at the time of his narration. Therefore, we learn that his intent is to explain his current situation to an unknown listener:

> I have premised thus much that I may be able, in some degree, to give an intelligible answer to your queries – that I may explain to you why I am here – that I may assign

> something like a reason for my wearing these fetters and tenanting the cell of the condemned. Had I not been thus prolix, you might either have misunderstood me altogether, or, with the rabble, you might have fancied me mad. (POE, 2004, p. 405).

Claiming to be a victim of the imp of the Perverse, the narrator attempts to convince his listener – and reader – that he is not insane. With this intention, he states that he had spent months conceiving a murder. After much thought, he gets inspiration from a French memoir about the death of Madame Pilau, who died after inhaling the smoke of a poisoned candle. Excited with the idea, and knowing that his intended victim used to read by wax-light at night, he poisons a candle and puts it next to the man's bed. The next day, the victim is found dead, and people attribute his decease as "Death by the visitation of God" (ibid.). Although the narrator provides no background information about his relationship with his victim, he tells he ended up inheriting all of his estate. After the incident, he gets rid of every clue that could eventually denounce his crime. The next years are happily lived by the narrator, who claims to have spent them fulfilled by a feeling of satisfaction and security.

However, the sentiment does not last forever, and suddenly his mind is constantly occupied by haunting thoughts: "I would perpetually find myself pondering upon my impunity and security, and very frequently would catch myself repeating, in a low, under-tone, the phrases 'I am safe – I am safe'" (POE, 2004, p. 406). As these words keep repeating in his brain, he ends up adding a condition to his current safety while walking on the streets: "I am safe – I am safe – yes, *if I do not prove fool enough to make open confession*" (ibid.). Once this thought makes its way into his head, he cannot get rid of it. Oppressed by the desire to scream his crime aloud, he starts running among the crowd, thus getting everyone's attention. As a result, people start following him because of his suspicious behavior. When someone grabs him by the arm, "the long imprisoned secret" finally comes out of his mouth. Once his crime is made known, he ends his report pondering upon his future whereabouts: "But why should I say more? To-day I wear these chains, and am *here*. To-morrow I shall be fetterless! – *but where?*" (ibid.).

Therefore, in "The Imp of the Perverse", Poe creates a genre-merging work that starts in the style of an essay and shifts to a first-person account typical of prose fiction. In any case, we cannot separate these two parts, since they altogether compose the narration of a condemned prisoner, and the fact that no break is used to divide the story into different parts – a resource Poe often employs in his works – only attests to this unity. In this sense, the narrative is once again in charge of a character-bound narrator (CN) who seeks to justify the reasons that have sentenced him to prison. By theorizing what he calls a primitive human impulse according to which we act against our interests, the narrator attempts at a rational explanation to his current

situation. The use of philosophical expressions, in addition to the everyday examples provided, covers his narration with a shroud of objectivity and rationality that aims at convincing his listeners and readers. However, this narrator is also manipulative and, as such, unreliable. By dedicating almost two thirds of his report to the development of what he calls the imp of the Perverse, the circumstances surrounding the murder he committed are briefly mentioned, so that more specific details are only alluded to. First of all, the justification for the murder and his relationship with the victim are topics upon which he does not touch. Nonetheless, the narrator shows knowledge of the man's routine and of his apartment, which suggests that he was very close to the man somehow. In this respect, considering that he inherited all of the man's estate after he died, we could raise the hypothesis that they were relatives – in this case, the narrator is the man's only or closest living relative.

Moreover, after briefly describing how he conceived and executed the murder, the narrator employs acceleration, or summary, for many years passed in a single sentence. As the time passes, the narrator says his feeling of absolute security gave way to a constant pondering upon both his impunity and security. However, although his report of the murdering of the man is extremely brief, the narrator does not avoid mentioning that he got rid of every clue that could incriminate him. In this sense, he should have no reason to, all of a sudden, fear for his safety. Based on that, we could argue that the recurring thoughts concerning his security and impunity, which he claims to be the result of the imp of the perverse acting upon him, are actually a manifestation of the guilt for having killed someone close, possibly his only living relative. As he was the only one that could denounce his crime, he does so as a means to punish himself for his terrible deed. No wonder he feels fetterless after having confessed his crime, even if that means he is going to be executed for that. That makes us ponder upon what he is actually breaking free from. However, since this narrator thoroughly develops a whole theory to explain his sudden act against his best interests, he deviates our attention from these fragmentary clues that hint at a different explanation for his current situation. Furthermore, the lack of clear temporal and causal marks in his account, especially regarding the events before and after the murder, as well as his relationship with his victim, only adds to the overshadowing of this underlying story that is secretly constructed.

3.3.3 "Íris"

The third episode of *Contos do Edgar* opens in a residential building during the night. The camera moves through a corridor, while the auditive narrator plays a loud beating sound.

As it approaches a window, we see that a party is taking place in one of the apartments, and the sound played by the audio track fuses with the music from the party. In the next shot, an old man, Jorge, is shown lying awake in bed, struggling to get some sleep because of the loud noise coming from the neighboring apartment. To his surprise, his wife, Conceição, is sleeping by his side. Irritated by the situation, Jorge decides to knock at his neighbor's door. A man called Maicon answers the door and immediately calls Íris, his girlfriend, to talk to Jorge, who complains that it is the third time that week in which loud music is being played late at night. Íris makes fun of him asking if he would rather have her play bolero, a slow-tempo music genre, and turns her back on him. Maicon then calls Jorge a fucking old man and shuts the door on his face. As the old man stands in the corridor, the scene is followed by the episode's opening credits.

The next scene is set at Jorge's apartment during the day. Edgar and Fortunato are there to get rid of an ant infestation that has spread through all the building, so that they are visiting every apartment to identify the sources from which the ants are coming. As Jorge points to a trail that leads to a filter, Fortunato asks him why he does not discard it, to which he replies he should first talk to the apartment's owner. Looking at the window, through which he can see Íris in her house, he also says he already has a lot to deal with in that building. At this moment, Edgar notices that Jorge is annoyed by the presence of Íris. Before he and Fortunato leave, Edgar hesitates to hand Jorge an injector with insecticide to be used in case the ants are back within a month (see Figure 12). He alerts Jorge that, since the poison is very strong, it must be handled carefully. As he hands him the injector, his first voice-over is introduced in the episode: "That old man who seemed so nice. Who would have thought? It was as if the poison had awakened something that was very well hidden in him"[7] (my translation). These words cast a doubt on Jorge's behavior early in the episode and suggest that Edgar sensed it was not a good idea to hand him the insecticide.

At noon, Jorge does not touch his food. Conceição asks him if he has no appetite, and, looking at the window, he sees Íris smoking. She lights her cigarette out of the fire of a burning lavender essence in a small glass container, and Jorge, gazing at her, tells his wife the girl has no respect for her neighbors, but Conceição says he is being grouchy and that he should leave her alone. However, it is visible in his expression how much he is bothered by the girl's attitudes. Before leaving for church, Conceição asks Jorge whether he is indeed fine, to which he only nods. Looking at the window again, the man sees Íris and Maicon as they start engaging

[7] From the original: "Aquele velhinho que parecia tão simpático. Quem diria?! Era como se o veneno tivesse despertado algo que tava muito bem escondido"

in intercourse. Knowing that Jorge is watching them, the girl gives him a provocative look, and the old man's reaction is to rush to the window and close the curtain.

Figure 12 – Edgar hesitates before giving Jorge the injector with insecticide

Source: Screen capture of "Íris"

At night, another party takes places at Íris's apartment. The place is crowded, people consume drugs, and music plays loud. Once again, Jorge cannot sleep due to the noise. This time, however, he decides to call the police instead of knocking at his neighbor's door. As the officers arrive at Íris's house, she runs to the window to throw drugs away. We see her through a subjective shot. As she faces the camera, a curtain is closed, covering the frame and revealing that Jorge was spying on her. The following shot shows her pressing her burning cigarette against an ant, angry for having her house party abruptly ended.

The next day, we see Jorge taking two trash bags to a garbage can in the building's corridor. The following shot shows Íris waiting for him there. She confronts her neighbor for having called the police the previous night, but before she can threaten him, Jorge emphatically says there will be no further parties. Angry, she approaches him and, staring at the man, brings her face closer to his. Then, she asks Jorge why he so obsessively looks at her whenever he can. She walks around the man, saying he is horny for her and asking whether he is aroused at that moment. Jorge does not say a word as Íris teases him. She then repeatedly calls him "*velho*" (old man), and both the visual and auditive tracks emphasize that by briefly accelerating the rate of frames per second and the speed with which her words are repeated. To reinforce the effect of this acceleration, the camera shows this brief moment from different perspectives in

the scene. Facing Jorge, Íris raises her arm and calls him a wrinkled old man. He finally reacts, grabbing her arm and demanding respect. Íris, however, covers her face and suddenly starts screaming as Lúcia, another neighbor, approaches. She separates the man and the girl, and Íris calls Jorge a pervert and orders him to never touch her again, which makes Lúcia think she has just witnessed a case of harassment. Jorge is speechless, and, as Lúcia accompanies Íris home, the girl looks back at Jorge, who is motionless in the corridor, with a malicious glance before the scene ends.

Figure 13 – Íris teases Jorge asking whether she arouses him

Source: Screen capture of "Íris"

At home, Jorge is extremely shocked with the way things turned out in his encounter with Íris. He trembles while fetching a glass of water and faints. The scene fades as Conceição runs to the living room to help her husband. The following shot shows Jorge sitting on the sofa and taking a pill while Conceição hands him a glass of water. She asks him what really happened, but Jorge lies, telling his wife he fainted because he had drunk his water too fast. When she leaves, Jorge turns the TV on. A documentary about the use of pesticides is airing, according to which the effects such chemicals have on insects are similar to those on human beings. As he listens to it, Jorge's reaction is to hold a small box by his side, from which he takes out the injector Edgar gave him. The scene ends with Jorge holding the pesticide, his look fixed neither on the TV nor on the injector, thus suggesting he is deeply involved in his thoughts as he hears the words from the documentary.

The next scene shows Maicon leaving Íris's apartment. He locks the door and puts the key under the rug. As he leaves, Jorge, who was hiding behind an iron grid, slowly walks through the corridor and picks up the key to enter his neighbor's house. The following shots alternate between Jorge inspecting the apartment and Íris arriving at the building and taking the elevator. This parallel montage generates tension, since it hints at different outcomes for the events: Íris may get home and surprise Jorge there, or Jorge may leave the apartment before his neighbor gets there. When Jorge finds the glass container in which Íris keeps the lavender essence, he removes its wick and inserts the pesticide with the injector. The following shot shows Íris getting home. She finds it suspicious that the door is open and, calling for Maicon and getting no reply, she concludes that he forgot to lock the door again, implying this is not the first time she finds the door unlocked. She turns a record player on and sits on the couch. From a subjective shot, we see her taking the glass container with the essence and lighting a joint on its fire. The reverse shot shows Jorge hiding in the kitchen and watching his neighbor as she smokes from the fire of the poisoned essence. Íris starts coughing and goes to the bathroom, taking the essence dispenser with her. The following shot shows both the kitchen and the bathroom windows, so that we can see both Jorge and Íris. Simultaneously, the music from the record player promptly gives way to the beating sound that opened the episode, which becomes louder as the camera focuses Jorge's face.

Figure 14 – Jorge inserts the pesticide in the essence

Source: Screen capture of "Íris"

As the essence keeps burning in the bathroom, Íris coughs harder. Jorge enters the room and finds her fainted in the bathtub. He puts out the fire of the burning essence and approaches his neighbor. He is about to touch her when she suddenly opens her eyes. Jorge reacts by covering her mouth with one hand and pushing her down the water with the other, drowning her. Scared by his terrible deed, he removes her body from the bathtub, but the camera does not show what he does with it. The following shot shows him removing the wire of the record player from the plug and cutting it with scissors, an act that reveals he was true to his words when he told Íris there would be no further parties with loud music in the building. As soon as he cuts the wire, the audio track stops the background music, which attests to its synchronization with the visual track.

At home, Jorge finds Conceição sleeping. He takes off his clothes, but instead of lying in bed, he sits on its edge and covers his face with his hand, probably thinking of what he has just done to his neighbor. Conceição rolls to his side and asks if he is fine. He does not answer, and she invites him to sleep. He lies on the bed and hugs her. The following shot focuses on the couple from above, just as if the camera were on the ceiling. As it slowly zooms onto Jorge, the audio track starts playing the beating sound. Jorge turns his face to the camera terrified and asks if Conceição can also hear the music. She does not even open her eyes and once again tells Jorge he should sleep. Extremely disturbed by the beating sound that prevents him from sleeping, Jorge covers his ears with his hands, while his face expresses his dread.

Figure 15 – Jorge covers his ears as the beating sound prevents him from sleeping

Source: Screen capture of “Íris”

According to Verstraten's *Film Narratology*, the scene just described is a good example of the focalization of sound in audiovisual narratives. As the camera shows both Jorge and Conceição in the scene, the visual track focalizes them externally. However, as the audio track starts playing the beating sound, the focalization is internal, since only Jorge can hear it. Therefore, Jorge becomes a point-of-audition, even if the visual track focalizes him externally, so that the auditive narrator conforms itself to his hearing or hallucinating.

The following scene shows Edgar and Dona Lúcia talking in the corridor. He asks her whether she has seen Íris around, for he has tried to check for any new ant infestation in her apartment in the last few days, but has not found her home. Lúcia says Íris is probably sleeping, for she is a night girl. Before he leaves the building, Edgar looks through the corridor window, from which he can see Jorge, motionless, staring at Íris's apartment. The next sequence of shots shows that Jorge is still struggling with the beating sound: no matter what he does, it does not leave his head. Suddenly, he walks fast towards her apartment while the beating sound plays. As he enters there, he approaches the record player, which seems to be on, even though Jorge had previously cut its wire. To his surprise, Dona Lúcia enters the apartment, fearing that, after the encounter between Jorge and Íris she witnessed, the man would be after the girl. She asks him what is going on there, but Jorge replies with another question, asking if Lúcia can hear the music. She says the only thing she heard was him entering the girl's apartment and, as she leaves, she picks up her phone and calls the police.

Figure 16 – The record player is on even with its wire cut

Source: Screen capture of "Íris"

The next scene shows Jorge, Conceição, and Lúcia talking to a police officer in the corridor. Jorge tells him he had heard a strange noise coming from Íris's apartment and, since the door was open, decided to check it. As the officer asks the man why he hesitated to call the police, his partner screams from the apartment. They enter there and find a pack of drugs, which shocks the neighbors. Jorge and Conceição tell the officer Íris used to throw parties at her place, frequently attracting strange people. The officer apologizes for the inconvenience and says he is going to talk to some of Íris's friends. Before he leaves, he pats on Jorge's shoulder, and the auditive narrator immediately plays a beat. The sound becomes continuous, leaving Jorge bewildered. He sits on the couch, and the auditive narrator once again focuses the scene internally. Along with the beating sound, the word "velho" (old man), spoken by Íris, is repeated endlessly. The following shots alternate between past scenes of Jorge confronting Íris in the corridor and drowning her in the bathtub and scenes of him on the couch with his hands on his ears as everyone around asks him what is going on. The shots alternate fast, and eventually the visual narrator conforms to Jorge's distorted perspective, for we briefly see, from an internal shot, Conceição, Lúcia, and the officer laughing at him, just as if they knew what he did to Íris.

Figure 17 – The officer, Conceição, and Lúcia laughing as Jorge has a breakdown

Source: Screen capture of Íris

Unable to cope with the beating sound and uncertain whether the people around him know he killed Íris or not, Jorge kneels to the floor and starts tearing the carpet off. In a desperate act, he removes one of the planks from the floor, thus revealing Íris's corpse buried

in it. Ants walk on her face, and, as the camera zooms toward it, a voice-over of Edgar is introduced:

> EDGAR: He would be safe if he hadn't been dumb enough to surrender.
> FORTUNATO: Fucking crazy old man. To give himself away on a plate.
> EDGAR: He couldn't stand his own guilt.
> FORTUNATO: Sooner or later he'd have it coming, anyway. They would find her corpse there some time.[8] (my translation)

After Edgar's first line, the following scene is set at the office of Nunca Mais. Fortunato is looking for his keys as Edgar is telling him the story the visual and audio tracks have just presented. Fortunato searches for his key on the sofa and, raising a cushion, finds a locket necklace with photos of Edgar and Lenora. He smiles, but his partner reacts aggressively. Edgar takes the necklace from Fortunato's hands and pushes him against the couch, saying he should never touch the necklace again. Fortunato is surprised by Edgar's reaction and starts arguing with him, saying that his partner's aggressive attitude is the reason why Lenora left him and that he should be thankful to him for helping Edgar have a job and a place to stay. The telephone rings, and Fortunato tells Edgar to answer it, suggesting it might be Lenora. Edgar does not reply, and the episode, just like the previous ones, ends with him answering the phone.

In "Íris", Edgar's last voice-over once again suggests that the scenes presented are an audiovisual rendition of the story we see him telling Fortunato at the end of the episode. This time, however, his explanation for the events do not suggest a supernatural account of them, for he blames Jorge's guilt for killing Íris as the reason why he shows what he did in the presence of the police officers. In this respect, his guilt is represented by the beating sound, which serves as a recurrent motif throughout the episode. Nonetheless, it should be noted that it is only after he kills his neighbor that the sound can be understood as a representation of his guilty conscience; prior to that, it corresponded to the loud music coming from Íris's apartament. Therefore, the episode shows Jorge's constant attempts to get rid of the noise that prevents him from sleeping and having some peace.

Early in the episode, such as in the previous ones, Edgar provides a character in the story with an item that will be of paramount importance for the unfolding of events. When Edgar hands Jorge the injector with pesticide and his first voice-over is introduced, its content anticipates that the old man will commit a terrible deed. This internal narration also reinforces

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[8] From the original:
EDGAR: Ele taria salvo se não tivesse caído na besteira de se entregar.
FORTUNATO: Velho maluco da porra. Se entregar assim de bandeja.
EDGAR: Não aguentou a própria culpa.
FORTUNATO: Uma hora ele ia ter que se dar mal também. Uma hora iam encontrar o corpo dela lá.

that what the visual track shows is actually a flashback, for the audio track alludes to a future event that has yet to be shown. As the events unfold, the viewer realizes that both Jorge and Íris are engaged in a fight, for the girl wants to keep with her night parties and the old man wants them to end, so that he can sleep. In this sense, the episode develops this hit-and-hit-back relationship between the characters, for each one of them attacks at every turn: Íris gives a night party, and Jorge calls the police; Íris gets her revenge by seting up a scene of harassment in front of a neighbor, and Jorge retaliates by poisoning and eventually killing her. Therefore, before Íris is murdered, it is not clear who will end up the winner of this fight. Yet, considering that killing the girl did not solve his problem, one can conclude there is no winner in the story.

In "Íris", the interaction between the auditive and visual narrators is largely explored by the filmic narrator. As the episode begins, the camera initially focuses the house party before showing Jorge lying on his bed. At this point, both the visual and auditive narrators focalize the scene from the same spot, for the beating sound is not as loud as it was in the previous scene set in the corridor. After having killed Íris, however, the next scene set in Jorge's bedroom has two spots of focalization. As the camera focuses on him and Conceição in bed, it does so through an external perspective; however, the audio track plays a beating sound that only Jorge can hear, so that its focalization is internal. When he enters Íris's apartment again, the visual narrator initially conforms to Jorge's internal perspective, even if the scene does not present a subjective shot, for we see the record player with its lights on while Jorge holds its cut wire. However, this internal compliance of the visual narrator is soon interrupted when Dona Lúcia suddenly enters the room and says she does not hear the sound Jorge claims to listen, which leads her to believe he entered the apartment after the girl who lived there. A similar event takes place when Jorge all of a sudden starts hearing both the beating sound and the word *velho* in front of the police officers. Therefore, by focalizing events from different spots, the visual and auditive narrators suggest two accounts of events: while the audio track often focalizes the old man internally, the visual track focalizes him externally. As a result, on the level of the audiovisual text, the viewer knows that only Jorge can hear the beating sound in his head that prompts him to find ways to end it, but, on the level of the fabula, the other characters interpret his actions as those of a crazy man who claims to hear sounds no one else can perceive.

As the scene is set at the office of Nunca Mais at the end of the episode, new information concerning Edgar and Fortunato's past is presented. First of all, the viewer learns from Fortunato that Lenora, the character Edgar mentioned in the previous episode, may have abandoned him due to his aggressive nature. Her photo in the necklace also gives her character a face and shows that she was romantically involved with Edgar. Then, we also learn that Edgar

only started working with Fortunato after being left alone by her. However, his hostile reaction against his partner is yet unjustified, for no evidence that could explain such behavior has been presented. In this sense, it ends up reinforcing the fact that Edgar plans to take revenge on Fortunato, as indicated in the first episode. Consequently, the unclear reasons for it only prompt viewers to keep watching the series for new pieces of information.

3.4 "THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH" AND "CECÍLIA"

3.4.1 "The Masque of the Red Death"

First published in the May 1842 edition of *Graham's Magazine*, the story was initially titled "The Mask of the Red Death. A Fantasy". It was only in the reprinted version of the July 1845 edition of the *Broadway Journal* that the spelling of "mask" was changed to "masque". As G. R. Thompson (2004, p. 299) wisely observes in his edition of Poe's selected writings, by changing the word, the American author "evokes the medieval tradition not only of libidinous yet sinister masked festival but also of the form of the Renaissance courtly *masque*, in which static emblems and ritual elements from myth and legendary history came together in tableaux and dance". As the critic further points out, these balls had also an allegorical and religious meaning, for they "symbolized the interpenetration of the realms of Heaven, Earth, and Hell" (ibid.).

The story opens with the narrator announcing that the Red Death, a fatal plague, had spread throughout the country. It was characterized by "sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution" (POE, 2004, p. 299). So strong were the symptoms that anyone affected by it died within half an hour, with the body covered by blood stains, especially on the face. As a means to escape the plague, Prospero, the country's prince, invites a thousand of his friends to a castellated abbey of his possession, protected by iron gates which were welded as soon as all guests were in. According to the narrator, the Prince's idea was to spend the following months celebrating in the company of his fellows and acquaintances while the plague kept spreading throughout the land and wiping out the citizens of the realm who did not receive an invitation to take refuge in the abbey:

> The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were

> musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death". (POE, 2004, p. 300)

The narrator avoids setting the story temporally and geographically. It never mentions when the Red Death spread throughout the country, or even makes explicit which country it speaks of. However, considering that it alludes to the Renaissance tradition of the masque, as well as employs Italian words such as *improvisatori* and *decora* to refer to the individuals who improvised songs and to the tastes of the prince, respectively, we can infer the story takes place somewhere in Italy. The fact that the only named character is called Prospero reinforces this idea. As for the narrator's level of involvement with the story it tells, considering that it is not a character in the fabula and does not mention its name, it is classified as an external narrator (EN) according to Bal's terminology. Nonetheless, it should not go unnoticed that in three passages this narrator briefly refers to itself as "I", even if it does not perform any action in the events narrated. Yet, considering that this narrator is also the agent responsible for focalizing the events of the story, it is an external focalizor (EF). In this respect, there are some passages in which its point of view suggests an approach to that of a character in the fabula, such as the last excerpt quoted here. When it mentions that "The external world could take care of itself", for example, the reader cannot tell whether this is a commentary made by the narrator or an use of free indirect discourse to convey Prince Prospero's own point of view corcerning the situation surrounding him, for the sentence somehow mirrors his selfish decision to lock himself up with his friends while his people perished in the presence of the Red Death. This only attests to the fact that narrating is never a neutral act.

In a very short paragraph, six months are said to have passed since the Prince and his guests secluded themselves in the abbey. According to the narrator, that was the moment in which the plague "raged most furiously abroad" (POE, 2004, p. 300), and the Prince decided to countervail it with a magnificent masked ball. The following two paragraphs are then dedicated to a long description of Prospero's seven imperial suites where the event was about to take place and of their decoration, marked by a "love of the *bizarre*" (ibid., italics in the original). The narrator says the seven rooms, differently from most palaces, were irregularly disposed, so that no one could see how vast they were. Instead, given that they followed each other by sharp turns, one could only see a suite at a time. Every room had two Gothic windows, one to the left and one to the right, behind which there was a corridor where heavy tripods with a brazier of fire provided illumination. As for the decoration of the suites, it was planned according to the predominant color of each room:

> These windows were of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue – and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange – the fifth with white – the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet – a deep blood color. (POE, 2004, 300-301).

The narrator does not provide further details about the rooms, except for the black one. In it, the light from the fire, passing through the scarlet glass of the windows, produced a ghastly effect that was so extreme no one dared to stay there. The chamber also had a big ebony clock, and the clang of its heavy pendulum produced a heavy sound "of so peculiar note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance to harken the sound" (ibid., 301). As a result, everyone at the masque became pale and confused at its tone. However, this moment of collective meditation ended as soon as the echoes from the clock ceased, so that after the strike of every hour, the reverie of the ball immediately returned for the next sixty minutes.

As the night approached, Prospero and his guests kept partying. The narrator says that the Prince had embellished every room, and it was according to his taste that the masqueraders were given character. The impression evoked by these figures and the decoration at the ball was that "To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams" (POE, 2004, p. 302). However, in the black room, unlike the others, not even the spirit of the party made the guests want to stay there. Yet, whenever the ebony clock stroke, everything and everyone paused for a second. This cycle kept going until midnight, and the twelve strokes that followed also announced the entrance of a new masked figure at the ball, since no one had noticed it before. As a result, Prospero's guests started whispering and murmuring about the strange presence, and the narrator says that this turmoil led to feelings of disapprobation, surprise, terror, horror, and disgust, which were largely evoked by the features of the new guest:

> The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood* – and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror. (POE, 2004, p. 303)

Feeling insulted by the uninvited guest, for the figure was not disguised according to the prince's taste and was causing consternation, Prospero, who was in the blue room, ordered his men to unmask and hang the individual by sunrise. None of the Prince's fellows, however, was bold enough to approach the disguised figure, described as a "spectral image" by the narrator, so that it made its way through all the chambers as everyone cleared the center of the suits and stood next to the walls. Enraged by the situation, Prospero withdrew a dagger and followed the masked intruder as far as the black room. As he reached it, the figure suddenly turned to the Prince, who immediately dropped the dagger and fell dead upon it. At this moment, many of Propesro's fellows finally found the courage to confront the uninvited presence, which "stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock" (ibid., 304). When they seized it and removed its mask, however, the men were shocked to realize there was no tangible form behind it. The narrator ends the story by claiming that the masked figure was indeed the Red Death, which triumphed as everyone in the abbey died in its presence:

> And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all. (POE, 2004, p. 304)

Therefore, in "The Masque of the Red Death", Poe creates a story whose ending can hardly be anticipated by the reader, which only reinforces the effect it evokes. No wonder its meaning and intended effect, as Kermit Vanderbilt (apud MAY, 1991, p. 140) states, "have challenged and eluded Poe critics over the years". Early in the tale, when the Prince and his fellows secluded themselves in his abbey, it is suggested that they are safe from the Red Death, since the narrator mentions that the iron gates were welded and no one was allowed to leave or enter the place. The fact that the Prince is described as someone happy, dauntless, and sagacious who "had provided all the appliances of pleasure" (POE, 2004, p. 300) to spend the following months reinforces the idea that he does not expect to be afflicted by the pestilence in his abbey. On the other hand, the description of the black chamber, whose red light produced a ghastly effect upon the decoration, makes it the perfect set for a supernatural event to take place. In addition to this, the narrator constantly reinforces the fact that no one dared to step into this last room and the feeling evoked by the sound of the ebony clock, which was able to make everyone and everything stop for a second. As a result, by thoroughly describing this room and constantly referring to the clock, the narrator calls our attention to them. In this sense, Michael J.

Cummings (2005) discerningly remembers that it is important to pay attention to Poe's choice of words and figures of speech, such as in the following passage:

> It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical[…] (POE, 2004, p. 301)

In this excerpt, Poe deliberately employs the word "stricken" instead of "struck" as the participle of the verb "strike". However, stricken is also an adjective used to refer to someone who is severely suffering the effects of something, someone who is afflicted or injured by something. Read in this light, the passage is an early indication that the clock is marking the countdown until the Red Death strikes the ball. Cummings also states that, by referring to the "brazen lungs of the clock", the narrator provides it with a human-like quality. Another indication of the coming of the plague to the abbey is when the uninvited guest masked as the Red Death is described as a spectral image, which is later on reinforced by its intangible form. Moreover, the fact that Poe changed the short story's original title should not go unnoticed. As previously stated, masque not only maintains the idea of mask, but also recalls a medieval and Renaissance tradition of courtly masked balls. In this respect, by attributing the masque to the Red Death, Poe suggests "an entertainment staged by Death, for it was he who drove Prospero and his friends into the abbey – a grand stage where, he knew, they would seek to put him out of mind with a divertissement. In short, Death had a ball" (CUMMINGS, 2005).

As it seems, "The Masque of the Red Death" can be read as an allegory to the inevitability of death. That would explain how an individual was able to enter the fortress in which Prospero and his friends secluded themselves to escape annihilation. When the Red Death stands within the shadow of the ebony clock, it suggests that the hour of death of the people in the story has arrived, even though they tried to run away from it. The fact that the narrator avoids setting the story temporally and geographically adds to this reading of the story as an allegory. Yet, by not performing any action in the events described, the narrator sets itself outside the realm of the fabula, so that it cannot be seen as a character. That also explains how it can tell the story, for if it were a character, the narrator would probably be a victim of the Red Death as well, so that it would not live to tell its tale.

Lastly, one cannot ignore the strong symbolism and the intertextual dialogue in the story. As Thompson (2004) remarks, many critics have argued that Poe probably took inspiration for his "Red Death" in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (c. 1611), in which Prospero is

a magician cursed with the "red plague" by his servant, Caliban. The play also features a masque initially conceived by Prospero and later on ceased by him. Another possible intertextual reference is Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1351-53), in which "a group of young people flee the Black Death raging in 14th-century Florence to a castle outside the city" (THOMPSON, 2004, p. 299). Also, in the end of the story, when the narrator says the Red Death "had come like a thief in the night" (POE, 2004, p. 304) to Prospero's masque, it alludes to two passages in the Bible. According to Thessalonians 5:2, "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night". This phrase is also present in 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat". In this sense, those references only reinforce that the Red Death is an allegory for the inevitability of death. Finally, it is important to mention that the meaning of the colors with which Prospero decorated every room in his abbey has long been a matter of debate among critics. While some claim that their meaning is undiscernible, especially because the narrator does not comment on it, others state that it is an allegory to Prospero's life span, with the seven colors paralleling the seven stages of life as proposed by Shakespeare in *As You Like It* (c. 1599). Trying to solve the colors puzzle, Brett Zimmerman (2009) resorts to previous discussions on the matter before he proposes his own interpretation, based on the *Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* and on books from Poe's time that attributed meaning to colors and which the American author had access to. His study is summarized as follows:

> The hues of Prospero's suite represent human existence from prebirth to birth (blue), to youth (green), to corrupt middle age (orange), to infirmity (white and violet), to mental degradation and death (black), possibly through disease (red), and *perhaps* reentrance into the ethereal repertoire of extra-carnal spirits (around back to blue). The royal purple has a special significance relevant to Prince Prospero himself. "The Masque of the Red Death" is, as so many other commentators believe, a tale about the stages of human life […] (ZIMMERMAN, 2009, p. 69, italics in the original)

Therefore, as far as Narratology can go in shedding some light on the narrative structure of texts, comparing it with previous texts and combining it with other studies and points of view makes it even more enriching. In this sense, even though our narratological analysis of "The Masque of the Red Death" already suggested that the story could be read as an allegory of the inevitability of death, looking at different perspectives, such as the one provided by Zimmerman in the excerpt above, adds to this early hint. In this respect, the idea of the certainty of death is reinforced by the sequence of colors with which the seven rooms are decorated, for they can be interpreted as a representation of Prospero's life span. However, since the narrator does not

suggest any special meaning to these colors, the reader does not pay attention to them. As a result, when the Red Death finally arrives and attracts Prospero to the last room, making the Prince walk from the blue to the black suite before making him its victim, the story alludes to the progression of his stages of life as Prospero walks the path from birth to death. That way, by not commenting of the meaning of the colors of the rooms, the narrator ends up masking the allegorical character of the story, secretly encoding it. Then, when it comes to the surface and the reader is taken by surprise, Poe's intended effect is achieved.

3.4.2 "Cecília"

The episode opens inside an antique shop. The camera moves through some of the items on sale, mostly dolls, and shows a woman opening the shop's front door and picking up a parcel box. As she takes it inside, the camera focuses on a poster announcing a carnival party to take place at the store on February 9. The next shot shows Cecília, the owner of the store, opening the box and taking a red mask out of it. She climbs on a stool to place the mask on a high shelf. However, she notices a small crevice on the shelf, through which she inserts her finger. A fine powder falls from the crevice, and, as Cecília moves her finger inside the wood, the scene dissolves to reveal the furniture is infested by a termite colony. The following shot shows a whole column of shelves falling down in front of Cecília. Through a subjective shot, we see the broken wood and the newly arrived mask covered in dust on the ground. Cecília picks it up and runs her hand over it, removing part of the dust and highlighting its dark red color (see Figure 18). She gazes at the mask, and the scene is followed by the episode's opening credits.

The next scene shows Edgar and Fortunato at the same room in which the shelves fell down. While Edgar applies pesticides to control the termite infestation, Fortunato, who wears a pair of pink butterfly wings, is amazed by the items on the store. He takes a mask from a shelf and, playing with it, tells Edgar they could come to the carnival party the shop will host. Suddenly, Cecília and a friend surprise him as they enter the room. Edgar tells the girls the room's baseboard needs to be replaced, and Fortunato assures them that a specialized team of pest exterminators, such as Nunca Mais, as he implies, could solve the problem. Cecília, looking at Fortunato's pink wings, asks the men not to touch the items of the store, to which he replies he will buy the wings. Before the girls leave, Edgar gives Cecília a pump and a mask, so that she can apply the pesticide and stop the infestation from spreading before they visit the shop again.

Figure 18 – Cecília removes the dust from the red mask

Source: Screen capture of "Cecília"

After handing Cecília a protection mask, Edgar looks at her trying it on her face. He then notices the red mask she received in the mail is placed on a lower shelf. As a subjective shot shows his point of view of the mask, his first voice-over is introduced: "There it was, in the corner of the cupboard. Blood-colored! And I could see, from her gaze, that a tragedy was going to happen"[9] (my translation). That way, Edgar's words, early in the episode, allude to the fateful story the unfolding of the events will reveal. In addition to this, by referring to the red mask and comparing its color to blood, the character also suggests that it will have a role in the upcoming incidents in the fabula.

The next scene shows Cecília and her friend, who is not named in the episode, in the shop's main room. They talk about the preparations for the carnival party. Their dialogue implies that Cecília is in debt, and the event will be an opportunity for her to raise money. The girl tells Cecília that the woman who usually prepares the sandwiches for the party has raised her prices and, based on that, suggests they sell *caipirinha* as a way to make more money. The scene ends with the girl leaving the shop and Cecília putting the red mask on display on a shelf.

At night, lying in bed, Cecília hears a noise coming from upstairs. The next shot shows her in her nightdress applying pesticide with the insecticide pump she got from Edgar. A new sound of furniture being moved calls her attention, so she realizes its source may not be the

[9] From the original: "Ali, no canto do armário, tava ela. Cor de sangue! E eu via, no olhar dela, que alguma tragédia ia acontecer"

termites. She carefully walks through the room, and the only sounds played by the audio track are that of her steps on the floor and of her breathing. The shots alternate between external and internal points of view. We see Cecília walking through the room, and the camera also shows her view of the dolls and toys that surround her. Suddenly, a wind-up monkey toy is powered, and its sound calls Cecília's attention. As she walks toward it, a subjective shot follows. The camera moves from the toy to the red mask behind it, which suddenly moves and faces Cecília. The following shot shows a man wearing the red mask pushing her to the floor. She falls with her back turned to him, and the masked man lies on her and takes her panties off. She tries to get rid of him, but the scene fades as we hear her crying.

The next scene shows iron grids being welded onto the doors and windows of the shop and cameras being installed inside and outside it. That way, Cecília, who lives above the shop, locks herself home, deeply traumatized by the tragedy she has been through, and avoids communication with everyone, not even answering the phone when her friend calls. The following sequence of shots highlights Cecília's secluded routine, and the visual narrator eventually conforms to her distorted perception of reality and her constant fear of not being alone at home, a clear sign of the extension of her trauma. In one of the scenes, for example, she washes her hands in the bathroom and, when she looks at herself in the mirror, she sees a white mask covering her face. She scratches herself as she struggles to remove the mask until drops of blood fall on the sink. Suddenly, her phone rings and calls her attention. When she looks at herself in the mirror again, no mask covers her face; instead, the camera shows stains of blood as the result of her scratches. She leaves the bathroom and walks through the corridor toward the living room, where her cell phone is ringing. She picks it up but does not answer it. The camera focuses on her face, and, as it moves to the right, so do her eyes. The frame shows the masked man behind her (see Figure 19), but a reverse shot reveals it was only a product of her imagination.

In this respect, Verstraten addresses this subservient position of the visual narrator as an accomplice, since it conforms to Cecília's distorted perception of reality even when it focalizes her externally. Therefore, the author classifies this kind of shot as external focalization with subjective content. The reverse shot, in this sense, exposes how this visual narrator operates as a double agent. In it, although the focalization is also external, the content, unlike the previous shot, does not conform to Cecília's point of view, disconnecting itself from internal focalization. The next shot reinforces that by showing Cecília and her friend watching the camera recordings of the previous night on TV. In the images of the cameras, Cecília is shown in the living room with her phone in her hand. She looks back at the corridor, but the camera shows no one else is

in it. As the girl realizes her friend spent the night awake wandering around the house, she tries to comfort Cecília by telling her that, if someone else really entered the house, the cameras would show who it was, so that she can feel safe at home. Cecília, however, does not say a word, and her only reaction is to cry.

Figure 19 – The visual narrator conforms to Cecília's perception of things

Source: Screen capture of "Cecília"

Although still shaken by her trauma, Cecília is able to leave her house for a moment. A shot shows her coming back home with a package in her hands. As she enters the shop, the camera focuses on a notice on the wall that says the antique store is temporarily closed. In her bedroom, Cecília surfs the web, and the camera shows she is reading recent news and statistics of sexual violence in Brazil. As she lays the mouse cursor over the link to a report of violence in São Paulo, she looks back, and the camera shows a revolver on her bed next to the empty package she has brought home.

At night, her TV is tuned on a news channel, according to which the rape records have increased 157% in four years. The report calls Cecília's attention, and once again the visual narrator conforms to her distorted perception, for the images in the TV show a girl being taken by two police officers. As she turns her face to the camera, we see Cecília on the screen of the TV. The next shot shows Cecília turning the TV off, and the scene triggers a series of memories of her rape, which is rendered by the visual track through a flashback of the event. This time, however, Cecília reacts by removing the rapist's mask, and a subjective shot shows a deformed white figure behind it.

Figure 20 – A deformed white figure is revealed behind the red mask

Source: Screen capture of “Cecília”

The next day, as she wakes up, Cecília notices a shadow downstairs on the shop through the TV. The following shot shows her at the top of the staircase holding her gun, which she hides as soon as she realizes it is her friend who has entered there. She climbs down the stairs and tells her friend to return her keys. This is the first time since the raping that Cecília speaks in the episode. Her friend approaches her and notices that her face is scratched. She asks Cecília what happened, but her reply is to ask for her keys once again. The girl gives her the keys and says she only opened the shop because it was time for the pest exterminator to apply the pesticide again. Then, a subjective shot shows Edgar at the antique store staring at the girls. Cecília’s friend calls her upstairs, saying she has something to show her. The next scene shows them at the table, and Cecília’s friend shows her a report on the newspaper, according to which a rapist from Northern São Paulo has been sent to jail. The girl is sure the man in question is the one who raped her friend. Cecília, however, is not so sure, for the report does not mention that a red mask was found with the man. The girl says Cecília has nothing to worry about and reminds her that the upcoming party is a chance for her to start over, for she will finally be able to raise the money she needs to get rid of her antique shop. The scene ends with the girls holding each other’s hands, hoping things are about to get good again.

As the audio track starts playing a beating sound, it leads to the next scene, which is set at the shop’s carnival party. The place is crowded, music is playing, and everyone is wearing a costume, with some people also wearing masks. The camera shows Cecília dancing among her

guests, and one of the girls approaches her to praise the party and the shop. Cecília walks to a different room, and the friend who was by her side throughout the episode follows her. The next shot shows them happy as they dance together. Then, the visual and auditive narrators slow the motion of the scene a bit as the girls share a kiss. The camera shows Cecília opening her eyes, and a subjective shot follows, showing a man wearing the red mask, which starts melting on his face. The next shot shows Cecília terrified, and her friend tries to help her as she has a panic attack at the party. They go to Cecília's bedroom upstairs. Sitting on the bed, her friend asks her what happened or whether she saw something, to which Cecília slightly nods. However, she is so scared she cannot say a word. Her friend gets a little pissed off for not having an answer for what is going on and tells Cecília to stay in the bedroom as she goes back to the party to fetch her something. As the girl leaves, Cecílias keeps crying for apparently having seen her rapist at her party. She moves her head to the side, and the camera focuses on her expression. She gets more frightened as she suddenly notices something, and a subjective shot follows. In it, we see the masked man on the TV, facing the security camera. Then, an external shot shows Cecília crawling toward the television.

Figure 21 – Through a subjective shot, we see the masked man on the TV

Source: Screen capture of "Cecília"

The following scene shows Cecília climbing down the stairs holding her gun. She joins the people at the party again, but, although everyone is dancing, the auditive narrator plays a suspenseful music. The following shots alternate between external and internal focalization. We see Cecília walking in the room in the middle of her guests, and the next shot, a subjective

one, shows the masked man on the opposite side of the room. The following shot is external, and we see Cecília approaching the man and raising both arms. She aims at him and shoots with the gun. The sound of the shot makes everyone around her stop and look at her. Scared, Cecília looks at the people surrounding her before looking at the one she shot down. An internal shot reveals it was her friend. As the camera approaches the dead body, a voice-over of Edgar is introduced: "When it was midnight, there was no longer any party"[10] (my translation). As Edgar says these words, the scene ends with Cecília putting the gun inside her mouth and shooting herself dead, which is followed by a fade-out.

The next scene is set at the office of Nunca Mais. Edgar is sitting in front of the TV, staring at the dove upon it that constantly visits him in search for food. Then, Fortunato asks Edgar what is the problem with him, for every story he tells ends with at least one woman dying. This line in some way addresses Poe's aesthetic ideal of the death of a beautiful woman as the most poetic subject matter in the world, which is reinforced in every episode of the series. Then, Fortunato invites Edgar to a carnival parade taking place the next day. Edgar, however, does not answer nor faces his partner. Sitting on the chair, he lowers his head, and Fortunato gets angry behind him for not getting a reply. Before leaving, Fortunato gives up inviting Edgar to the carnival parade and says he better stay alone and watch out for any woman out there who might shoot him, thus alluding to the story Edgar had just told him. As Fortunato leaves, Edgar stares at the dove once again and starts talking to it, saying that, according to his partner's words, he will be alone the next day. Suddenly, the telephone rings, as in the end of every previous episode. However, this time around Edgar does not take it off the hook. Instead, he angrily throws it to the floor and, after that, pretends to answer it by saying "Nunca Mais" (Nevermore), which leads to the episode's final credits.

As Edgar's last voice-over turns into a dialogue with Fortunato as soon as the scene is set in their office, the temporality of the audio track matches that of the visual one. Once again, the fact that the last voice-over blends into a dialogue implies that the scenes previously presented are an audiovisual rendition of the story we see him telling Fortunato at the end of the episode. Although this time Edgar does not suggest a supernatural explanation to the events in his final lines, Fortunato is still reluctant to believe in his partner's stories, for they always end with a woman dying in them, thus suggesting they follow a pattern. Considering that Edgar does not answer Fortunato, the question of whether what he tells indeed happened the way he reports remains a mystery.

[10] From the original: "Quando deu meia-noite, já não tinha mais festa nenhuma"

In “Cecília”, the audiovisual rendition of the story hints at two accounts of events, since the visual narrator either conforms to a traumatized character’s point of view as well as presents scenes that go against it, thus working as a double agent, as Verstraten states. After being raped, Cecília’s perception of reality is distorted by the constant fear of not being alone at home, thus prompting her to wander around her house at night for any sign she finds suspicious. In this sense, by presenting both her hallucinations – such as in the scene in which her face is covered by a white mask or when her rapist is behind her in the living room – and a point of view that counters it externally – such as Cecília looking at herself in the mirror and not seeing the white mask anymore or the reverse shot that shows no one was behind her in the living room – the visual narrator initially leaves the viewer in doubt of what he should believe in. If her hallucinations in these scenes were focalized internally, the viewer would probably early on interpret them as the product of Cecília’s traumatized mind.

Later on, as further scenes presents Cecília’s deranged perception of things through subjective shots – such as when she sees herself on the TV or when, in a flashback, she sees a deformed white face behind the rapist’s mask –, the viewer is led to believe that the shock of the event has strongly affected her senses. However, when her friend claims that her rapist has been sent to jail based on a newspaper report, Cecília is not totally convinced and highlights that no mask had been found with him, thus suggesting she may have a point. This is also reinforced when, at the party, she apparently sees a man wearing the red mask. Because there is no confirmation that the police has indeed caught Cecília’s rapist, it does not seem unlikely that the man could return to the shop, especially during a costume party in which it would be harder for him to be recognized. Based on that, although the visual narrator progressively makes clear that Cecília’s perception of reality is deeply influenced by the trauma she went through, the way the events unfold does not altogether deny her suspicious regarding the criminal being still around, thus generating narrative suspense, for two accounts of events are developed simultaneously. Consequently, an effect of surprise is produced when Cecília shoots her friend dead in the middle of the party, for she mistakes her for the rapist. The effect is reinforced especially because Cecília was kissing the friend she shot down when she initially saw/believed she saw the masked man in the party, thus making it unexpected that she would later on mistake her friend for him. The ending of the story also shows that the tragedy Edgar’s first voice-over alluded to was not exactly Cecília’s rape, which was connected to the red mask, as the voice-over implied, but her and her friend’s tragic death, which was prompted by a supposed vision of the red mask.

Lastly, although no new information concerning Edgar and Fortunato's past is introduced at the end of the episode, the way the events unfold suggests that Edgar is closer to finally having his revenge plan carried out. When he refuses Fortunato's invitation to the carnival parade, which makes his partner scream angrily at him, their conflictive relationship is highlighted. After Fortunato leaves the office, Edgar, in a monologue with the dove, ponders on Fortunato's words, since his partner told him he would spend the next day alone. When the telephone rings, a motif that always signals the episode is about to end, Edgar hesitates to answer it before he throws it to the ground, thus breaking with the convention established in the previous episodes, which have all ended with Edgar answering the phone and saying the words *Nunca Mais*. In addition to this, as he ponders on being alone the following day, Edgar's attitude somehow implies that there is something building up for the next episode of the series.

3.5 "THE BLACK CAT", "THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO", AND "LENORA"

3.5.1 "The Black Cat"

First published in the August 1843 edition of the Philadelphia *United States Saturday Post*, "The Black Cat" presents an early definition of the concept of "perverseness", which Poe further developed in his "The Imp of the Perverse", from 1845. In this respect, the story is often compared to "The Tell-Tale Heart", also from 1843, in the sense that this idea of a primitive impulse that leads someone to act against his own best interests is also suggested as the justification for the narrator's deeds. Another Poe story often compared to "The Black Cat" is "The Cask of Amontillado", since both of them present narrators who confess to having walled up someone else. Just like the narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart", the narrator of the "The Black Cat" opens his account of events claiming he is not a mad man, although this time he does not demand the reader to believe in his report:

> For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not – and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified – have tortured – have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me, they have presented little but Horror – to many they will seem less terrible than *baroques*. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place – some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive, in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects. (POE, 2004, p. 348-349)

In this initial paragraph, the narrator explicitly refers to itself as “I”, thus indicating it is a character-bound narrator (CN). Therefore, we will address it as “he” in this analysis. According to his report, he is about to be executed the next day, and his account of the reasons that have sentenced him to death is the way he finds to release his soul from grief. Although the narrator claims he is not mad, he acknowledges he is in an excited state of mind, aroused by the horror and terror the previous events in his life evoke. As such, these feelings seem to influence his understanding of what has happened to him, for he avoids explaining the causal connection between the episodes he is about to pen. Nonetheless, he makes clear that a less excited and “more logical” mind will realize the ordinariness of his story. Therefore, in the beginning of the tale, the narrator presents his reader with the task of establishing the chains of cause and effect between the events that are about to unfold, and the only hint provided is that, together, they comprise a series of ordinary household episodes.

In the second paragraph of the story, the narrator highlights that, from his childhood, he was known for been extremely fond of animals, up to the point that his friends used to make fun of him for being so sensitive. He says he grew up surrounded by all sorts of pets and that the pleasure he found in their company followed him into his adult life. Suddenly, without any temporal mark, the next paragraph of his account jumps to the time of his marriage, in which the narrator says that his wife, aware of his affection for pets, made sure they “had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and *a cat*” (POE, 2004, p. 349, italics in the original). In addition to italicizing the word cat, the narrator says it was his favorite pet, “a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree” (ibid.). Its name was Pluto, which is also the Roman name for Hades, the Greek god of the underworld. Nonetheless, along with naming a black cat Pluto, the narrator also briefly mentions that his wife “made frequent allusion to the ancient popular notion, which regarded all black cats as witches in disguise” (ibid.). Right after mentioning this superstitious belief, the narrator attempts to undermine it by saying that his wife was never serious about that popular assumption and that he only mentioned it in his account “for no better reason than that it happens, just now, to be remembered” (ibid.). It should be noted, however, that although the narrator claims this last sentence is devoid of importance, making it part of his account goes against Poe’s principle that “In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design” (POE, 2004, p. 647). Therefore, if the American author was loyal to his aesthetic principles in his own fiction,

as this thesis intends to show, the information the last sentence of this passage provides should not be disregarded, as it most likely contributes to the preconceived effect intended in the story.

As the story continues, the narrator states that his friendship with Pluto lasted for several years. However, he also progressively turned into a heavy drinker during this period of time, consequently becoming "more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others" (POE, 2004, p. 349). As a result, he shamefully confesses to have started beating his wife and mistreating their pets due to his addiction to alcohol, not even sparing Pluto from his violence:

> One night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish malevolence, gin-nurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame. I took from waistcoat-pocket a pen-knife, 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. (POE, 2004, p. 350).

This passage is a clear example of how the narrator manipulates the reader in his account of events. When he describes Pluto's reaction after been seized by him, he places a lot of emphasis on the cat's bite, for he claims to be instantly taken by an evil fury after the event. In this sense, by employing words such as "demon", "possessed", "soul", "fiendish malevolence", and "thrilled", for example, the narrator ends up embedding his report with supernatural allusions, for the way he describes the cat's reaction to being grabbed suggests that Pluto was an evil entity that cursed him with its bite, an image reinforced by the previously mentioned superstition regarding black cats. As a result, the less attentive reader may not realize that this same passage refers to his alcohol addiction and to how it affects his perception of things by altering his state of mind. This is indicated by the use of words such as "intoxicated", "fancied", and "gin-nurtured". Read in this light, it is evident that the cat is not the one to blame for the way the events have unfolded. However, since the narrator strongly suggests that a supernatural event has taken place, the reader may link it to the presence of Pluto. In addition to this, right after describing the atrocity he committed to his pet, the narrator avoids emphasizing his violent and sick attitude; instead, he shifts the time of narration from past to present to highlight how much the event has affected him, for he claims to blush and shudder as he writes the report. He also lessens his guilt by saying that the remorse he felt the next day was "a feeble and equivocal feeling, and [that] the soul remained untouched" (POE, 2004, p. 350). With this mindset, the narrator decides to drown the memory of the event in wine.

After the incident, the narrator says that Pluto recovered well, although the cat fled in terror whenever he approached it. As for its injury, the socket of its lost eye became "a frightful appearance" (POE, 2004, p. 350). At first, the narrator felt grief for having lost his companion, but this feeling soon gave way to a constant irritation that later evolved into the so-called spirit of perverseness, which he defines as an "unfathomable longing of the soul to *vex itself* – to offer violence to its own nature – to do wrong for the wrong's sake only" (ibid.). Taken by this primitive impulse, the narrator eventually decides to end damage he caused to Pluto:

> One morning, in cold 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, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart; – hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and *because* I felt it had given me no reason of offense; – hung it *because* I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin – a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it – if such a thing were possible – even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God. (POE, 2004, p. 350-351, italics in the original)

Despite initially claiming that his remorse for cutting Pluto's eye was but an equivocal feeling, it is with tears in his eyes that the narrator appallingly kills his cat. In the first paragraph of the story, the narrator states that he will not comment on the events he tells, assigning the reader the task of establishing the cause-and-effect relations between the episodes. However, in the passage above, he provides explanations for his terrible deed, as the recurrent use of the conjunction "because", which is italicized, suggests. His words make clear that he is aware of the weight of his actions and of how unworthy of mercy they are, but even so he consummates them. In this sense, the fact that he performs them crying implies that he is punishing himself for the heavy drinker he became, for his alcohol addiction turned him into the opposite of what he was mostly known for: someone extremely fond of animals. Therefore, acknowledging that Pluto, his favorite pet, had once loved him and had given him no reason that could justify his terrible action, the narrator still performs it. However, by attributing his move to a sudden impulse of perverseness, the narrator provides a different cause for what he has done – one that, as he puts it, not even Philosophy has taken account of. In this respect, by claiming to have been suddenly taken by a drive to commit an evil act, a few lines after having placed a lot of emphasis on Pluto's bite, the narrator ends up reinforcing the idea that he was somehow cursed by an entity that eventually took control of his actions.

On the night of the day the narrator kills the cat, his house mysteriously catches fire. The narrator, his wife, and a servant barely make their way out of the flames as the fire consumes the house. This event is described in a short paragraph, and no clue about the reason why the house burned down is provided. In the following paragraph, the narrator claims to be

unable to establish a relation of cause and effect to the event; even so, however, he decides to detail a chain of facts in the hopes of not leaving "even a possible link imperfect" (POE, 2004, p. 351). According to him, only a compartment wall of the house stood up, apparently because plaster had been recently spread on it. Most notably, however, was that the wall had the figure of a gigantic cat, with a rope around its neck, engraved in it, thus attracting the attention of the neighbors. The narrator says he was initially terrified with the apparition, but, after reflecting about it, he provides an explanation for what happened. He says that the cat was hung in a tree adjacent to his house, and that the fire called the attention of the people who lived around. Then, in an attempt to wake him up as his fire burned down, he says a neighbor probably cut the cat from the tree and threw it through his bedroom's open window. As the other walls fell down, the narrator says they probably compressed Pluto into the recently spread plaster, thus engraving it in the compartment wall. It should be noted, however, that none of the neighbors who come check the standing wall the next day claims to have thrown the cat through the window.

Although providing an explanation for the apparition of Pluto on his wall, the narrator says the image of the cat made a deep impression on his mind for months. He initially thought it was due to remorse, but then concludes it was regret for having lost his favorite pet, so that he decides to look for a similar cat to replace Pluto. One night, while drinking, the narrator notices a black figure on a barrel of gin or rum. As he approaches it, he realizes it is a big black cat very similar to Pluto, except that it had a large portion of white hair covering its breast. The narrator caresses the animal, and the cat purrs and rubs his hand as a sign of affection, which the narrator interprets as an indication that he finally found the pet he was looking for. As the tavern's proprietor knew nothing of the cat's origin, and the cat manifested a disposition to follow the narrator, he decides to take it home, where the animal soon attracts the affection of the narrator's wife.

Some time later, the familiar feelings of dislike and irritation progressively arise in the narrator in the presence of the new cat, eventually leading to hatred. The remembrance of what he did to Pluto, however, prevents him from doing the same with the new pet, so that the narrator decides to avoid it as much as possible. Part of the reason for such hatred is the realization that the cat, just like Pluto, is deprived of an eye. His wife, on the other hand, sees that as a sign that the cat needs further care and fondling. Yet, whenever possible, the cat demands the narrator's attention, following him everywhere and thus irritating him even more. In addition to this, the cat's white hair slowly assumes, as both the narrator and his wife notice, the form of the gallows, which become a source of absolute dread for him, since it is a constant reminder of how he

killed Pluto. Once again, the narrator employs words that allude to the supernatural when describing both the cat and the figure its white hair formed, such as “hideous”, “ghastly thing”, and “monster”, which suggest that the new cat is a reincarnation of Pluto, as the following passage strongly implies: “And *a brute beast* – whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed – *a brute beast* to work out for *me* – for me a man, fashioned in the image of the High God – so much of insufferable wo! Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!” (POE, 2004, p. 353, italics in the original). As a result, the narrator, overcome with fear, avoids doing the cat any harm.

Struggling with his constant fear and fighting against his will to hurt the cat, the narrator says that the good in him eventually succumbed to a “hatred of all things and of all mankind” (ibid.). One day, as he and his wife go into the cellar, the cat, following them, almost makes the narrator fall down the stairs by getting between his feet. In an act of fury, he uplifts an axe to hit the animal, but his wife intervenes by holding his arm. Angry at her attitude, he raises the axe again and aims at her this time, instantly killing the woman by hitting her in the head. Aware that removing the body from the house would raise suspicion, the narrator sets himself to conceal it in the cellar. Taking advantage that its walls had been recently plastered and that there was a projection of a false chimney or fireplace in one of the walls, the narrator decides to remove the bricks that covered the compartment, insert the corpse there, and wall it up with plaster, so that it would resemble the rest of the place. In the following paragraph, he describes how painstakingly and carefully he proceeded with hiding his deceased wife’s corpse. After finishing the job, he looks for the cat with the intention to kill it as well, but he is unable to find it. However, without feeling the animal’s presence in his surroundings, the narrator finally has a good night’s sleep again.

On the fourth day after the event in the cellar, the cat, to the narrator’s happiness, is still missing. Some police officers appear in the house to make some inquiries about the disappearance of the narrator’s wife. Confident that he has done a gone work hiding her corpse, he guides the men through the house to investigate. As the officers, satisfied with the inspection, are about to leave, the narrator, feeling triumphant, calls their attention to how well constructed his house was, saying that its walls were solidly put together. While he utters these words, he hits with his cane the wall behind which he plastered his wife’s corpse. To his surprise, however, something within the wall suddenly reacts:

> But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs of the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb! – by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly

> anomalous and inhuman – a howl – a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation. (POE, 2004, p. 355)

In this excerpt, the narrator's choice of words and expressions to describe the unexpected cry, such as "anomalous", "inhuman", "arisen out of hell", "throats of the damned", "demons", and "damnation", for example, evoke the supernatural once more. Prompted by the sound of this loud cry coming from the wall, the officers start removing its bricks, thus discovering the corpse buried within the plaster. To the narrator's surprise, however, the cat, "with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire" (POE, 2004, p. 355), was sat above the corpse's head. The story ends with the narrator acknowledging he had walled up the cat along with his wife.

Therefore, in "The Black Cat", Poe manipulates the reader by having a character-bound narrator whose report constantly pushes the boundaries between the real and the supernatural. In the first paragraph of the story, the narrator states that, although sane, he does not expect the reader to believe him, for his intention in reporting the past events in his life is to free his soul from grief. He also claims that the episodes he is about to tell still have effects on him, so that he attempts to present them neutrally by not indicating the causal relations between them. However, he emphasizes that a "more logical" mind is able to realize that his story is nothing but "an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects" (ibid., p. 349). In this sense, he gives the reader a hint on how to understand his account of past episodes. Nonetheless, this series of "mere household events" is embedded with recurring suggestions of supernatural events, especially regarding his black cat, Pluto. As we have already pointed in this analysis, by naming his cat after the Roman god of Hell and addressing the superstitious belief that black cats are witches in disguise, even if he disregards it right after mentioning it, he implies that the animal might be the representation of an evil creature, an interpretation reinforced by his choice of words whenever he refers to the cat, such as in the moment it bites him. In addition to this, the fact that he ends up adopting a cat similar to Pluto after having killed it suggests that the new pet might be a reincarnation of the previous one. The white hair in its breast that eventually assumes the form of gallows and the recurrence of the feelings of dislike and irritation reinforce that.

However, as previously mentioned, Poe constantly emphasized in his critical reviews and theoretical essays that every word employed in a work of fiction must contribute to its preconceived effect. Based on that, we cannot ignore that, right in the second paragraph of the story, the narrator highlights how he has been known, from his infancy, as someone extremely

fond of animals. Although apparently disconnected from the following events of the report, especially by its temporal distance from them, the information this paragraph conveys should not be ignored. When the narrator tells he has become a heavy drinker, he says he is ashamed of that, for alcohol was responsible for his change of behavior, turning him into someone easily irritable, not even sparing his wife and pets from the violence his altered manners led him to commit. As a result, his alcoholism turned him into the opposite of what he was most known for, as the action of cutting out one of Pluto's eyes and eventually killing it show. However, by initially declaring the remorse he felt for his first attack on the cat was only momentary and by attributing the hanging of the animal to a primitive impulse called perverseness, the narrator attempts at an explanation for his terrible deeds. Yet, the reader should not ignore that it is with tears in his eyes, aware of the love the cat had for him, and with "the bitterest remorse" that the narrator kills the cat in a way that no mercy could save his soul. In this respect, the way with which he describes the killing of Pluto suggests that his action is a way of punishing himself for the terrible person he became, thus acknowledging he does not deserve the love of that cat he has treated so bad.

Moreover, when his house burns down, the narrator neither indicates what provoked the fire nor provides a reason as to why he had recently plastered a compartment wall. He only says that the fresh plaster was what possibly kept the wall up, and that a neighbor threw the dead cat through the open window as a means to wake him up. In this sense, it is hard to think that someone would go to bed and leave the bedroom window open. Besides, it is also unlikely that the narrator would leave his cat hung in the tree in view of everybody who passed in front of the garden, especially because later on in the story, after having killed his wife, he says he could not remove her body neither by day nor by night, for the neighbors could observe him. In this respect, it seems very likely that, after having hung the cat, the narrator took advantage of the compartment wall in his house to conceal the animal within it with plaster, so that he would not raise any suspicion. This not only provides an explanation for the wall being recently plastered, but it also helps explain why no neighbor confessed to having thrown Pluto as a means to wake the narrator up during the fire. The absence of causal marks in the passage, however, overshadows this reading of the events.

After having adopted a stray cat similar to Pluto, which was actually the reason why he adopted it, the narrator claims that its white hair formed the image of gallows, thus frightening him. However, the cat's behavior is the opposite of what the narrator makes it seem like. As no one knew about its origin, the stray cat became affectionate with the very first person who showed it some fondness. In addition to this, after having been brought home, the cat also

becomes amiable to the narrator's wife, whose behavior resembles her husband's lost distinguishing trait. Afraid that it might be Pluto reincarnated, the narrator decides to avoid his new pet. Nonetheless, as the feelings of dislike and irritation return, he decides to get rid of the animal in his first fit of rage. As his wife intervenes, she ends up becoming the victim of his behavior. In this sense, considering that the narrator walled her up inside the projection of a false chimney or fireplace in the cellar and that she constantly demonstrated love for the cat, it is no wonder that the animal stayed close to her after the narrator attempted to kill it. Although he claims to have proceeded very carefully in burying his wife in the wall, we should not forget that he was in an excess of rage when he did it, so that he could not realize he walled up a black cat down in the cellar wall, as his surprise at finding the cat inside the wall in the end of the story suggests. However, it is also hard to think that the cat would remain four days inside the wall without making any sound unless provoked. Therefore, Poe pushes the boundaries between the real and the supernatural up until the last sentence of the story, thus encoding two accounts of events in one. The author also constantly foreshadows upcoming events in the story. When the gallows become a recurring image, since the narrator uses them to kill Pluto and, later on, they appear on the new cat's hair, they end up foreshadowing the narrator's sentence of execution by hanging. Besides, the plastering of Pluto inside his bedroom wall also foreshadows the plastering of the other cat in the end of the story. Lastly, by having the focalization of the story solely provided by a disturbed narrator, the reader is left with no other point of view to confront his perception of things. Yet, as the narrator claims in the first paragraph of the story, despite the constant suggestions of supernatural events taking place, it is also possible that an attentive reader will identify a logical and causal relationship between the episodes narrated.

3.5.2 "The Cask of Amontillado"

First published in the November 1846 edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*, "The Cask of Amontillado" is the account of how Montresor carried out his revenge plan against Fortunato during carnival festivities. Just like in "The Black Cat", the theme of immurement is present in the tale. The story is told by Montresor himself, therefore by a character-bound narrator (CN), who opens his account addressing an implied listener and expounding the resolution with which he conceived his plan:

> The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled – but the very definiteness with which it was resolved

> precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong. (POE, 2004, p. 415, italics in the original)

From this first paragraph, Montresor makes clear that he has been planning his revenge for some time, as the italicized expression "at length" shows. Although his animosity towards Fortunato resisted many injuries, it is only when Montresor is insulted by him that he decides to take his revenge. However, the nature of this insult is not made explicit in this initial paragraph. Instead, Montresor details the conditions according to which he must proceed to successfully execute his plan: he not only has to punish Fortunato with impunity, but his enemy must also be aware that it is Montresor who is punishing him. Therefore, he decides to attack him on his weak spot, which is the fact that "He prided himself upon his connoisseurship in wine" (POE, 2004, p. 415). In this respect, however, Montresor says he did not differ from Fortunato. Yet, while he claims to be "skillful in the Italian vintages" (ibid.), he says his enemy's knowledge in the matter of old wines was just sincere. Taking advantage of that, Montresor approaches Fortunato during carnival festivities, claiming to have recently received a barrel of what is supposed to be Amontillado, a Spanish amber dry wine. Unsure of the authenticity of the article, he consults Fortunato on the matter, in a clear attempt to lure the man into the wine cellars of his palazzo to execute his revenge. With this plot in mind, Montresor makes sure Fortunato does not suspect anything along the way.

At the carnival night, as Montresor meets Fortunato, who wears "a tight-fitting parti-stripped dress" (ibid., p. 416) and a cone-shaped cap with bells, the narrator says the man receives him with enthusiasm, since he is already tipsy for having drunk in the festivities. Monstresor praises Fortunato's look and tells him about the barrel of Amontillado he recently bought in a bargain and expresses his doubts about its legitimacy. However, finding him engaged in the carnival party, he says he is going to consult another specialist, Luchresi[11], which prompts Fortunato immediately to say that "Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry" (ibid.). Montresor then further provokes him by saying that some fools believed Luchresi could match Fortunato's wine connoisseurship. Feeling his pride hurt by that statement, Fortunato rushes Montresor to take him to his vaults, so that he can tell whether the wine is Amontillado or not. Montresor, however, perceives that Fortunato has a cold and alerts him that the damps may not be a good environment for him. Even so, he decides to go, and Montresor, putting on a black mask and drawing a *roquelaire*, guides his prey to his place.

[11] In the Griswold edition of Poe's works, the name is spelled as Luchesi.

As they approach the palazzo, Montresor notices none of his attendants is there, as he anticipated, for he had told them he would not be back until the next morning. Taking two flambeaux and giving one to Fortunato, he leads him downstairs into his vaults, which comprise a series of family catacombs where either his ancestors were buried or their remains were pilled up. As they enter the place, Fortunato's cough gets worse, and he is unable to speak for several minutes. In this situation, Montresor suggests once again they should return:

> "Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi—" (POE, 2004, p. 417)

In this passage, Montresor's words imply that Fortunato is publicly perceived as someone socially superior to him, since people respect and admire him. Moreover, the excerpt also suggests that Montresor's status was not always like that, for he claims to have once been as happy as Fortunato currently is. Nonetheless, although he apparently shows concern about the man's physical condition in his damp vaults, his line is embedded in irony, for Montresor does not miss the chance to further hit his enemy's pride by saying he can ask Luchresi to assess his Amontillado. As a result, Fortunato says his cough is nothing and asks his companion to take him farther on, where the cask supposedly is.

As they walk through the vaults, Montresor continuously shows signs of irony. At some point, he opens a bottle of Medoc to relieve Fortunato's cough. While the sick man, surrounded by the remains of Montresor's ancestors, says he drinks to their memory, the narrator says he drinks to Fortunato's long life. Later on, when Montresor offers the man a bottle of De Grâve, he obviously makes a pun on the word "grave" and on his enemy's upcoming fate. Fortunato, on the other hand, also carelessly makes statements and gestures that clearly annoy Montresor and hint at the nature of the insult the narrator claims to have received from his rival. When he drinks to the buried people in the catacombs, Fortunato notices that the vaults were indeed extensive, to which Montresor says his family was a great and numerous one. However, just as if contradicting such greatness, Fortunato claims to have forgotten the family's coat of arms and motto, to which Montresor replies that it represented "A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel" (ibid., p. 418). As for the motto, he says it is *Nemo me impune lacessit*, which means "No one is allowed to impugn me". In this respect, G. R. Thomspon (2004) states that his motto can also be paraphrased as "no one offends me with impunity", thus making a clear reference to the conditions according to which Montresor must proceed in order to execute his revenge plan.

Besides, another hint at Montresor's inferior status and lack of participation in the local aristocracy is his inability to understand the gesture Fortunato makes when he receives the bottle of De Grâve. Noticing the man does not know the meaning of his gesticulation, Fortunato infers Montresor is not a member of the masons' brotherhood, a statement Monstresor dismisses. However, when asked for a sign that could identify his belonging to the Freemasonry, the narrator takes a trowel that was hidden behind his *roquelaire*, thus confirming his ignorance regarding masonry as a fellowship and his social limbo.

As they keep descending to the most remote part of the vaults, the air becomes rarefied and the flambeaux provide less light. At some point, they reach a small crypt with three of its smalls covered in human remains. Fortunato raises his torch to see within it, but the fire of his torch dies. Montresor tells him to proceed, for there is where the Amontillado supposedly is. As the man enters the small space, the narrator follows him and, taking advantage of his astounded and tipsy state, quickly fetters him to the granite wall at the extremity of the niche with chains attached to iron staples. Fortunato initially does not understand what is going on and still asks for the Amontillado. Montresor, however, uncovers some bricks and mortar from a pile of bones and starts walling up the entrance of the niche with the trowel he had previously showed Fortunato. When the fourth tier of bricks is laid, Fortunato shakes the chains in an attempt to escape. Montresor pauses his work until the sound is gone and then resumes it. As he is about to finish the wall, he throws his flambeaux over it, and Fortunato reacts screaming, but Montresor replies each one of his screams louder. His work progresses and, at midnight, there is only one brick left to be laid on the eleventh tier. Suddenly, Fortunato starts laughing, thinking that the whole situation is but a joke and that soon they will be all laughing together at Montresor's palazzo. The narrator confirms that it is time for them to be gone, but, when he calls Fortunato, he gets no reply. The story ends with Montresor telling how he finished his job:

> No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!* (POE, 2004, p. 421, italics in the original)

Therefore, at the end of the story, the reader finds out that the distance between the time of narration and that of the events of the story comprises fifty years. In this sense, the whole narrative consists of a flashback, or retroversion, as Bal calls it. Although the reader knows, from the beginning of the account, that the narrator seeks revenge against Fortunato, the nature of the insult that prompted his actions is not explicit, but hinted at different moments of the

story. As Elena V. Baraban (2004, p. 50) remarks, “Poe clearly contrasts injuries and insult in his story”. She develops on the difference between these words as follows:

> While “injuries” presuppose rivalry of socially equal enemies, “insult” involves contempt: that is, treating the other as a socially inferior person. To insult is, by definition, “to exult proudly or contemptuously; to boast, brag, vaunt, glory, triumph, esp. in an insolent or scornful way; to assail with offensively dishonoring or contemptuous speech or action; to treat with scornful abuse or offensive disrespect” (*OED*, VII: 1057). Fortunato’s disrespect of Montresor, regardless of the form it takes, is a sufficient basis for Montresor’s vengeance. (BARABAN, 2004, p. 50-51)

Once the reader is aware of the difference between injury and insult, it is easier to trace the origin of Montresor’s angry towards Fortunato. First of all, he claims that, in the matter of old wines, he was skilful, while his enemy was only sincere. Fortunato’s lack of expertise in the subject is also evident when he claims that “Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry” (POE, 2004, p. 416). By typing the word “sherry” with a capital letter, Poe emphasizes Fortunato’s ignorance, for sherry is a generic term that refers to a wide variety of wines, including Amontillado. Nonetheless, it is Fortunato, and not Montresor, that is rich, respected, admired, beloved, and happy as the narrator once was. If such a public dismiss of Montresor’s skills in favor of Fortunato’s sincere and unworthy knowledge of wines is not enough of an argument to justify his angry, Fortunato’s unfamiliarity with his fellow’s family coat of arms and motto further propels the narrator’s wish for revenge. Although heir of a palazzo with vast catacombs that display his long lineage, Montresor feels disrespected, or insulted, when someone that enjoys an important social status affirms not to be aware of his superior lineage. This is further reinforced when the narrator is unable to understand the gesture Fortunato makes with a bottle of wine, for his ignorance about Freemasonry evidences that the local aristocracy has sentenced Montresor to a social limbo.

In “The Cask of Amontillado”, Poe also presents some motifs and is very careful with his choice of words. Fortunato, for example, is an Italian name that refers to “someone who becomes rich and prominent by chance (*Fortune*), rather than through personal virtue” (BARABAN, 2004, p. 52), whereas Montresor stands for “my treasure” (Mon-tresor), thus alluding to the narrator’s aristocratic ancestors buried in the catacombs. The names of the wines in the story are not random either. As previously stated, De Grâve is a pun on “grave”, whereas Amontillado “is a metaphor and evokes the meaning of the root of this word – *mons*, *montis*” (ibid., p. 55), thus alluding to the piles, or mounts, of human remains in the catacombs. In this sense, the title of the story itself presents a new meaning, for the word “cask” is also the root for the word “casket”, therefore implying that the cask of amontillado may either refer to the

barrel of wine as to the casket where the human remains are pilled up. Moreover, the costumes the characters wear during the carnival night somehow allude to the unfolding of the events. Fortunato, for example, dresses himself as a court jester, which somehow parallels the role of a fool Montresor makes him play as he lures him into his vaults. The narrator, on the other hand, wears a black mask and a *roquelaire*, which is a small cape, thus resembling a masked villain.

As for the motifs, some of Montresor's lines and gestures foreshadow the outcome of the story and express his strong sense of irony. Drinking to Fortunato's long life and saying he will not die of his cough are examples of this. Morever, when he shows he is carrying a trowel with him, he not only attests to his ignorance about Freemasonry, but also ends up presenting an object that is fundamental to the execution of his plan. In addition to this, Montresor's family motto, "no one offends me with impunity", is another hint that helps justify the narrator's actions. The coat of arms of the family is also a metaphor for the conflict between Montresor and Fortunato. In it, as the foot crushes the serpent, the reptile hits back by imbedding its fangs in the heel. Therefore, the coat represents a mutual injury, which may prove fatal to both parts, so that critics have long debated whether it is possible to tell who represents what in the image. Nonetheless, Montresor carries out his plan according to the conditions he established in the first paragraph: punish Fortunato with impunity and making him aware of who punished him. In this respect, Baraban states that some critics usually resort to the story's last scene as evidence that the narrator is actually a mad man, and not an avenger, for his last lines make clear that, fifty years after the event, he is still talking about it, just as if it were a sign of a guilty conscience. G. R. Thompson goes as far as to suggest that, since the narrative is a long retroversion, it represents the last confession of the narrator on his deathbed. Baraban, however, interprets the last scene as further evidence that attests to Montresor's vengeful spirit:

> The very last words in the story are, "Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*" The sentence "*In pace requiescat!*" ("May he rest in peace") refers to Fortunato. The phrase is used in the Requiem Mass and during Last Rites, when, having listened to a dying person's confession, a priest forgives his/her sins. If Montresor's narration is his last confession, he should look forward to being forgiven and to hearing "*In pace requiescas!*" ("May your soul rest in peace") from his priest. Instead, Montresor maliciously subverts his role as a repentant sinner when he says "*In pace requiescat!*" in regard with Fortunato. Not only does he deprive the poor man of a Catholic's right to the last confession, he is arrogant enough to abuse the formulaic expression used by priests to absolve dying sinners. The fact that Montresor uses this expression for finally pardoning Fortunato highlights his conviction that he has merely avenged himself for the wrong that Fortunato afflicted upon him fifty years ago. (BARABAN, 2004, p. 56-57, italics in the original)

In this respect, by making the Latin expression part of Montresor's narrative, and not the line of another character in the story, Poe suggests that "The Cask of Amontillado" is not the account of a guilty mind in deathbed, but the report of how an aristocrat who had his lineage insulted by someone unworthy of his current status takes revenge according to his family principles. The nature of this insult is constantly hinted at throughout the story, and Poe's careful choice of words reinforce his aesthetic principle that nothing which does not contribute to the achievement of the preconceived effect must be employed in a work of fiction. No wonder "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Cask of Amontillado" were published in the same year.

3.5.3 "Lenora"

The final episode of *Contos do Edgar* opens with a night scene. The camera initially focuses the dark sky before slowly moving to the left and showing a building's facade, in which the viewer can read "*Edgar Lanches*" (Edgar's snacks) above one of its doors, while a suspense soundtrack plays. The following shot is set inside the shop. A woman lies on the floor, dead, with a wound on her neck. Suddenly, a man drags her down the bloody floor. From a different shot, the scene is shown blurred in the background, while in the foreground the camera focuses on a photo of Edgar and Lenora on the day of their marriage. The photo is the same as the one in Edgar's locket necklace shown at the end of "Íris". That way, the camera suggests that the dead woman is Edgar's wife, although her hair is now dyed in a different color. The next shot shows the man dragging her downstairs. He puts the corpse against a wall and takes a penknife out of his pocket, possibly the tool used to kill her and make the wound on her neck. Although the camera does not focus on the man's face, it shows that he is wearing an *Esportivo Poense* jersey, the same soccer team both Edgar and Fortunato support, as presented in "Priscila". The next shot shows the man building up a wall with bricks and mortar, thus locking the woman in a small space. The scene is followed by the episode's opening credits.

The next scene is set at Nunca Mais on the day following the end of the previous episode, "Cecília". Fortunato, wearing his pair of pink butterfly wings, sings and dances as a carnival parade starts its march on the streets. He invites Edgar to go to the festivities with him, to which he replies he hates carnival. Fortunato then reminds Edgar that he is going through a dry spell probably since Lenora disappeared, and that the festivities are an opportunity for him to find someone, but Edgar remains silent, staring at his partner. Fortunato then hands him the bottle of *cachaça* from which he was drinking in the hopes of warming his friend up, but as Edgar

smells it, he makes an ugly face and asks Fortunato what kind of crap he is drinking. He tells him it was the only *cachaça* available, as everyone bought the good ones for the carnival. Edgar then tells him he knows where they can find good *cachaça*, including a bottle of *Amontillada*. As he hears this, Fortunato shows surprise and says that the last time he saw that kind of drink was at Edgar's abandoned bar, to which Edgar replies the bottle remains there. Knowing that a bottle of *Amontillada* might be within reach, Fortunato urges Edgar to take him to the bar, so that they can pick up the bottle and go to the carnival parade. Edgar initially refuses, but, as his partner insists, he agrees. Fortunato says he will wait for Edgar outside as he prepares himself to join him. As he leaves, Edgar rushes to a drawer, where he picks up a bunch of keys. Then, he takes a flashlight on the shelf and the locket necklace under one of the sofa's cushions. As he looks at the photo, both a flashback and a voice-over are introduced:

> EDGAR: It was him! I had to take revenge. He would know that I was getting revenge. Fortunato had a major flaw: he liked to tell everyone he had a knack for *cachaça*, and he indeed had. But this thing of wanting to prove it all the time... well, I took advantage of it.[12] (my translation)

As the auditive narrator plays the voice-over, the visual narrator alternates the scene of Edgar looking at the necklace with a flashback in which Fortunato is shown opening a penknife and hitting Lenora at Edgar's bar, thus implying he killed her. In the scene, he wears an *Esportivo Poense* jersey, which suggests that what the episode's opening scene showed was how he proceeded after killing Lenora. Therefore, Edgar's motive for planning a revenge against Fortunato is finally revealed in the first part of the series' last episode: Lenora is not missing, but dead, and Fortunaro is her murderer. This early scene also shows that mentioning the bottle of *Amontillada* is part of Edgar's plan, for it serves as a bait to lure Fortunato to his abandoned bar. Moreover, given that the two characters work together, it is implied that Fortunato neither is aware of what Edgar knows about him nor suspects that his partner has been plotting against him.

The next scene is set at Edgar's bar two years before, as a subtitle informs. The visual narrator presents the scenes with a sepia filter, thus indicating that they are part of a flashback. Edgar and Lenora are shown working together at the bar, and Edgar is annoyed with the presence of her cat, Plutão (Pluto), around their establishment, fearing that it may cause them trouble, especially if people eventually see it roaming around the kitchen. As Edgar serves a

[12] From the original:
EDGAR: Foi ele! Eu tinha que me vingar. Ele ia saber que eu tava me vingando. O Fortunato tinha um grande defeito: gostava de dizer pra todo mundo que manjava de cachaça, e manjava mesmo. Mas esse negócio de querer provar isso o tempo todo... bom, eu me aproveitei.

customer, Fortunato comes from the basement downstairs and tells his friend that the place is full of cockroaches, warning him that a health inspection will most likely close the bar. As she overhears the dialogue, Lenora calls Edgar and expresses dissatisfaction with Fortunato being there, saying that he will fill the place with pesticides, which can be harmful to Plutão. Edgar tells her to get by on her own with the cat and says she should ask Plutão to pay the bills after an inspection closes the bar. She reprimands his behavior and leaves, while Edgar approaches Fortunato again and asks him when he can start his pest control services. He says he can start his work the next day, and Lenora, holding Plutão in her arms, watches them as they talk.

On another day, when the bar is already closed, Fortunato is at the kitchen counter putting some work materials in a bag. Edgar approaches him and says he is about to taste the best *cachaça* he has ever had in his life, to which Fortunato replies that he has yet to see a *cachaça* he has never tried. Edgar then shows him a bottle of *Amontillada* and says he discovered it at a small alembic store while travelling in Minas Gerais. He says the owner of the place was a weird old man, and, feeling sorry for him, he decided to buy a bottle of his article. When he tried it, however, he was surprised by the quality of the product and decided to come back for more one week later, but the man had mysteriously disappeared. As he hears Edgar's story, Fortunato fills two shot glasses and offers one of them to his friend. As they raise the shots, Fortunato says he toasts to the raven, the mascot of *Esportivo Poense*, and kisses the team's crest on his shirt. After drinking it, he is amazed at the quality of the beverage. Edgar then tries to slice a salami to accompany the drink, but his knife does not cut properly. Watching as his friend struggles with it, Fortunato takes a penknife out of his pocket and slices the salami. He asks Edgar whether he noticed how Lenora wandered around the bar with Plutão as he applied pesticides, warning him that the poison he uses is strong and could harm the cat. Fortunato tells Edgar he can do his work another time, to which his friend says he cannot take the risk of losing his bar and that he will manage things. Before leaving, Fortunato jokes that the bar would eventually be renamed to *Lenora Lanches* (Lenora's snacks), or even *Plutão Lanches* (Pluto's snacks). Alone in the bar, Edgar sees a cockroach killer spray on a table. As he takes it, he realizes Plutão is lying on a cushion looking at him. He stares at the cat and asks it what it is looking at, while the suspense soundtrack that played at the beginning of the episode starts again. He shakes the spray and walks toward the cat as the scene fades.

Before the scene fades in, we hear Lenora kicking someone out and saying that the person in question is not going to kill her cat. The next shot shows Lenora, Fortunato, and Edgar at the bar the following day. She is angry because Plutão suddenly appeared with a red eye, which she attributes to Fortunato's pesticides. As she shows Edgar what happened to the cat,

Fortunato says he warned him that such a situation was about to happen, thus alluding to their conversation the night before. Edgar, however, does not say a word. Lenora releases the cat and, calling Fortunato a monster, starts throwing out his pesticides, saying he is not going to kill her cat. He tries to stop her, but she sprays his eyes with an insecticide. After emptying the content of Fortunato's containers, she ironically tells the men they can call the health inspection, for the bar's cockroach infestation is now under control. Enraged by the situation, Fortunato tells Edgar once again that his wife and her cat will eventually ruin him. Picking his things up, he says he will not continue his services at the bar. Before leaving, he kicks a chair as a sign of his angry. Edgar, however, remains speechless, and the next scene shows him cleaning the bar. Suddenly, Plutão runs past him, calling his attention. The following shot shows Edgar approaching the cat, which was lying on the counter. He grabs it with one hand and tightens its collar with the other. The camera then focuses his angry face as he strangles Plutão. When the cat stops reacting, Edgar starts calling its name, seemingly regretful for what he has just done. The next shots show Edgar holding the cat in his arms and laying it on its cushion. Plutão, however, remains static, apparently dead.

Figure 22 – Edgar grabs Plutão and prepares to strangle it

Source: Screen capture of "Lenora"

The following scene resumes the carnival day. Edgar and Fortunato arrive at the abandoned Edgar Lanches. They open the establishment, which has been closed for two years, and enter it. The place is dark and full of cobwebs, while cockroaches roam on the walls. Turning his flashlight on, Edgar hands Fortunato the first bottle within his reach, but the man

says that the drink is crap. Edgar then says that the good ones are downstairs in the basement, but suggests they had better leave the place and take the *Amontillada* another day. Fortunato disagrees and insists that they pick the bottle that day. The two men go downstairs, and the place is even darker there. Edgar keeps handing Fortunato every bottle he finds, thus getting his partner drunk. Fortunato, however, insists that he does not want to waste his time with bad drinks and rushes Edgar to take the *Amontillada* because he still wants to join the carnival parade. Edgar guides him to a small space in an extremity of the place, saying that the bottle is in there, and the suspense soundtrack plays again. They enter the spot through a narrow opening, and, as Edgar bends down to pick up a box, he asks for help, saying that the bottle is under it. As Fortunato approaches him and raises the box, Edgar points the flashlight to the box with one hand, leaving the other hand free to pick the bottle. Instead, however, he reaches a handcuff attached to the wall and locks Fortunato in the place, ironically asking him whether he found the bottle.

Figure 23 – Edgar handcuffs Fortunato against a wall in his bar

Source: Screen capture of “Lenora”

Edgar lights a candle, and Fortunato initially thinks it is all but a joke, for Edgar seems to be setting up the scene for a sexual fantasy, but he claims to have no intention of touching Fortunato. Edgar then starts talking about the fight Fortunato and Lenora had when she thought the pesticides had harmed Plutão. He says his life only got worse since then: he killed the cat, his wife left him, and a health inspection closed his bar. As he talks, he also prepares mortar, while Fortunato repeatedly asks Edgar to free him from the handcuff, reminding him that they

are friends and that he helped Edgar during that bad period in his life by inviting him to work at Nunca Mais and providing him a home. Edgar, however, says he found Fortunato's kindness quite suspicious:

> EDGAR: I started to be suspicious of all that kindness of yours, you know. Your quarrel with Lenora, the face of hatred you gave me when you left the bar… I don't know. Something wasn't right. One day, when I was already living at DDT, working and stuff, I decided to come here, at the bar, to have a look around. The basement was very strange, eh, Fortuna? Oh, Fortuna! You coulda been more careful, eh? What did you think, Fortunato? At my bar? At my house? What did you think? Did you think that I wouldn't notice, that I wouldn't look around the basement, all weird, that I wouldn't notice a new wall? Did you really think I wouldn't notice anything?[13] (my translation)

As he says these words, Edgar grabs his flashlight and points to one of the corners of the small spot where Fortunato is handcuffed, thus revealing the human remains of Lenora. Fortunato is terrified by the vision of the skeleton and asks Edgar what he has done there. Edgar, however, starts blaming him for killing Lenora and locking her dead body there. Fortunato says Edgar must be crazy and tells him that, after Lenora had "screwed things up" at the bar, he has never seen that "crazy woman" again, to which Edgar tells Fortunato to measure his words when talking about his deceased wife. Pointing his flashlight next to the skeleton, Edgar sheds light on Fortunato's penknife, implying that it is evidence that he indeed killed Lenora. Enraged by the accusation, Fortunato stands up and yells at Edgar, saying that he had given him the penknife. As the camera focuses his face, a short flashback is introduced, and the visual narrator presents the scene in which Edgar first serves Fortunato *Amontillada*. This time, however, Fortunato presents Edgar with the penknife after using it to cut the salami during their conversation at the bar. As the flashback ends, the camera focuses Edgar, whose expression shows surprise as Fortunato reminds him that he had given him the penknife. The camera approaches his face, and a new flashback follows. In it, Edgar enters the bar's kitchen as Lenora is cleaning the place. He looks at the cushion where Plutão used to rest, but it is empty. Lenora asks him whether he is angry with her after she quarreled with Fortunato, to which Edgar replies that everything is fine. She approaches him and, noticing his shirt is dirty, takes it off. It is then revealed that Edgar was wearing an *Esportivo Poense* jersey under it. She apologizes for what

[13] From the original:
EDGAR: Comecei a ficar desconfiado dessa sua bondade toda, sabia? Sua briga com a Lenora, a cara de ódio que cê fez pra mim na hora que cê saiu do bar... Não sei. Alguma coisa não tava fechando. Um dia, eu já tava lá morando na DDT, tava trabalhando e tal, resolvi aparecer aqui, no bar, pra dar uma olhadinha. O depósito tava muito esquisito, hein, Fortuna? Oh, Fortuna! Cê podia ter sido mais cuidadoso, hein? Que cê achou, Fortunato? No meu bar? Na minha casa? Cê achou o quê? Que eu não ia perceber, que eu não ia olhar ali o depóstito todo estranho, que eu não ia olhar uma parede nova? Cê achou mesmo que eu não ia perceber nada?

happened, but Edgar reassures her that, whether she likes it or not, they have to apply insecticides to exterminate the pests at the bar. As she hugs him, he notices Plutão is lying on the cushion. Edgar claims the cat cannot be Plutão, for it is dead, thus alluding to the scene in which he strangled it. Lenora, however, says the cat is indeed Plutão and asks Edgar whether he is drunk, to which he replies that he thinks the cat is a creature of the devil. Lenora disregards Edgar's words and tells him to go take a bath, suggesting that he is actually drunk. The camera then focuses on Plutão, which is not wearing his white collar; instead, the hair around its neck is white. Taking the penknife he got from Fortunato out of his pocket, Edgar once again says the cat is a creature of the devil and walks towards it to kill it. Lenora intervenes and grabs his arm, but, as Edgar tries to release it, he ends up hitting her with the penknife, eventually killing his wife.

Figure 24 – Edgar hits Lenora with the penknife, and her blood stains his shirt

Source: Screen capture of "Lenora"

The next scene resumes at the bar's basement, and Edgar acknowledges he killed Lenora. Fortunato tells him to stay calm and says that everything is fine. He asks Edgar to release him, so that they can build a wall together and lock Lenora's remains in there to avoid further suspicions. Edgar's next lines, however, suggest they should proceed differently: "Everything's gonna be fine. But I have another proposal to you: you stay there with your story, the real one, and I keep mine to myself, the one in which you murder my wife and I avenge her

death. It's more romantic!"[14] (my translation). As Fortunato starts screaming desperately after hearing the words of his mad partner, Edgar starts building up a wall to seal the small spot where Fortunato is chained. While he piles the bricks up, he starts calling Fortunato a motherfucker and, taken by anger, states that he killed Lenora, just as if constructing a new narrative about this tragic event in his life. This new account of Lenora's murder is reinforced as flashback scenes alternate with the ones in which Edgar constructs the wall. In them, the visual narrator initially shows Edgar crying over Lenora's dead body. However, as her murder scene is presented once again, it is now Fortunato who is shown hitting Lenora and having his shirt stained with her blood. In this sense, these flashback shots conform to Edgar's new version of the events. The scene ends with Edgar looking at the photos in his locket necklace right after finishing the wall and locking Fortunato behind it.

Figure 25 – Fortunato hits Lenora with the penknife, and her blood stains his shirt

Source: Screen capture of "Lenora"

The following scene shows Edgar at the office of Nunca Mais. The song "*Nunca Mais*" (Never More), performed by João Macacão and written by Danilo Dunas especially for the series, plays in the background. Wearing the company's shirt, Edgar gives the place his own touch by reorganizing the office's desk and placing the portrait of him and Lenora on it. The dove he used to feed sits on his legs, and his expression shows he is happy. The telephone suddenly rings, as at the end of every previous episode. This time, however, before Edgar can

[14] From the original: "Vai ficar tudo bem mesmo. Mas eu tenho uma outra proposta pra você. Cê fica aí com a sua história, a verdadeira, e eu fico com a minha versão, a de você assassinato da minha mulher e eu vingo a morte dela. É mais romântico."

answer it, Fortunato's voice is heard on the other side. He asks, "Nunca mais, Edgar?" ("Never more, Edgar?"). Surprised, Edgar asks, "Fortunato?". The scene is then followed by the episode's final credits, and the series ends with a cliffhanger.

Therefore, in "Lenora", the mystery surrounding Edgar and Fortunato's past is finally revealed. By presenting Edgar's motive for taking revenge against Fortunato in its first five minutes, the episode has plenty of time to introduce a plot twist near its ending when it is revealed that Edgar is the real murderer of Lenora. In this respect, the role of the filmic narrator, especially during the flashback scenes, is of paramount importance for the narrative construction of the episode. Although every previous episode of *Contos do Edgar* mostly consisted of a long flashback, which ended with Edgar telling a tragic story to Fortunato at Nunca Mais, "Lenora" presents a balance between flashback scenes and the ones presented at the time of narration. Moreover, all of the scenes set in the past, except for the first one, have a sepia filter applied to them, thus indicating that they are flashbacks. Nonetheless, each of these past scenes is the audiovisual rendition of the memory of one of the characters, usually introduced by a voice-over or through editing, when the camera initially focuses a character's face, and the next shot presents his memory through a flashback scene. In this respect, the visual narrator tends to conform to the character's point of view of how things happened in the past.

When the episode opens right after the murder of Lenora, the scene actually consists of a flashback. Here, however, the sepia filter is not applied to the scene, and the fact that the visual narrator does not present the murderer's face suggests that it is not conforming to a character's point of view. However, when Edgar's first voice-over is introduced, the flashback that follows conforms to his narrative of Fortunato being the killer of Lenora. It is only when Fortunato confronts Edgar's accusations in the second part of the episode that a new account of the tragic event is presented. In the flashback that follows, we see him presenting Edgar with the penknife he uses as evidence for incriminating Fortunato. After having his narrative confronted, Edgar acknowledges that his partner is right, and the flashback that follows shows Edgar killing Lenora. This scene is another example of how the visual narrator eventually conforms to a character's point of view. When Edgar strangles Plutão, it is suggested that he kills the cat, for the animal stops reacting after having its collar tightened. However, when Edgar approaches Lenora in the kitchen in a new flashback, the cat suddenly appears lying on the cushion, and he thinks that it is a creature of the devil. Considering that Lenora was very attached to the cat and that she kicked Fortunato out of the bar when she thought he had hurt the cat's eye with his pesticides, it is very likely that she would be deeply shaken if the cat was indeed dead. In this sense, when she confronts Edgar and asks him whether he is drunk, she

suggests Edgar might have a distorted perception of events, which could indicate that he imagined he killed the cat when he strangled it. In addition to this, the fact that she refers to the cat as Plutão implies that the cat Edgar sees is not a new one. Consequently, by conforming its rendition of events to Edgar's perspective of events, the filmic narrator provides one account of how things happened, and the viewer is led to believe in what it shows. However, when Lenora confronts Edgar's claims that the cat is both dead and a creature of the devil and asks him whether he is drunk, the episode generates tension, for two accounts of events clash at that point. In addition to this, the fact that Edgar decides to rewrite history and blame Fortunato for Lenora's murder even after acknowledging that he was her real killer is further evidence of his madness and of how his perception of events is altered by it.

Lastly, although the tragic story revolving Edgar and Fortunato's past finally comes to the fore in "Lenora", the series does not miss the chance to end with a cliffhanger, thus attesting to its conformity to its own narrative structure. Every previous episode ended with new hints that alluded to the past of the main characters of the show and to the reasons why Edgar would want to seek revenge against Fortunato, thus prompting viewers to keep watching the show. However, even after resolving this mystery in the final episode, the series ends with a new puzzle, which consists of how Fortunato was able to make a phone call to Edgar after being walled up by him. This not only raises new questions, but it also opens the possibility of a new season for the show, thus attesting to how episodic and serialized television narratives, characteristics of Mittell's concept of complex TV, have been following a pattern of closing one storyline while other(s) starts developing. Therefore, this narrative structure enables a successful series to continue if it is eventually renewed for another season.

3.6 "A SHORT STORY ALWAYS TELLS TWO STORIES" – AND SO DOES A TV SERIES

As our discussion of the works analyzed in this chapter has highlighted, Narratology is mostly a descriptive methodology. As such, the use of its concepts and tools often results in long written sections. Based on that, it is convenient to resume the focus of the chapter here and to summarize some of its results. Our main goal with the narratological analyses of Poe's short stories and the episodes of *Contos do Edgar* is to emphasize how the two media – literary and audiovisual – present a narrative structure in which at least two accounts of events are encoded into a single work, according to Piglia's theses, and how they end up generating and enhancing tension with this parallel articulation of events, in line with Indrusiak's concept of narrative

suspense. In this sense, it is not our intention to propose a particular formula both Poe and the producers of *Contos do Edgar* have resorted to in order to conceive their narrative works in their respective media, especially because our analyses have shown that the authors have employed different techniques and narrative resources to create suspense. Instead, our main goal here is to highlight some of the narrative elements that are recurring in the works discussed concerning the construction of narrative suspense.

Regarding Poe's stories discussed here, they often present character-bound narrators who are mentally disturbed and that attempt to either prove their mental sanity or explain the reasons that have led them to their current status through their reports. However, the nature of the events described and the actions performed by these narrators constantly call into question their reliability and mental stability. In this sense, their compulsive behavior, such as Egaeu's monomania, and the objects of their obsession, such as teeth, an eye, or a black cat, for example, are evidence of their insanity. Furthermore, their accounts are constantly permeated by the suggestion of supernatural events taking place and by the lack of temporal and causal marks that could establish relationships of cause and effect between the episodes narrated. That way, these narrators tend to manipulate the reader, usually deviating his attention to long descriptive passages – such as the conception and execution of the murder plan in "The Tell-Tale Heart" and the development of the notion of perverseness in "The Imp of the Perverse" – in which they often place emphasis on words that allude to the supernatural – such as the description of the old man's Evil Eye and that of Pluto's bite – or that attempt at a rationalization that could justify their terrible deeds – such as the use of philosophical expressions in "The Imp of the Perverse". Moreover, the setting of some stories, with castles and catacombs, for instance, taps into the Gothic tradition, which leads us to an expectation of supernatural events. On the other hand, important omissions are frequent in their reports, such as the name of the narrator's disease in "The Tell-Tale Heart", the nature of the insult in "The Cask of Amontillado" or the narrator's relationship with his victim in "The Imp of the Perverse", which, as we have discussed, are key to reveal a secondary storyline that provides another explanation for the events narrated. Therefore, considering that these character-bound narrators are also character-focalizors, the reader is left with no other point of view to confront their reports. However, although Poe's narrators provide one account of past events, hints at a second explanation for them are embedded in the stories as well, thus generating the tension characteristic of narrative suspense. Consequently, we can hardly anticipate the outcome of Poe's stories, and that only adds to the intensity with which his intended effect is achieved.

It should also be noted, however, that character-bound narrators are not the only kind of narrative agent employed by Poe. In "Metzengerstein" and "The Masque of the Red Death", for example, the narrators are not characters in the story. Coincidentally, unlike the other short stories analyzed, the unfolding of the events in these two tales suggests that supernatural events have indeed taken place in the stories. Yet, that does not mean in any sense that their narrators are not manipulative or unreliable. In Metzengerstein, for example, the narrator constantly downplays the ancient prophecy regarding the two rival families of the story, even if the events constantly indicate that this ancient prediction is actually being fulfilled. Therefore, the reader is led to believe that nothing bad will happen to Frederick, an interpretation that is reinforced by the narrator's initial claim that, even if taken seriously, the prophecy indicated the triumph of Metzengerstein over Berlifitzing, and by the fact that the narrator sets itself close to the title character of the story. Regarding "The Masque of the Red Death", the narrator's lack of commentary on the meaning of the colors according to which Prince Propero's rooms are decorated helps overshadow the development of the second storyline, that in which one cannot avoid Death, even when one locks himself in a castle. In this story, the choice of words is also of paramount importance for the encoding of the second story, such as the double meaning of "masque" and the fact that the ebony clock's sound leaves everyone "stricken". As a result, the less attentive reader is taken by surprise when the intended effect is finally provoked.

As for *Contos do Edgar*, different resources and techniques are also employed to suggest a double articulation of events in the series. Every episode consists mostly of a flashback in which the filmic narrator renders Edgar's account of past events. That way, the series suggests that its main character performs an authorial role regarding the stories presented, for they supposedly represent events he somehow witnessed or heard of in his daily routine as a pest exterminator. Edgar's role as a storyteller is also reinforced by Marcos de Andrade's physical resemblance to Edgar Allan Poe and by the character's recurring voice-overs, which usually frame every episode, express his opinion about someone or something relevant to his narrative, and mark the transition between the end of the tragic story of the week and the time in which he reports it to Fortunato. Moreover, during *Contos do Edgar* original broadcast on FOX Brazil, the teasers of the series presented Edgar directly addressing the viewer and saying he had horror stories to tell, thus emphasizing this authorial role even during the interval between episodes[15].

However, Edgar's reliability is constantly called into question throughout the series, especially by Fortunato, who always takes everything his partner tells with a grain of salt, as

[15] The teaser for the series' debut is available on the following link: <https://vimeo.com/178035319>.
The teaser for the series' pilot episode is available on the following link: <https://vimeo.com/78264253>.

their final dialogues imply. In “Berê” and “Priscila”, for example, Fortunato refuses to believe in the supernatural explanation Edgar provides for the events, whereas in “Cecília”, Fortunato finds it suspicious that every story told by Edgar ends with at least one woman dead. In addition to Fortunato’s disbelief in the likelihood of Edgar’s reports, the visual rendition of his stories eventually presents inconsistencies that can be taken as further evidence of his unreliability. In the first four episodes of the series, for example, Edgar is absent from the majority of the scenes presented, thus invalidating his role as a witness who kept up with every event regarding the tragic stories he tells. Nonetheless, the voice-overs that introduce the episodes imply that what the viewer sees is the audiovisual rendition of Edgar’s internal narration. In this respect, Verstraten (2009, p. 135) argues that “It is quite usual to resort to the split principle of internal narration with external focalization on the visual track in flashback scenes”. That explains why Edgar is focalized externally by the visual narrator in the scenes that render his internal narration of events. However, most of the subjective shots in the flashback scenes actually present the perspective of the objects of narration, i.e., that of the other characters, and not Edgar’s. On this matter, Verstraten states that it “occurs often in practice and is rarely a problem” (ibid., p. 139), since these subjective shots often say more about the narrating character than about the focalizing character (ibid.).

In the series, most of the characters who have their internal perspectives shown have a distorted perception of reality, for they are heavy drinkers (Cícero), victims of trauma (Cecília), mentally disturbed (Jorge and Edgar), or obsessive (Fred and Cícero). Consequently, the visual narrator eventually conforms to the distorted perception of these characters, either internally or externally, and that ends up generating tension. In “Cecília”, for example, it either conforms to a traumatized character’s point of view as well as presents scenes that go against it; however, since both perspectives are rendered externally, this alternation between points of view creates suspense. In “Íris”, the filmic narrator generates tension by focalizing events from different spots, for the visual narrator usually focalizes scenes externally while the auditive one presents Jorge’s internal perspective of events. In “Berê”, Cícero’s distorted perception of things is either indicated by external shots, in which we constantly see the character drinking, and by his subjective shots, which are filled with teeth imagery and are always blurred, therefore highlighting his obsession with teeth and anticipating his horrible deed at the end of the episode. In “Priscila”, the visual narrator assumes a more compliant role, for the unfolding of the events reinforces the supernatural explanation Edgar attributes to them. Even so, however, how could he attest to Fred’s motorcycle being possessed by Guilherme’s spirit, especially considering he was not even in the auto repair shop when it burned down? Yet, since the visual narrator shows

the bike starting and accelerating on its own, it conforms to Edgar's account of how things happened. Lastly, in "Lenora", flashback scenes are introduced more than once, and they convey the point of view of different characters every time. The episode's opening flashback scene, for example, is not explicitly attached to a character. Later on, both Edgar and Fortunato have their perspectives rendered by flashbacks, and each of them presents a personal account of how events happened in the past, thus generating tension.

However, it is not only through its episodic structure that *Contos do Edgar* creates narrative suspense. Its serialized storytelling also addresses the double narrative structure Piglia identifies as the core of the short story genre, since every episode hints at a secondary plotline regarding Edgar and Fortunato's past. That way, at the same time the viewer sees both characters working together as pest exterminators, he also learns, from the very first episode, that Edgar plans to take revenge against his partner. The reasons for that, however, are only alluded to at the end of every episode, which always adds a bit of new information, or narrative enigmas, as Mittell (2015) proposes, concerning their troubled past, thus prompting viewers to return to the series in its next episode for the next puzzle piece. These seemingly disconnected hints, such as the disappearance of Edgar's wife, the fact that he refuses to sell his abandoned bar, and the anger with which he reacts when Fortunato finds his locket necklace, are all tied together in the last episode, when this underlying story comes to the fore and reveals itself. The teaser for the last episode also helps build anticipation for the series finale, for it indicates that the mystery regarding Edgar's past and his revenge plan against Fortunato is finally about to be solved[16]. Therefore, by presenting the shifting balance between episodic and serialized forms characteristic of Mittell's narrative complexity, *Contos do Edgar* not only transposes Piglia's thesis "that a short story always tells two stories" (2011, p. 63) to an audiovisual narrative format, but the series also generates and enhances narrative suspense, as proposed by Indrusiak (2009), for an episodic account of events in which the main characters are working partners is paralleled with a fragmentary narrative according to which one of them plots a revenge against the other, so that the recurrent references to this underlying story, whether at the end of every episode or in the teasers announcing the next one, enhance the series' narrative tension.

[16] The teaser for the series finale is available on the following link: <https://vimeo.com/178035554>.

CONCLUSION

The Poe effect has indeed been a cultural force, propelled especially by the ever-increasing number of adaptations, appropriations, and re-imaginings of the life and works of the American writer. If, as Dennis Perry (2012, p. 2) remarks, "Poe perceived in popular culture untapped literary resources" during his lifetime, popular culture has in return granted him an afterlife he could hardly anticipate. His works, however, already hinted, throughout his career, at how the author would survive, for "not only did Poe pioneer popular culture in terms of mining its latent artistic potential and contributing to the development of several popular-culture genres, but he also established the trend of, in various ways, adapting Poe texts himself" (ibid., p. 9). It is no wonder, then, that several of Poe's stories, including the ones discussed in this thesis, show how the writer refined – or re-imagined – recurring motifs and themes he had previously explored in earlier works. That way, Poe, whether consciously or not, practiced adaptation, the very device popular culture has found to keep the author relevant and appealing to contemporary audiences.

It is not surprising, then, that Poe's strong bond with popular culture – as the variety of contexts in which the author and his works have been reshaped shows – has granted him a continuous permanence that has lasted for more than a century and a half so far, a feat that Scott Peeples addresses as the reason why "everything leads to Poe" (2004, p. 152). In the Introduction of this thesis, we stated that any attempt to measure the diversity of ways in which the Poe effect has spread could, at best, provide only small glimpses of how culture has approached Poe and his writings. Based on that, we believe that the path this work has taken – that of focusing on one of the cultural products that feeds on the author and his works – is neither unreasonable nor devoid of relevance, even if *Contos do Edgar* represents only one of the more than 340 film and TV titles the Internet Movie Database enlists as inspired by Poe's works. Actually, it has provided us with the opportunity to take a closer look at how enriching the dialogue between two different media can be and how such an approach is able to highlight the intricacies of each medium regarding their ways of storytelling.

In short, the aim of this work was to demonstrate how narrative resources typical of the short story can be transposed to an audiovisual medium in order to generate and enhance tension and achieve unity of effect. More than attesting to Edgar Allan Poe's own adherence to the aesthetic principles he discussed in his essays and critical writings – which eventually helped to shape short story theory –, this work focused on how these principles also resonate in a different medium, thus highlighting the formal dialogue between Poe's stories and *Contos do*

Edgar. The key to unveil this structural bond was Ricardo Piglia's theses on the double narrative structure of the short story. If, as he puts it regarding the literary genre, "A visible story hides a secret tale, narrated in an elliptical and fragmentary manner" (PIGLIA, 2011, p. 63), the same applies to *Contos do Edgar* and its serialized storytelling. By presenting an underlying story between its main characters, Edgar and Fortunato, and hinting at it in every episode, the series addresses the work of Edgar Allan Poe not only thematically, re-imagining the author's stories in a contemporary São Paulo context, but also in its formal aspects, since it develops two accounts of events simultaneously. However, considering that the unfolding of this secondary storyline breaks the limit of a single episode and stretches along the whole series, this narrative construction ends up generating and enhancing the tension characteristic of narrative suspense, as Elaine Indrusiak proposes.

As a means to emphasize this formal dialogue between the short stories and the episodes analyzed, we have resorted to Narratology as our main methodology. Since Poe's principles regarding fictional writing do not deal with more specific narrative categories, such as narrative voice, focalization, and time of narration, for example, Narratology was essential for providing the conceptual framework and tools necessary for us to undertake our analyses. Yet, as dealing with different media implies acknowledging the specificities and mechanisms available in each medium, resorting to specific handbooks on literary and audiovisual Narratology was imperative for this work. Fortunately, such theoretical textbooks do exist, thus attesting to the flexibility of narrative theory. In this sense, it is our hope that this work will help to make this theoretical background more visible, especially in Brazil, where the lack of translated handbooks on Narratology are indicative of the limited dissemination of the field. As the acknowledgement of the ubiquity of narratives in our culture has revived the interest in Narratology, thus prompting contemporary scholars to refine the theory and propose theoretical models to deal with different cultural manifestations through the analysis of narratives or of the narrative aspects they entail, the relevance of Narratology has currently become more visible and, therefore, should not be ignored.

Furthermore, although we dealt with two different media here and showed how existing narrative resources are transposed from a literary to an audiovisual medium, we intend by no means to suggest that the former is superior to the latter or vice-versa. Instead, we aim at corroborating the formal dialogue between them and, from that, shed some light on television, a medium that has often been neglected in academic studies, especially concerning its aesthetics. As our discussion on television narratives has shown, TV writers face many challenges and constraints when conceiving works in the medium, such as strict time limits, a

longer availability of the cast, and the uncertainty of whether a given series will be renewed for a new season or unexpectedly cancelled, for example. In this respect, Jason Mittell's (2015) notion of narrative complexity, marked by the shifting balance between episodic and serialized modes of television storytelling, addresses one of the most creative ways writers have found to overcome the medium's constraints in the last decades, thus signaling a new narrational mode in TV formats. In it, narrative enigmas, cliffhangers, multi-episode plotlines and different narrative arcs are some of the elements that help create a cumulative narrative that aims at keeping viewers engaged as the episodes succeed each other. In this sense, *Contos do Edgar* is one example of a recent miniseries out of many contemporary television shows that conform to this way of storytelling.

Moreover, we could not end this thesis without commenting on the implications of choosing a Brazilian television series as part of the corpus of this work. If, on the one hand, television narratives have often been neglected in the academy, narratological studies on Brazilian productions, on the other hand, are even rarer. Somehow, this says something about how we perceive national productions and their importance. In this respect, it is a pity that a law needs to be passed in order for cable networks to broadcast just over three hours of national content weekly during prime time. However, the fact that a law such as Lei 12.465/2011 has also encouraged the production of domestic audiovisual works must be celebrated, for *Contos do Edgar* is one of the good things that came out of it. The series not only reimagined – or updated, as Thomas Leitch (2007) proposes – the works of Edgar Allan Poe in a completely innovative way, but did so while keeping in mind its target audience, for it managed to make stories written in America during the first half of the nineteenth-century appealing to a Brazilian audience of the twenty-first century. The fact that the series pilot achieved the highest viewers' rating at the time for a national series debut on a cable network only attests to that[17]. In addition to this, the series figured in the top 20 of the most watched shows on cable networks in 2013[18], thus attesting to its good reception among the public.

However, not even a strong debut and a well-received first season were enough for FOX Brazil to renew the series for a second season. In a 2013 interview, Pedro Morelli and Gabriel Hirschhorn, the show's creators, stated that, if the series had a good impact among the public, chances were that a new season would follow. Unfortunately, five years have passed, and a

[17] The audience ratings of "Berê" are presented in the following report: <http://www.o2filmes.com/noticias/1768/contos-do-edgar-boa-audiencia>.

[18] According to the following report: < http://www.o2filmes.com/noticias/2161/series-de-2013-e-a-audiencia-na-tv-paga/>.

second season never materialized, despite the favorable reception and the creators' will to write new episodes. That said, we can only regret that good initiatives such as the Lei 12.465/2011 could not secure the continuation of the good outputs that came out of it. In the case of *Contos do Edgar*, many are the Poe stories that could make their way into the series in additional episodes. Besides, the series' final cliffhanger not only raised questions whose answers could propel a new season, but it is also further evidence of how television shows, in an era marked by narrative complexity, are able to cohesively finish a multi-episode plotline and start a new one if they happen to have a chance to continue.

Therefore, as we reach the end of this thesis, we hope to have succeeded in reinforcing the formal dialogue between the two media analyzed here, thus inserting this text in the hall of works that have committed to unveiling the rich ways adaptation, intertextuality, and influence operate. More than that, however, we hope to have succeeded in shedding some light on the aesthetics of a medium that, just like Poe's place in-between literature and popular culture, has mediated the ground between the high and the low brow, but still struggles for legitimacy within the academy. As TV currently lives what some call its golden age, marked by innovative ways of storytelling and participatory audiences, we hope to have encouraged more people to tackle on the medium's format and call attention to its poetics. Lastly, we would like to finish this work reminding that, although Poe's raven may indeed have quoted "nevermore" in 1845, fortunately popular culture has since then suppressed the "n" and echoed "ever more" in return, therefore granting us traces of Poe's life and works in unprecedented ways. *Contos do Edgar* is just one of them.

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THE WIRE. Created by: David Simon. Produced by: David Simon, Robert F. Colesberry, Nina Kostroff Noble. USA: Blown Deadline Productions, HBO, 2002-2008. 5 seasons, 60 episodes. 55 min, son., color.

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