

MAKING THE DETECTIVE:
EXAMINING THE INFLUENCES THAT
SHAPED EDGAR ALLAN POE'S DUPIN TRILOGY

by

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INTRODUCTION

Approaching the canon of Edgar Allan Poe's literature, which includes short stories, poems, and editorial reviews, is no small task. During his short life, Poe published seventy-three short stories in magazines he was employed by and periodicals where he submitted writing for prize money. He also published volumes of compiled works, not to mention a long list of poems, spanning from his youth as a fledgling poet to his last work, which was penned just days before his death. Poe's contributions to criticisms include essays on literature and poetry that he reviewed during his time working for various publications. Poe valued writing as an art form and undertook his craft with ardent and often harsh tenacity.

It is evident that many of Poe's tales embrace macabre topics: from a fixation on a cousin's teeth in "Berenice," to murdering a new wife and reincarnating the previous spouse in "Ligeia," Poe's writing often includes gothic stories related to life, death, and sometimes even the undead. My own interest in Edgar Allan Poe began during my teen years when I carried around a tattered copy of Poe's selected tales in my backpack as proof of my dedication to literature. The dark and sometimes disturbing tales like "The Masque of the Red Death" and "The Tell-Tale Heart" were exciting and dangerous and I was hooked. Like Humbert Humbert's first encounter with his own Annabel Leigh in Nabokov's *Lolita*, an intrigue for Poe's writings had taken root; over the years always returning to various tales and indulging in the same senses and feelings that first interested me. But unlike Humbert, my returning to Poe has far fewer psychological, ethical, and criminal implications. The gravity of Poe's work provides an opportunity to

uncover the layers of Poe's abilities to produce stories that parallel societal interests. Every reading provokes more discoveries.

I have always understood Poe's contribution to the horror genre to be a given. His tales and the persona that goes along with it have inspired writers who credit him for being a trailblazer in their genres. However, it wasn't until I took a more in-depth look at the entirety of his work that I began to recognize how prevalent his contributions are to different genres with varying degrees of horror. As a fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, I found it impossible to ignore the similarities between Holmes and Poe's own creation of the detective C. Auguste Dupin. Within Poe's short published stories are those which he described as "tales of ratiocination." Ratiocination, being "the process of exact thinking: reasoning" ("Ratiocination," def. 1) was an important component of Poe's stories and he was able to showcase his "intimacy with the secrets of cryptography," thus writing stories that would later be hailed as a "harbinger of the modern detective story" (Ackroyd 91). Almost a century after Poe's death, poet and critic T.S. Eliot wrote: "So far as detective fiction is concerned, nearly everything can be traced to two authors: Poe and Wilkie Collins" ("From Poe to Valéry" 330). Eliot asserted that Poe created the detective story, yet the detective genre should be attributed to Wilkie Collins. Eliot criticized Poe's work as "haphazard experiments in various types of writing, chiefly under pressure of financial need, without perfection in any detail" ("From Poe to Valéry" 327), yet he also admitted Poe's influence on international poets, science fiction, and detective writers with the importance of looking at Poe's work as a whole.

The origin and credit of the genre is not the concern of this paper. In fact, it is precisely the detective story itself that is of interest. It reflected a society during Poe's

lifetime with readers and judgments that came at a fledgling era in American history. Not even fifty years before Poe's birth had America won its independence and begun to develop as its own nation with cultures and practices to define it. Poe's writing exhibits his connection with society. Poe's stories resonated with readers due to their close cultural and proximate vicinity to real-life crime and concerns of the population. In *The Book of Poe: Tales, Criticism, Poems*, Addison Hibbard delivers editorial introductions to different selections of Poe's work. Hibbard addresses Poe's contribution to the detective genre as he writes:

Perhaps the statement most frequently made by careless readers of Poe, the statement most irritating to one at all interested in truth, is that Poe invented the short story. This is, of course, the sheerest balderdash and springs usually from the careless desire of the neophyte to claim all things for the master. Poe did not invent the short story...Poe's function was to crystallize the form, to state a few principles which needed stating, to contribute new elements to the form...He developed the form; he did not create it. Those who want to claim distinction as an originator for Poe have a better basis in their contention that he was the inventor of the detective story. Here, despite certain precursors, the enthusiast is on surer ground. (235-236)

Regardless of the genre's credited establishment, and even though the term "detective story" wasn't coined until 1843 (Ackroyd 92), several of Poe's works are detective in nature. Poe preferred the term "ratiocination" in his description of such a category, the work being a new type of story.

Within Poe's ratiocinative stories are three tales that focus on the deduction of crime: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and "The Purloined Letter." What sets these apart from his other works is that they all involve a crime, methods for understanding and resolving the crime, and a central figure who is able to unravel the puzzle of mysteries. But to construe the tales as simple games and puzzles would be to ignore the world that Poe lived in and how that shaped his writing. At the very least, the quest for a truthful solution, while not necessarily seeking justice, motivates the detective. Poe puts his detective and method of solution — not the crime — at the center of the story; the crime being a vehicle for the genius to display his abilities. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" it was only after the imprisonment of an innocent man did Poe's detective become actively interested in the case. The narrator writes that the detective "seemed singularly interested in the progress of this affair" (Poe 152). Poe's protagonist's concern was the false accusation of someone who, as he states, "once rendered me a service for which I am not ungrateful" (Poe 153). The detective was interested in absolving an innocent party instead of justice for the victims. Poe's tactic of indulging in his own enjoyment of puzzles does not appear out of context. The mid-nineteenth century was a rapidly changing time for the newly established United States and for shaping the American landscape, especially that of the perception of crime and criminality. As the crimes of the day continued to captivate the public, periodicals assisted in quenching readers' thirst by publishing relevant stories.

Positioning Poe's crime fiction, specifically the sub-genre of detective stories, within a historical and cultural context while tracing influences and motivations, lends

understanding to the relevance of his new form of writing and how it was compatible with the world around it.

Chapter One examines influences on Poe's detective stories and places Poe close to the reporting of crimes by discussing publishing practices and events. This will demonstrate Poe's use of journalism and how his editorial and fictional works fit in. Then I will concentrate on Poe's interest in ratiocination as a genre and the beginning of the detective story. The time Poe spent writing for magazines he was also absorbing the social surroundings and the culture that would be a platform for his tales of ratiocination. Chapter Two discusses the human factor in Poe's works and how he created his characters. Up until "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," no writer had focused solely on a detective as a main character. This gave Poe the opportunity to create a figure in whatever image he chose without the influence of other writers' constructs. Several figures appear as influences on Poe's writing due to the similarities between the detective Dupin and that of their professions, intellect, and social impact. Chapter Three addresses the importance of Poe's education, specifically that which led him to develop mathematics as a focus in his detective stories. His exposure to a curriculum that promoted the necessity of mathematics led Poe to insert the subject within his stories as a distinguishing factor. This correlation of mathematics and problem solving was in context with movements during the nineteenth century.

My intent is to give a broader sense of Poe's impact during his career. The goal is to accept Poe not just as the tragic figure who created insane and homicidal characters but also as a writer who was closely in tune with the people of his day. This will provide a

deeper understanding to how his tales of ratiocination reflected his surroundings and contributed to literary culture and the detective genre.

CHAPTER 1: MURDER! MURDER! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1809 and died forty years later after spending much of his life pursuing recognition and fortune as a writer. At a young age, Poe began writing poems. One of which was a satirical piece lampooning a local merchant that Poe considered a rival (Silverman 24). Unfortunately for Poe, poetic dreams during his teenage years were not met with approval from his benefactor, something that was needed to pursue his art at his leisure. Eventually cut off from his foster father's allowances and disinherited from a will, Poe found it necessary to generate his own source of income. Although Poe's career was not without travail, even including a brief stint in the military, he continued to strive toward artistic endeavors. In the spring of 1831 Poe entered a literary contest which he lost, but not even a year later the same magazine published Poe's short story "Metzengerstein." After the inaugural publishing of Poe's work he continued to make attempts to have more stories appear in print. Efforts to publish Poe's collections were met with acceptance but also rejection.

In 1835, Poe joined the editorial staff of the "Southern Literary Messenger" in Richmond where he came to realize an interest in the power of magazine publishing and found success in editorial work. Silverman writes, "Nothing in Poe's literary experience entitled him to speak so confidently about the business of magazine publishing...his air of expertise was well founded on a canny understanding of what interested the growing reading public" (101). Poe's ability to gauge the attention of society aided him in his profession and despite enjoying success with his position, Poe encountered difficulties sustaining employment at the publications. At times Poe was removed from positions due to conflicts with the owners; other times he felt the work he was doing was beneath his

standards as an artist. Poe was not a rural reporter; he was a professional poet who required steady work in order to earn an income. Poe needed a more reliable income than what he was achieving with his stories being published. Because of this Poe had to continue a career path as an editor and that required a close proximity to bustling culture; it was necessary for him to be itinerant in order to obtain work.

Prior to the creation of his tales of ratiocination, Poe reported on a homicidal crime as part of his editorial work. Poe's article "The Trial of James Wood," discussed the verdict of a man on trial for the murder of his daughter ("The Trial of James Wood"). The sensational story of the murder had gripped the city of Philadelphia (Panek 46) and Poe had the opportunity to capitalize on the atmosphere and further his fictional stories. Poe had an audience eager to read about crime.

In April of 1841, Poe began work at Philadelphia-based *Graham's Magazine*; a periodical that featured poetry, literary reviews, current fashions of the day, artwork, and whose owner promoted original content with new illustrations. George Rex Graham accomplished this while avoiding subjects that were too controversial to appease his largely female readership (Silverman 163). Having been out of stable work for months and eager to fulfill his duty to provide for his family, Poe accepted a position with the magazine, with the enticing compensation of eight hundred dollars a year. Silverman writes, "The *Graham's* diet was hardly palatable to Poe, who came to detest what he later called 'the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music and love tales'" (163). Poe may have disagreed with the fluff content, but he used his position at the magazine to further his own writing career and create a new type of writing: the detective story.

Nestled in an issue of *Graham's Magazine* between other authors' lighter existential poems "Comparisons" and "An April Day" was Poe's considerably edgier and darker story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." This began Poe's tales of ratiocination which, in a letter to fellow poet Phillip Cooke, he explained as a new type of story and credited their popularity to the fact they were new in form. "Rue Morgue" introduced readers to a genius recluse, C. Auguste Dupin, who through reason and exact thinking is able to solve a horrendous crime that has stumped the Parisian police force.

As a city dweller, Poe would have been very aware of various crimes taking place and the reaction the general population was having toward unlawful acts. Since settling in Philadelphia, Poe's stories had taken on a metropolitan energy and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" fulfilled this in its setting of the crime (Silverman 172). In *The Cambridge Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe* Benjamin Fisher describes the city's vastness as "perfect settings for crime and mystery" (22). The urban location provided Poe with an environment that would connect with readers.

Poe's editorial work provided him a front seat for creating his own stories that would excite readers while also fulfilling his own interests. Poe believed in timely stories and was journalistic in many of his writing pursuits; Poe had "a shrewd notion of the public taste for 'sensation'" (Ackroyd 90). The "penny newspapers" supplied such sensationalized stories worthy of tabloids today. The University of Illinois' library credits *The Philadelphia Public Ledger* as Philadelphia's first penny paper, was in publication from 1836-1942 ("American Newspapers, 1800-1860: City Newspapers") and sold for one cent, opposed to other publications that went for six cents each.

The tabloid nature of pennies omitted journalistic integrity of authentic reporting: “Penny papers often made claims about their own truth and impartiality...they were filled with items that later proved to be invented... but not before the articles had been widely reprinted...Even when it came to more local news, there was a great deal of room for invention” (“American Newspapers, 1800-1860: City Newspapers”). Poe may have been allured by the public’s interests in penny papers and inspired to delve into stories that would interest his readers with the same sensationalism as tabloid journalism. One possible reason could be that with an increase in crime came an increased *interest* in crime. Publishing was flourishing and Poe satisfied the rising absorption in stories that were criminal in element during readership of the day. T. S. Eliot wrote in his essay on detective novelists Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens that there was an interest in new literary material: “Those who have lived before such terms as ‘high-brow fiction’, ‘thrillers’ and ‘detective fiction’ were invented realize that melodrama is perennial and that the craving for it is perennial and must be satisfied” (*Selected Essays* “Wilkie Collins and Dickens” 409). But Poe also had a deep absorption in cryptography and puzzles. At *Graham’s Magazine* he continued a series of cryptographically inspired challenges where he made requests to readers to send him ciphers. But the consequent response turned out to be more than he was able to maintain. Silverman writes:

He later said he became “absolutely overwhelmed” with the challenges and requests, placing him in a dilemma: “I had either to devote my whole time to the solutions, or the correspondents would suppose me a mere boaster, incapable of fulfilling my promises. I had no alternative but to solve all.”

He estimated that, time being money to him, he spent more than a thousand dollars solving ciphers, to prove he could. (Silverman 164)

In “A Few Words on Secret Writing,” Poe wrote about the history of cryptography and the use of secret writing amongst army generals during battle (*Graham’s Magazine* 33). But through his tales of ratiocination, Poe was able to apply his preference for deductive methodologies to fictional works, which in turn secured readership and subscriptions. Poe had an audience interested in puzzles and his stories, with their logical unraveling of conundrums, had mass appeal. As Eliot phrased it “The detective story, as created by Poe, is something as specialized and as intellectual as a chess problem” (*Selected Essays* “Wilkie Collins and Dickens” 413). Poe approached his detective’s methods for solving crime with exact and careful thinking and describes Dupin as a man with discerning interests: “He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of *acumen*” (Poe 141). Poe was able to incorporate his interest in puzzles with a fictional format that kept the public interested in his work. Not only did Poe’s detective stories captivate audiences, but he also connected with readers by inviting them to interact with him through puzzle solving.

Poe’s philosophy on writing for ratiocination was formulaic and similar in detail with his article “Philosophy of Composition” published in 1846: “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” (“Philosophy of Composition” 163). Poe’s main reference in his critique of creating poetry was his own work, “The Raven” which he

immediately considered a masterpiece. But the essence of his methodologies is prevalent even in his earlier work. In 1841, for his newest literary venture, Poe described the methods of solving crime with a consistent incorporation of his own interest in logical deduction (Hibbard 239). In Poe's first tale in the trilogy he transfers his absorption with ratiocination to his main character. Poe develops a character that becomes quintessential to the role of a detective. As for introducing his amateur sleuth Dupin and explaining his techniques, Poe begins "Rue Morgue" by explaining what type of attributes are needed for solving any problem, including a crime:

The mental features discoursed of as the analytical, are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know of them, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when inordinately possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that moral activity which *disentangles*...His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition. (141)

Poe delivers a set of characteristics that captures the essence of certain traits needed in order to be a detective. Poe even compares the analytical capabilities to that of playing the card game whist: Poe writes:

He considers the mode of assorting the cards in each hand; often counting trump by trump, and honor by honor, through the glances bestowed by their holders upon each. He notes every variation of face as the play

progresses, gathering a fund of thought from the differences in the expression of certainty, of surprise, of triumph, or chagrin. (142)

Whist, Poe's narrator explains, "has long been known for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power" (Poe 142) and is a predecessor of the Bridge card game. Whist was a popular game in the nineteenth century and could have a lighthearted or serious approach, depending on who was playing (Pool 65). Poe seemed to take the latter approach and deemed the game an indicator for intelligence of his hero.

After Poe's success with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," he attempted a sequel with "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt." Having separated from *Graham's Magazine*, it took Poe over a year to find a publisher who would print the follow up-investigation story. The sequel parallels the murder of Mary Rogers which took place in the summer of 1841 and was highly publicized in newspapers. Poe would also take an interest in the case: "While the newspapers had their way with Mary's life and death, Edgar Allan Poe turned to fact-based fiction to make sense of the case" (Serratore "Edgar Allan Poe Tried and Failed"). On this point there is no speculation; Poe did not hide his references to newspapers and directly references the Rogers murder as his source of inspiration. Poe commences "Marie Rogêt" by addressing the real crime straight on:

The extraordinary details which I am now called upon to make public, will be found to form, as regards sequence of time, the primary branch of a series of scarcely intelligible *coincidences*, whose secondary or concluding branch will be recognized by all readers in the late murder of MARY CECILIA ROGERS, at New York. (170)

During his attempts to publish the story, he describes “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt” as “Thus, under pretence of showing how Dupin (the hero in ‘The Rue Morgue’) unravelled [sic] the mystery of Marie’s assassination, I, in reality, enter into a very long and rigorous analysis of the New-York tragedy. No point is omitted” (Panek 43). Eventually the story was printed by *Snowden Ladies Companion* and appeared in installments, each focusing on different sections of the crime.

Poe had ample encouragement to write on the subject of a murder mystery. On September 3, 1841, William H. Seward, Governor of New York, wrote in the *New York Tribune*:

Whereas Mary C. Rogers...was lately ravished and murdered...and whereas the efforts made by the police of the city of New York to discover the perpetrator of these crimes, as appears from the public prints, proved altogether unsuccessful; and whereas the peace and security of society require that such atrocious crimes should not go unpunished: Now, therefore, I do hereby declare and make known, that a reward of Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars will be paid to whosoever shall give information resulting in the conviction...of any person guilty of the said crimes.

(“Proclamation”)

The promise of a monetary reward and the opportunity to decipher a problem that had stumped officials were enough to entice Poe to attempt to solve the murder. Parallels of his intentions also appear in “The Purloined Letter” where Dupin seems interested solely in solving the puzzle and collecting the prize, but not necessarily in bringing a perpetrator to justice. Martin Maloney discusses Poe’s interest in how the detective operates as a

motivating factor in his portrayal of the protagonist: “Poe, of course, wasn't primarily interested in detectives or crime...he felt an extraordinary attraction—probably compensatory—the coolness and detachment of the logical processes” (35). In “Rogêt,” Poe was able to fictionalize the account of a true crime and at the same time continue to create an archetype for the profession.

Poe was savvy enough to recognize the timeliness of capitalizing on sensational stories. Much like the influences of penny presses on the reading public's demands, newspapers were also sources of interest. Poe understood the market and what content could sell his stories. The tragedy of Mary Rogers' death came during a movement in the culture of printed material. In the introduction to *The Mysterious Death of Mary Rogers*, Amy Gilman Srebnick writes: “The newspaper, the dime novel, the sensational pamphlet, and the magazine with its serialized stories were the places where the Rogers story was both created and popularized” (xvi). Poe wasn't the first to take advantage of the serious real crime. The Rogers' boarding house was in close vicinity of publishing houses, whose employees served as patrons of the cigar shop where Rogers was employed. The death of a beautiful girl was then able to take on a life however these publishing men saw fit for their needs. For Poe's own storytelling, he chose to devote a section of “Marie Rogêt” to dissecting the articles that appeared in the *New York Tribune* and fictionalizing them into news from Paris. Looking at Poe's detective Dupin and allowing him to be Poe's avatar, it is possible to conclude that Poe had read accounts of ongoing details and criticized their views. In “Marie Rogêt” Poe writes of Dupin and the narrator reviewing Parisian newspapers as part of their study of the murder: “It will be proper that I submit to the reader some passages which embody the suggested alluded to” (Poe 175). During the

narrator's review of various Parisian newspapers, Dupin stops at different passages to point out inconsistencies in reporting or blatantly state assertions such as, "This latter point, however, was fully disproved" (Poe 176). Dupin may find disagreement with the papers, but his focus is still on the crime committed: "Were it my purpose...merely to *make out a case* against this passage of *L'etoile's* argument, I might safely leave it where it is. It is not, however, with *L'Etoile* that we have to do, but with the truth" (Poe 182). Various newspapers, relating to the actual murder and also Poe's fictionalized one, published editorial claims and opinions based on inconclusive forensic facts, which will be discussed in a later chapter. Poe used newspapers' analyses as evidence for his detective to dismantle and accurately analyze the murder. It wouldn't be the last time Poe used current social affairs reported in print as the backdrop for highlighting crime solving through detection. Poe is making a comment on how the newspapers fed on the hysteria of the "persistent activity of gangs in molesting women about New York that summer" (Wimsatt 237). The gang theory was one Poe found especially egregious and devoted a generous piece of the story to refuting a theory that a gang was the responsible for any murder.

Reporting on scandals became a normal activity and a familiar topic to readers of the day. Prior to Mary Rogers, another homicide was widely sensationalized among the penny press. In 1836 Helen Jewett, a respected prostitute, was found murdered in her bed. The lascivious nature of her occupation became an immediate public interest and the story was reported in numerous newspapers. Patricia Cline Cohen writes, "Most modern historians of journalism have been content to attribute the murder's notoriety to the new breed of newspaper editors of the penny dailies who were competing for and building up

their readership by printing sensationalist articles” (378). The details of Jewett’s attributes, including her intelligence and demeanor, complicated the public’s support for either the victim or the perpetrator and extended the life of the murder story in print. Vocal critic E.L. Godkin lambasted pennies for publishing incorrect or politically biased stories, including “personal details about individuals” (Coyle 264) but as Poe was penning his fictional account of Mary Rogers there was still ample supply and demand for printing personal details of private lives. These publications were known to satisfy the public’s desire for others’ misconduct and Poe was ready to transform the voyeur theme to his detective series.

Poe would use Dupin once more in “The Purloined Letter” to sort out a puzzle that the police of Paris could not. Unlike his two previous Dupin detective stories, “The Purloined Letter” does not focus on death or murder as the crime that catalyzes the story. In this story, the central criminal focus is scandal and blackmail. The story is about the theft of a letter from a lady of royal standings; the contents of the letter having incriminating details that would leave several reputations compromised. Dupin is recruited by the Police Prefect G— in order to alleviate wrongdoing and ascertain the whereabouts of the letter in question so as to return it to the rightful owner. Dupin uses his high intellect to reason out the thinking process of the letter thief. But the real intellectual trick is not taking the opponent for granted but identifying “the reasoner’s intellect with that of his opponent” (Poe 215). Dupin’s accurate assessment of the letter thief allows him to gain the upper hand, unlike the Prefect who only assumed the Minister D— as a fool poet, therefore inhibiting his own ability to realize the cleverness of the thief.

Other publications and newspaper articles had a profound influence on the topics that Poe wrote about in his stories. His aptitude to gauge the public's interests aided in his ability to market his works to publishers and magazines where he was employed. Always striving for more notoriety, acclaim, and reputation, Poe had a personal stake in the publications and their financial health. He relied on the income but also needed the platform as an easier mode to produce his work. He was able to parlay his hobbies into timely stories that would captivate audiences. The characteristics of Poe's tales of ratiocination were relevant for the climate and the culture of a newly emerging and crime-fascinated society.

CHAPTER 2: WOULD THE REAL DUPIN PLEASE STAND UP?

Edgar Allan Poe drew upon his experience as a magazinist, along with his knowledge of popular literature and culture, to create his fictional detective Chevalier C. Augustus Dupin. There are several men, famous for the most part due to their exploits in their professions, who share characteristics with Poe's detective. Dupin is introduced to readers in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" in the April 1841 publication of *Graham's Magazine* and the unnamed narrator states, "I could not help remarking and admiring...a peculiar analytic ability in Dupin" (Poe 144). This skill for ratiocination is the root of Dupin as a character, but other traits are found from other factual men living in the early nineteenth century. André-Marie-Jean Jacques Dupin, his brother Charles Dupin, and Eugène François Vidocq all embody the essence of the detective Dupin. The Dupin brothers fulfilled Poe's expression of an aristocratic, learned gentleman who had social standing; Vidocq, who is often credited as being the first true detective, shaped the foundation of what the profession would look like. The influence these men had on Poe's tales of ratiocination trilogy is evident by tracing Poe's exposure to world events. The detective Auguste Dupin is an amalgam, pieced together by Poe to create a new type of character for an emerging genre. By creating a new character, Poe immortalized André-Marie-Jean Jacques Dupin, Charles Dupin, and Eugène François Vidocq in another genre which they were otherwise not part of.

One connection that Poe has to an actual person can be seen in the naming of his character: Dupin. But there are several other facts that tie Poe to André Dupin. The advocate André Dupin had a well-established reputation for having been involved in controversial legal cases and was seen as a champion for the liberal minded. Monsieur

Dupin was also involved in the defense of the French poet Béranger, a contemporary of Poe's, whom Poe would later quote at the beginning of "The Fall of the House of Usher" (231). Dupin's legal cases gained him notoriety and news of the events no doubt found its way to Poe as Poe was known to follow current events and read publications from outside the United States. Poe's use of Béranger's poem provides another connection between Poe and Dupin. If Poe was familiar with Béranger as a poet, it's likely he would have been aware of Béranger's well-known legal affairs and Béranger's choice of, what today would be the equivalent to, a celebrity-attorney. Additionally, Dupin's name seemed to stay in the press with the help of his adversaries. The conservative press vilified André Dupin for his liberal leanings and kept his name in print by various means, including in the Tory publication *John Bull* where a satirical ballad was printed regarding his involvement in another controversial case. The ballad was largely directed toward the client's re-use of André Dupin as his lawyer, but of the forty lines of verse "Dupin" appears fifteen times, including the title, while the defendant Wilson's name is only printed twice (Jones and Ljungquist 73-74). One description of André Dupin's cases is: "It is generally agreed that he was a *romantique* in a square cap...he was one of the chief promoters of the transformation which judicial language has undergone" (Walsh 214). In legal cases, André Dupin is said to have "created a new style—the familiar...He studied, dissected, squeezed his cases until he had obtained from them every the smallest particle of argument" (Walsh 214) and he was also known for having an excellent memory. André Dupin had an ability to take on causes which were considered unpopular and garnered him much attention. It may have been André Dupin's publishing of his writing *Free Defence of the Accused*, described as clear, concise, and logical, or Dupin's

reputation for being involved in civil minded matters that got Poe's attention.

Commenting on the influence Dupin had on Poe, Jones and Ljungquist wrote:

Most important, Poe must have been impressed by the way in which Dupin, one of the richest proprietors in France, advocate to the House of Orléans, and President of the Chamber of Deputies from 1832 to 1838, furthered his reputation to become more legendary after each successive triumph. (77)

Poe considered much of his life to be a struggle for stature and wealth to which he felt he was entitled and André Dupin's ability to champion dark horse causes may have been appealing to Poe.

Another tie between Poe and André Dupin came while Poe was writing for *Graham's Magazine*. During his tenure, Poe held the responsibilities of checking proofs and writing reviews on literary publications (Silverman 164). In April 1841, the same publication, which produced "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," one review appeared regarding the translated version of a biographical compilation: *Sketches of Conspicuous Living Characters of France*. Originally written by Louis de Loménie and translated into English by Robert M. Walsh, the chapters are separated by each focusing on the men who were influencing French society. The book is prefaced with an explanation to the reader: "The interest felt here in the present condition of France, and in the eminent men who are controlling her destinies for good or for evil, seemed to authorize the translation which is now offered to the public" (Walsh 2). Although not specifically addressed in *Graham's Magazine*, an entire chapter of the book was devoted to André Dupin. This bares a strong resemblance to the fictitious detective Auguste Dupin. The description of André Dupin continues and states, "To judge from his writings, Dupin must be a perfect living

encyclopaedia...he has read every thing, retained every thing” (Walsh 224). The narrator of Poe’s tales of ratiocination first becomes acquainted with the Detective Dupin “at an obscure library” (Poe 143) and learns that “Books, indeed, were his sole luxuries” (Poe 143) –books that he keeps in his personal library. Like André Dupin, the fictional Dupin has a voracious appetite for reading and retaining facts.

The shaping of Dupin began with the biography that was reviewed by Poe for the magazine, but there were other influences. The traits of Poe’s Dupin also extend to André Dupin’s brother, the well-known French mathematician Charles Dupin. In “The Purloined Letter” Poe transfers their traits on to Dupin’s antagonist. As the Prefect pays a visit to the narrator and Dupin to discuss a difficult case regarding a stolen a letter from royal personage and the robber is identified as Minister D—(Poe 209). In this tale the crime is known and the culprit indicated, but the actual piece of stolen material is so valuable to the victim’s reputation that it would be a scandal if the contents of the letter came to light. Therefore it is necessary for the letter to be returned without public knowledge and the Minister D— must be outwitted. As the Prefect begins to outline the details of the crime and the means, which he has already employed to retrieve the letter, he assesses the Minster’s cunning acumen. Dupin comments on the Minister, “D—, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course.” The Prefect responds, “Not *altogether* a fool, but then he is a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool” (Poe 211). Dupin then states, “I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself” (Poe 211). Dupin is identifying with the attributes of a poet. Later as the story unravels and the letter is retrieved and in safe hands, the narrator says, “There are two brothers...both have attained reputation in letters” (Poe

217) and states that he believes the Minister to be a mathematician, but not a poet. Dupin corrects the narrator to let him know that states that Minister D—is a poet *and* a mathematician and because of such he would have exact reasoning abilities that could dupe the police.

Poe also utilizes another real and well-known Dupin as an inspiration for his characters. Charles Dupin, brother of André Dupin, was a mathematician who studied at the L'Ecole Polytechnique, an institution that Poe was surely aware of. In “The Purloined Letter” Dupin is able to use both poetical and mathematical tactics in order to outsmart the villain. Poe takes certain traits of both Dupin brothers and distributes them between his detective, the Minister D—and the Minister’s brother. The detective Dupin isn’t a carbon copy of the Monsieurs Dupin brothers of France, but Poe takes the artistic liberties in their characteristics to create a picture of the stories’ hero in his tales of ratiocination: “The traditional explanation of the time sheds light on Poe's choice of a name for his detective. The traditional explanation of the detective's surname holds that Poe took it from one André-Marie-Jean-Jacques Dupin (1783-1865)” (Irwin 190). However, between the two real brothers, it can’t be determined who was the greater influence. Both had a persona that would have appealed to Poe’s notions of his Dupin character. Poe pieces together different aspects of the Dupins to create his characters in the three tales.

Another historical figure well known during Poe’s era was Eugène-François Vidocq. Unlike the attorney Dupin, or his mathematician brother, whose details resemble the detective Dupin’s intellectual acumen, Vidocq is considered to be the first detective in terms of his tactics in resolving crime. Vidocq became well known as a criminal turned

police-spy, whose autobiography “Memoirs” described not only his occupation as a paid detective but also his personal exploits. “Vidocq’s ‘Memoirs’ found a ready audience, and, more importantly, for popular recognition, in 1829 they were adapted in two theatrical versions” (Flanders 15). Much like the biography of André Dupin, Poe is additionally tied to Vidocq through his professional editorial reviews.

In Leroy Panek’s exploration of the source of the detective genre *Before Sherlock Holmes*, he discusses a new form of contentious literature: the Newgate novel. As the Newgate novels were becoming popular with readers, they were also vilified for their perceived glorification of the criminal. In the April 1840 edition of *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine and American Monthly Review*, of which Poe was a contributing editor and partly responsible for book reviews, the editorial review stated that one such controversial Newgate novel *Jack Sheppard* was a disgrace to literature (Panek 34). *Jack Sheppard* had been sensationalized due to a true crime having been committed after publication and the criminal admitted to having found inspiration from the details of the book. Poe may have disagreed with such a piece of writing, but he no doubt capitalized on the effect. Although Poe didn’t join *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine and American Monthly Review* until 1840, Burton himself had published a police story in 1838 and then, after the success of Vidocq’s *Memoirs*, wrote and published a series of stories about the “most famous detective of the day” (Panek 39). The Newgate novels became a particular genre of literature. Due in part to the aid of romanticized criminal life in the Newgate novels in Britain, Vidocq’s 1828 memoir was later translated from French into other languages, which quickly made their way to England and the United States (Panek 29). The four volume *Memoirs* describes Vidocq’s journey from thief to the chief of the

Sûreté. Vidocq's name had been familiar with readers since 1834 and Poe had ample opportunity to be acquainted with the police agent.

In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" Poe confronts the direct correlation between Vidocq and his detective Dupin, but only gave Vidocq enough credit to establish him as a form of contemporary for Dupin. But with Dupin, Poe could create his own version: an aristocratic gentleman instead of a brawling and womanizing ex-criminal. Dupin dismisses the French police-spy with comments such as:

Vidocq...was a good guesser, and a persevering man. But, without educated thought, he erred continually by the very intensity of his investigations. He impaired his vision by holding the object too close. He might see, perhaps, one or two points with unusual clearness, but in so doing he, necessarily, lost sight of the matter as a whole. Thus there is such a thing as being too profound. (Poe 152)

In turn, another fictional detective, having been compared to Poe's creation, is only willing to concede their predecessor's influence. This is seen in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes when he states:

No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin...Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine. (Doyle 24)

Although Poe makes no additional references to Vidocq, the influence Vidocq had reached further than Poe's slighted reference. Vidocq also inspired works by other authors. Émile Gaboriau, a nineteenth century French writer created another fictional detective, Monsieur Lecoq, who like Vidocq was said to have been employed by the French Sûreté. Doyle also draws on Lecoq as a reference for Holmes to express his own superiority. Vidocq's personage also became inspiration to other writers: Wilkie Collins, Herman Melville, Alexandre Dumas, Charles Dickens, and Honoré de Balzac (Morton 243). Poe's tales of ratiocination strengthened Vidocq's influence on subsequent detective stories.

The presence of Vidocq is also closely tied to the history of formalized police organizations. It might be hard to imagine a large city without an official police force but that's exactly what you would have seen until the mid-1800s. In today's age the police force is ubiquitous with keeping the rules of society and their presence is seen in every single division of government: local, state, federal. But there was a time in America and in other countries that the responsibility of keeping social order was carried out by volunteers. This created various challenges for keeping law and order. England had the Watch which served to "prevent and report crime" (Panek 16) but was thought to be somewhat ineffectual. As a result of the lack of an agency to protect society, the Duke of Wellington spoke in favor of improving law enforcement in his speech "An Act for Improving the Police in and near the Metropolis." The Duke acknowledged the issue that the current means of unofficially policing was insufficient and stated:

Whereas Offences against Property have of late increased in and near the Metropolis; and the local Establishments of Nightly Watch and Nightly

Police have been found inadequate to the Prevention and Detection of Crime, by reason of the frequent Unfitness of the individuals employed, the Insufficiency of their Number, the limited Sphere of their Authority, and their Want of Connection and Cooperation with each other... That it shall be lawful for His Majesty to cause a new Police Office to be established.

(“The Peel Web”)

Shortly after this The Metropolitan Police Act was passed and London law enforcement consisted of individuals who were in part concerned with crime detection but also identified with criminal elements. This group played a role in policing for the next ten years until the official Detective Department of London police was established in 1829. America’s Police force also became established during the time between the American Revolution and 1850. During this period American criminal justice in large cities that once relied on night watchmen and constables began to adopt similar practices as the English (Rubin 762). New York City had not yet created its police force until 1845 and Philadelphia still lacked a formal police agency. The initiation of a department that keeps order and solves crime resounded with Poe. Dupin states, “The Parisian police, so much extolled for *acumen*, are cunning, but no more...the results attained by them are not unfrequently surprising, but, for the most part, are brought about by simple diligence and activity” (152). There is the acknowledgment that a form of police is necessary but “there is such a thing as being too profound” (Poe 153). Here, just as Poe did in “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt,” is where Dupin can step in where the police failed. Both Poe and his detective could succeed where the police were non-existent. The lack of policing in reality is reflected in Dupin’s lackluster criticism of the police force.

Police agencies wouldn't use a crime laboratory until decades later, but still Poe used what he knew of forensics and applied them to his stories. Forensic science is considered "the application of science to those criminal and civil laws that are enforced by police agencies in a criminal justice system" (Saferstein 1) and Poe was at the forefront of the movement of using science to solve crimes. Dupin displays the hair he collected from the Rue Morgue to the narrator: "I disentangled this little tuft from the rigidly clutched fingers of Madame L'Espanaye" (Poe 161), one of the victims, and the narrator states upon seeing it, "this hair is most unusual—this is no *human* hair" (Poe 161). In relation to forensically studying hair: "the prime purpose for its examination in a crime laboratory is to establish whether the hair is human or animal" and "can normally be accomplished with little difficulty" (Saferstein 194). Even with the absence of a lab, Poe used his understanding of science and human and animal biology to present as evidence.

Regardless of Poe's fictional character's opinions, even if the statements were less than favorable, Vidocq's impact on detectives, spies, and modern policing would have been a stretch for Poe to ignore. Instead of rejecting the movement of police detection, Poe used certain traits of the detective profession while giving his creation a polished and respectable demeanor. By piecing together traits of historical figures and tracing them to Poe's writing, readers can see how his environment stimulated Poe's creations. However it seems that another character that Poe emulated in his creation of the criminologist was Poe himself. Poe had already demonstrated an aptitude for puzzle solving and thought highly of his own skills. It is not unlikely that he would have seen impressive intellectual features in others and combined them with his own attributes. Poe's detective is a

combination of multiple personalities. But he also drew from his own interests and education to form a principal character that would serve as the model of a genre of protagonists. Poe inserted his own persona into the tales of ratiocination with his detective's focus on problem solving. Dupin was not interested in the morality of the crime or legal justice being enacted; he was concerned with the truth. Whether it was solving the puzzle of the culprit in the Rue Morgue, disentangling the facts of the murder of Marie Rogêt, or decoding the criminal mind of a purloiner of letters, at the heart of his crusade is unraveling the mysteries that have stumped the police.

In Poe's letter to Phillip Cooke he states:

These tales of ratiocination owe most of their popularity to being something in a new key. I do not mean to say that they are not ingenious — but people think them more ingenious than they are — on account of their method and *air* of method. In the "Murders in the Rue Morgue", for instance, where is the ingenuity of unravelling [sic] a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the express purpose of unraveling? The reader is made to confound the ingenuity of the supposititious Dupin with that of the writer of the story. (Poe "Edgar Allan Poe to Philip P. Cook")

Poe was aware of the novelty of his newfound style of writing and was not shy in expressing his views to his friends and confidants. If Dupin was the hero, Poe positioned himself as the mastermind of the complex task of untangling a difficult problem. Poe after all didn't just emulate others and hold them in high esteem; Poe also believed in his intellect and talent as that to rival anyone else.

Borrowing from the modern-day figures of the early nineteenth century, Poe built a connection between his fiction and central characters of compelling scenarios. The three Frenchmen he adopted to form his own creation all represented a portion of society that was recognizable, if not to all his readers, at least to Poe.

CHAPTER 3: YOUR TEACHER WAS RIGHT, YOU WILL USE MATH ONE DAY

Edgar Allan Poe's path to creating the genre of the detective story did not originate where one would typically assume most poets and writers found their education and influences. Poe utilized subject matter not traditionally invoked when we think of his prominent gothic writings. Although for a short time, Poe studied at a traditional university, it was the education from the military that provides the strongest correlation to the detective series through the heavy concentration on mathematics.

During his elementary and adolescent years, Poe showed an affinity toward the military and by the age of fifteen Poe achieved the rank of lieutenant for the Junior Morgan Rifleman, a volunteer company in Richmond (Silverman 24). It was during this time in his education that Poe first displayed an aptitude for learning the French language. The combined education of the military and the French language would be a skill set that would be useful throughout his formal education.

After a brief stay at the University of Virginia and a short career in the army, Poe finally enrolled at the United States Military Academy at West Point. At West Point, he initially excelled and monthly reports ranked him high in both mathematics and French (Silverman 61). Poe acquired more than mathematical influences from his time at the military academy: upon Poe's departure from West Point, he was able to convince his fellow cadets to aid in the publishing of his poems, persuading more than half of them to donate a dollar of their pay to go toward the cost (Silverman 67). Poe's military schooling was cut short as he was eventually dismissed for dereliction of duty. His formal education ends here, but not without imparting lasting impressions that would form his writings later on in life. West Point had introduced him to mathematicians and mathematical

studies which would form characters in his tales of ratiocination. Poe took the funds from his classmates and published *Poems by Edgar Allan Poe...Second Edition* where he included a dedication to the cadets.

In the years preceding his acceptance to the prestigious military school, West Point's curriculum had undergone a transformation and teachings became focused on certain subjects. Prior to Poe arriving at West Point in 1830, the military academy had adopted the similar curriculum of L'Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, the same institute where mathematician, and Poe inspiration, Charles Dupin studied. At L'Ecole Polytechnique the study of mathematics was given the utmost priority in techniques of war and the war department in the United States acknowledged that the French teachings would benefit American military.

Considered the first engineering school, in the early nineteenth century West Point had a specific curriculum that focused on technical teachings. Because France produced leaders in mathematics, France also created sought after engineering and military texts written in French. West Point superintendent Jonathon Williams was aware of this, but due to a lack of resources was not able to provide enough material for the cadets. Yet another problem was that the cadets were not able to read the French textbooks books in their native English. For this reason, an inferior English language product was used (Rickey and Gellach). Then in 1815, the War Department sent Sylvanus Thayer to Europe, particularly interested in France, to investigate their military (Irwin 194) and Thayer spent this time studying at L'Ecole Polytechnique. Two years later as Thayer was designated the military academy's superintendent, he began to move away from the English version of mathematics textbooks and started using French

publications on algebra, geometry, and calculus. This in turn required cadets to learn the French language in order to read their mathematics books (Rickey and Gellasch). A government report written decades later gives an explanation of the history of the Thayer curriculum:

Under Thayer's management mathematics advanced...to a complete course of algebra, geometry, plane and spherical trigonometry, descriptive geometry (including shades and shadow, and perspective), surveying, use of instruments, analytical geometry, and the calculus...Mathematics is the study which forms the foundation of the course. (United States Military Academy "Annual Report of the Superintendent" 47)

The rigorous studies in mathematics and French gave Poe a unique experience for a writer and mathematics becomes an overarching theme in Auguste Dupin's ability to logically process series of events and solve the puzzles at hand. The education Poe received at West Point provided him with knowledge and inspiration shown in his tales of ratiocination with themes that focused on mathematics and analysis. This was a time when mathematicians were renowned, especially at West Point where mathematical calculations were considered the crux of military tactics and French was "regarded as the language of military science" (Beidler 333-334). This study also exposed Poe to situations in France that are echoed in his stories. During the nineteenth century mathematics played a prominent role in French society and garnered attention in part due to mathematicians contributing to politics (Irwin 188). One quarrel is referenced in "The Purloined Letter" as described as Dupin's having disagreements with "some of the algebraists of Paris" (Poe 217). Geometer Gaspard Monge, a French teacher of

mathematics and active in establishing L'Ecole Polytechnique, held political posts that gained him much notoriety. A fellow mathematician, the algebraist Augustin-Louis Cauchy adopted an opposing political view from Monge. Cauchy was also a professor at L'Ecole Polytechnique and published *Cours d'Analyse*, a revolutionary text on mathematical analysis based on "limits, functions, and calculus" (Irwin 189). Poe's reference to Dupin's quarrels nods to the two leading mathematician-politicians:

The fact that leading figures from two distinct mathematical camps in nineteenth-century France-the geometer Monge and the algebraist Cauchy-were deeply involved, from opposite ends of the political spectrum, in the governmental turmoil of the period explains in part the appropriateness of Poe's including a reference to mathematical partisanship. (Irwin 189)

During the nineteenth century, because France was a global leader in producing prominent mathematicians, it is appropriate that Poe would choose the country as the setting for his three tales that feature math and analysis so prominently. Poe's characterization of Dupin as a typical Frenchman who shares personal details with "candor...whenever mere self is the theme" (Poe 143) is a colorful addition of the narrator's view of a stereotypical French trait. Poe used this characterization to support the choice of setting to have Dupin fit in with the culture of mathematics.

Beginning with "Rue Morgue," Poe writes about the ability to solve a problem as being rooted in the studies of math: "The faculty of re-solution is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which...has been called... analysis" (141). The ability to problem solve involved both calculation and analysis, but as Poe points out "to calculate is not in itself to analyze"

(141), therefore emphasizing the collaboration of both in order to achieve success. One explanation that Poe provides occurs when the narrator explains that the game of chess and whist require a deliberate need for calculation, that the whist player makes observations but “the necessary knowledge is that of *what* to observe” (Poe 142). In “Rue Morgue,” Poe lays the foundation of his detective’s mind being of both the calculator and observational, having origins in military mathematics.

Poe continues this trait of applying math to problem solving in “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt.” The published version of the story concludes with Poe writing, “it should be considered that the most trifling variation in the facts of the two cases might give rise to the most important miscalculations” (207). “Marie Rogêt” makes numerous references to the calculus of probabilities while trying to determine the cause of death of the victim and the likelihood of certain people being perpetrators of the crime. The narrator begins the story by explaining the importance of facts being received and processed at face value instead of creating a narrative based on coincidences. Poe’s narrator writes:

THERE are few persons, even among the calmest thinkers, who have not occasionally been startled into a vague yet thrilling half-credence in the supernatural, by *coincidences* of so seemingly marvellous [sic] a character that, as *mere* coincidences, the intellect has been unable to receive them. Such sentiments— for the half-credences [sic] of which I speak have never the full force of *thought*—such sentiments are seldom thoroughly stifled unless by reference to the doctrine of chance, or, as it is technically termed, the Calculus of Probabilities. Now this Calculus is, in its essence, purely mathematical; and thus we have the anomaly of the most rigidly

exact in science applied to the shadow and spirituality of the most intangible in speculation. (Poe 169)

The narrator and Dupin examine newspaper accounts that list facts alongside speculation. Dupin criticizes the writer's lack of judgment in putting forth theories that don't hold sound probabilities: "As his argument is obviously an *ex-parte* one, he should, at least, have left this matter out of sight" (Poe 186). Poe even directly pulls in mathematical theories to debunk the newspapers' assertions:

If, the feet of Marie being small, those of the corpse were also small, the increase of probability that the body was that of Marie would not be an increase in a ratio merely arithmetical, but in one highly geometrical, or accumulative. Add to all this shoes such as she had been known to wear upon the day of her disappearance, and, although these shoes may be 'sold in packages,' you so far augment the probability as to verge upon the certain. (Poe 187)

Poe continued to link ratiocination with mathematics and analysis as the mode for problem solving in "The Purloined Letter." The narrator comments "The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the reason par excellence*" (Poe 217). But Dupin asserts that it takes more than just mathematics in the quest to uncover truth and outsmart a criminal. In his article on the psychological explanations of Poe's writing, Allan Smith writes:

This is precisely the power which Dupin demonstrates in his ability to place himself in the situation of the other when solving his problems of

detection. “The Purloined Letter” hinges upon a similar process of deduction. Both Dupin and the Minister are aware that in the mind of the Prefect and his cohorts the association of concealment with out-of-the-way hiding places is invariable. Furthermore, the Prefect associates poetry with foolishness, and therefore assumes that because the Minister is a poet, he must be a fool. On the contrary, Poe says, the fact that the Minister is a poet as well as a mathematician means that he can reason well. This is, perhaps, because the poet is more finely adapted than other thinkers to be aware of the wide variety of suggestions which are available from any object. (286)

Poe also believed that mathematical calculation alone wasn’t enough to unravel mysteries. Poe took his military education alongside his poetic artistry to create in Dupin a character that understood all aspects of deduction.

Poe used the time at the military academy to further his true calling of writing, but the exposure to the link between tactical military procedures and the study of numbers, patterns, probabilities, and proofs that occur in math left a lasting impression on the young writer. Poe took that knowledge and added to it by insisting that analysis contributes to the story. This impression was a reflection of Poe’s time and his use of experience to create a new type of tale.

CONCLUSION

Studying the writer on various layers allows one to connect Poe with his influences. All that is needed is placing Poe at the scene of each circumstance and then piece them together. By examining influences surrounding Poe, readers can see how the author used similar creation tactics in his fictional detective. Poe had a recurring character whom he could develop over three stories, which allowed him to add details to fit the current events of the times.

Poe used his surroundings as stimuli to achieve his goals in writing and used his positions at periodicals to promote his works without always needing to pitch his stories to various editors at other publications.

Another advantage to writing for frequently published material such as periodicals was that Poe was closer to the action of the people. Magazine editorials and writing provided Poe the ability to study societal concerns and produce stories that would interest the public. Poe used the culture of the day to create a niche for his writing and used his experiences and education to create the stories; Poe was influenced by what was going on around him. In short, he capitalized on the sensationalism of current events to further his own popularity. Poe wrote sensational material and the climate of print during the time he was writing was to glorify shocking and scandalous acts. If the people were hungry to be shocked, Poe could satisfy with their need.

Poe's up-close experience to notable characters provided him inspiration used to create the quintessential detective. Poe's close proximity with current events gained him access to influential figures in the process of making history in their own right and he

could take parts of their personalities, experiences, and professions in order to base a central character.

Poe also had exposure to an educational system that placed the utmost value on a type of logical processing that the institution intended to be as much a weapon of war as that of a physical piece of machinery. Poe used his experiences to develop his characters' thought processes and deductive thinking in the scenarios he created in his crime stories.

Between Poe's exposure to current events via his newspaper and magazine career, his education in military mathematics, and his own poetry publications, we can see how his everyday life influenced the development of the detective story genre and the detective himself. In Jay Kirk's magazine article discussing *The Vidocq Society*, he writes of modern culture, "We have long granted detectives a lofty place in our pantheon, because, like the priests before them, and the oracles before that, detectives are our most reliable curator of life's waning sense of mystery" (62). Poe's muses combine and transform into a beacon of truth. Poe leaves the detective genre with the timeless impression that all mysteries can be uncovered as long as you have the correct process of thinking.

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