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POE'S DUPIN AS PROFESSIONAL, THE DUPIN STORIES AS SERIAL TEXT

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The reader of Poe's Dupin stories is caught between two contrary models of Dupin's professional status. On the one hand, Susan Beegel considers it "obvious" that Dupin is the "prototypical amateur detective" and thus by definition not a professional at all. Indeed, on a different level of theoretical discourse, Jacques Lacan experiences Dupin's interest in fees as a "clash with the rest" of "The Purloined Letter."[1] On the other hand, in such neo-historicist readings as Terence Whalen's, Dupin appears so money-focused that the actual solution to his mysteries becomes unimportant, and Dupin becomes the extreme opposite of the amateur puzzle solver.[2] Adjudicating between such views requires exploring the kind of professional Dupin is as well as Poe's motive in creating such a professional.

Dupin is, of course, not a professional investigator of the movie sort with a sign outside, a receptionist, and a regular procession of clients. He also is not, on the other hand, merely a disinterested puzzle solver, in spite of his claim in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" that his "ultimate object is only the truth."[3] In fact, following the Dupin stories in their self-conscious sequence from "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" through "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" to "The Purloined Letter" shows the development of an increasing professionalism.

Such professionalism seems only reasonable given Dupin's background. A member of "an illustrious family" who "had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it," Dupin would naturally be interested in making money, especially since his tastes in life include buying "very rare" books ("Rue Morgue," p. 179). Dupin does not simply exist in an atmosphere of books, as Jacques Derrida rightly points out,[4] but in a world of books as pricey commodities.

Many readers, Richard Wilbur among them, have noted the similarity in analytical thought between Dupin and Legrande of "The Gold Bug," and the reference to Dupin's character as "succumbing" to the force of poverty also recalls the parallel social condition of Legrande.[5] Legrande's poverty not only signals lack of money and possessions but also betokens social disgrace verging on scandal, a "mortification" that

has "infected" him with near madness (p. 155). Moneylessness produces a deep mental wound, explicitly in Legrande's becoming a hermit, and implicitly in informing Dupin's tastes. Himself a near hermit in at least the first two detection stories, he scorns men "who wore windows in their bosoms," literally shutters his own windows, and adopts a practice of living in near darkness illuminated by "a couple of tapers which . . . threw out . . . only the feeblest of rays." Only with the "advent of true Darkness" does he go into public to perform "quiet observation" without being himself observed ("Rue Morgue," pp. 179–80). Such a desire is more than the "freak of fancy" that the narrator fatuously sees. It is also not as complicated as George Grella would make it, seeing the love of night as a sign from Poe that Dupin actually is the criminal he pretends to seek.[6] Financial and social embarrassment is the motive here. As Poe emphasizes in "The Philosophy of Furniture," true aristocracy is not the "aristocracy of dollars" (p. 15). The aristocrat distinguishes between kinds of money. Still, if money does not define nobility, nobility is nonetheless impossible in poverty, and it is impoverishment rather than social declassifying of some other sort that wounds characters like Legrande and Dupin.

That the narrator does not consciously name embarrassment over loss of money and class as Dupin's motive in seeking darkness only signals the narrator's relative lack of insight, an obtuseness long recognized as essential to the sort of "Dr. Watson" figure the narrator represents.[7] As a sign of obtuseness in this case, the narrator explains Dupin's desire to tell his family history as a product of his being French and hence confessional ("Rue Morgue," p. 179). The narrator does not understand Dupin's compulsive engagement with this past, mortifying fall from financial grace. As John T. Irwin ingeniously shows in his analysis of Dupin's opening "mind reading" act in "Murders in the Rue Morgue," sensitivity to lost class pervades Dupin's every thought, even where class is not at all at the forefront of Dupin's conscious discussion.[8] The mystery stories' culmination in "The Purloined Letter" implicitly allows Dupin the social mobility to associate with kings, queens, and ministers and to regain by association the aristocratic station and fortune he has lost. Shawn Rosenheim points out the parallel between the royal figures in the plot and the face cards in the whist game the narrator celebrates in "Murders in the Rue Morgue": winning entails royalty, and by "The Purloined Letter" Dupin has insinuated himself into a royal flush.[9]

One can trace this fantasy of recovering nobility in Poe's Dupin-like characters as well, as has already been suggested for Legrande of

"The Gold Bug." It has been remarked that the night-wandering narrator of "The Man of the Crowd" "assumes the role of a 'Monsieur Dupin'"[10] when this figure discerns the pursued old man's one possibly criminal act, carrying a hidden weapon, what the narrator describes as a "diamond and a dagger" (p. 287). Crime in his imagination requires a jeweled poinard, and even in the most impoverished part of town the narrator imagines himself into a murder at court. Of course, Legrande and the narrator of "Man of the Crowd" may differ from Dupin in important respects, but they nevertheless seem to combine night wandering or analysis with Dupin's social characteristics, the traumatic loss of aristocracy and the imaginary attempt to regain it.

Given this obsession with recovering station and money lost, professionalism on Dupin's part is not surprising. It is not, however, as Terence Whalen would have it, a professionalism that suddenly springs up in "Mystery of Marie Rogêt," making Dupin a figure catastrophically lapsing from Enlightenment "free thinker to hired intellectual." As Christopher Rollason says, Dupin's evolution as professional is "gradual," starting with "Murders in the Rue Morgue," not a sudden plunge. But Rollason joins a line of readers who see the Dupin stories, in Derrida's words, as "drift[ing]" from one to another, or who more radically, like Terry Martin, see no connection between the "Dupins" of the three stories at all.[11]

If the growth of professionalism is a regularly charted, organizational constant throughout the three tales, the reader would expect some sign of this at the outset, and indeed this sign is there. The first connection between Dupin and the narrator is billed as a monetary exchange. Finding in Dupin a "treasure beyond price," the narrator exchanges for it "the expense of renting" their rooms ("Rue Morgue," p. 179). Even the narrator's vantage for observing the stories' events is one for which Dupin implicitly barters a piece of his "treasure." Interestingly, over the course of the three stories this fungible rental property, "time eaten" and "tottering" in "Murders in the Rue Morgue," becomes a congenial place of "luxury" with a "back library" in "The Purloined Letter" (pp. 225–26). Lacan misremembers when he calls the Dupin of "The Purloined Letter" a "virtual pauper."[12] Dupin has achieved professional success, and the professional detective's office is born, from what is from the start a professional agreement between the narrator and Dupin made in response to Dupin's pain of money lost.

The implied exchange of "treasure" for "expense" seems to give Dupin unconscious incentive to pursue a model of exchange. His interest

in the grisly "murders" in the Rue Morgue comes not from some abstract interest in puzzle solving but from the identity of one of the killings' incidental figures. Adolphe Le Bon, a bank clerk, had attended the elder victim to her residence "with . . . 4000 francs" (p. 184); this same Le Bon, Dupin says, "once rendered me a service for which I am not ungrateful" (p. 186). Given Le Bon's duties the reader has to assume the "service" in question entailed giving or lending money; the investigation into the Rue Morgue murders then is on its way toward becoming detective services rendered for fees paid, though at this early stage the professional arrangment is a very hazy, informal one (service as repayment or compensation for financial favor).

Moreover, in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" Dupin seems to be receiving a lesson in fee structures. When he creates the ruse that he has caught the Corsican's killer ape, the Corsican promises "to pay a reward . . . —that is to say, any thing in reason" (p. 195). Later, newspapers report that on recapturing the animal the Corsican sells it to the zoo "for . . . a very large sum" (p. 197). Dupin always reads the newspapers. The sole form of evidence in "Mystery of Marie Rogêt," in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" the newspapers give Dupin a first inkling of what "any thing within reason" might mean when applied to "rewards."

As might be expected in a genuinely compact series of stories, the first tale provides the hero with learning experiences that inform the series. Burton Pollin points out as peculiar Dupin's remark in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" that observation has become only "of late, a species of necessity" for him ("Rue Morgue," p. 181).[13] The peculiarity disappears, however, if the story is taken as an early, experimental phase in Dupin's self-education. "Observation," along with other skills and techniques, are developing "of late" as responses to "necessities" in Dupin's mental life.

By "Mystery of Marie Rogêt," set "about a year" after the Rue Morgue case (p. 198), Dupin's professionalism becomes more apparent. Whereas in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" Dupin's attention had been independently drawn to the killings, in "Mystery of Marie Rogêt" no word of Marie's murder "reached the ears" of Dupin until the Prefect of Police arrives to tell the story, an inattention on Dupin's part that even the narrator finds "strange." No puzzle intrinsic to the murder case draws his attention; nevertheless, without knowing anything about the case, Dupin "accept[s] at once" after the Prefect has "made him a liberal proposition, the nature of which [the narrator does not feel himself] at liberty to disclose." This sum must be high, since the narrator has

already felt "at liberty" to report on the general reward of thirty thousand francs for Marie's killer (p. 200). Robert Shulman suggests that Dupin's concern with money in scenes like this represents wishful thinking in which "the poet surrogate [Dupin] easily wins the gold," thus reversing the state of real-world impoverished "poets."[14] Whatever its symbolic "poetic" signifigance, Dupin's lost social fortune has created a situation in which the Prefect's "liberal proposition" and not the case has led to Dupin's instant acceptance. That "the cases were not few in which attempt was made to engage Dupin's services" (p. 198) suggests Dupin does not take a case without an extravagant fee.

This special sort of payment is probably responsible for the long-standing assumption that Dupin is an amateur and not a professional to begin with. Such a view in fact makes sense if "professional" is taken in its most usual current sense of working for a salary (like a police detective) or an hourly wage (like a private detective). Dupin's professional type appears rare, and its closest analog might be the successful prize fighter who takes the occasional match for a very rich purse. Such a career is certainly not "amateur," but a person on the street would probably think twice before saying the boxer "really" has a job. In keeping with his loss of great fortune, Dupin too takes an occasional case for an exceptionally high price; crime detection becomes, therefore, a "profession," but perhaps not a "job." One sign of the usual job, whether for salary or wage, is to show up regularly on time; Brigid Brophy suggests that Dupin intends his "irregular hours" as violation of an employer's time clock, allowing him "the aristocratic mark of the man who does not have to go out to work next morning."[15] As they hide him from the shame of social declassification, so Dupin's nighttime hours at once affront the keepers of workaday time and perhaps also render him physically incapable of day labor.

Professional practice of his sort complements Dupin's compulsion to regain aristocracy, since windfall profits are the closest Dupin can come to simulating inherited wealth, and very occasional work is the closest he can come to being idly and aristocratically rich. Poe's own remarks on his ceasing to solve codes for *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* and *Graham's Magazine* help connect this quest for lost station to the very occasional nature of Dupin's work. "I was at one time absolutely overwhelmed" with cryptographic submissions, Poe wrote to John Tomlin in August 1843; "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. . . . You will hardly believe me when I tell you that I have lost, in time, which to me is money, more than a thousand dollars in solving ciphers."[16] Poe's being swamped with requests for crytograph solutions recalls Dupin's situation, in which requests for his help "were not few." But as Poe's exasperation suggests, to work regularly at such a task is to participate in a bourgeois "time is money" mentality.

And to participate in that mentality entails the possibility of sometimes losing, as Poe feels he has, if according to some wage formula the hours spent outweigh the money taken in. Financial loss had been Dupin's original psychological wound; losing again is a psychological risk Dupin cannot take. The clearly aristocratic stamp of Dupin's professionalism is at odds with Rollason's assertion that Dupin's money-making offers the "middle-class reader an imaginative palliation for real social anxieties," or Sevanne Woodward's that Dupin is inventing "the system of capitalism" as an "unintellectual common denominator for humanity, a need for bread." If Brophy reads Dupin as a democratized aristocrat, he remains an aristocrat *manqué* all the same.[17] Dupin's professional mode aims at making him as little "common" or "middle-class" as possible and indeed at recreating a past social state from which to consider the bourgeosie inferior.

"The Purloined Letter" caps this development toward occasional windfall professionalism; as Woodward observes, in this final installment of the trilogy Dupin comes to replace word games with number games, and specifically the numbers of money, when he insists on the Prefect's fifty-thousand-franc check before turning over the stolen letter.[18] Noticeably, the fictional time between "Mystery of Marie Rogêt" and "Purloined Letter" is longer than that between "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and the Marie Rogêt case. Instead of "about a year," the time has been "several years" ("Purloined Letter," p. 226). The case in the Rue Morgue had been a payback to Le Bon, in itself netting no cash; the Rogêt case, in contrast, had brought a "liberal" payment allowing "several years" of aristocratic otium. In "The Purloined Letter," Dupin is out to make as good a deal or better, allowing him another "several" years before performing service again; on receiving the check for fifty thousand francs, Dupin "examined it carefully" before putting it in his wallet (p. 230). Interest in examining checks is dramatized in a way that interest in the case, to begin with, is not, at least until Dupin's eventual explanation.

Increasing attention to periodic profit-making also helps explain Dupin's mystifications. Dupin discusses his methods with "no other

individual" but the narrator ("Marie Rogêt," p. 198). While allowing Dupin to keep his methods a professional secret, the "Dr. Watson" figure also gives Dupin an opportunity to practice a professional style that will be crucial to his business success, namely creating the impression of magical performance. The generic affinity of Dupin-style detective fiction to the supernatural tale has been occasionally remarked; as Syndy Conger remarks, "magical thinking has not been so much banished as temporarily subdued" in the story of ratiocination.[19] The theoretical introduction to "Murders in the Rue Morgue" says that Dupin's sort of "*acumen* . . . appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural," an impression that, the narrator suggests, may produce a studied affectation, an "air of intuition" (p. 175). Poe's celebrated remark of August 9, 1846 to Philip Pendleton Cooke that the Dupin stories seem "more ingenius that they are—on account of their . . . *air* of method" may show overmodesty or true self-dissatisfaction,[20] but in the reference to "air" Poe echoes his own narrator and suggests his awareness of "intuition" as practiced technique.

When the "Watson" interlocutor first meets Dupin, Dupin "seemed . . . to take an eager delight" in the "exercise—if not exactly . . . display" of his analytic ability (p. 180). The narrator's repeated "profound astonishment" at Dupin's ability sends Dupin over the verge of "not quite enjoying" an audience and coaches him in the techniques of mystifying display. The narrator is a perfect trainer in such mystification, since in addition to telling Dupin his abilities are amazing ("I do not hesitate to say that I am amazed and can scarcely credit my senses"), he also harbors an unspoken feeling that Dupin's analysis is supernatural ("I was even more startled than I would have been willing to express" [p. 180]). Since Dupin is in the process of picking the narrator's mind clean, the reader has to assume Dupin is aware of these thoughts the narrator dares not speak.

By the time of "The Purloined Letter," the mystification in which Dupin schools himself in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" has developed to the high art that is the signature of detective fiction *à la* Sherlock Holmes: revealing the mystery's solution in a way that is sudden for the client and others but delayed for the detective, who has known the solution for some time. Dupin has recovered the stolen letter long before he reveals or explains the fact; one can imagine that the game he plays to surprise Prefect G— would today bring a review board hearing for a police detective and a punch in the nose for a private detective of a more homely professional stamp. A mark of Dupin's professional type is that

he not only can risk the shock revelation but that he needs it to pursue the kind of occasional, windfall work he does.

Terry J. Martin notes an increased emphasis on the immaterial in Dupin's explanation of his problem solving between "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter."[21] This increase is effectively a canny business choice, to play up the clairvoyant showmanship of Dupin's methods. As Grella notes, Dupin's style of professionalism requires "insur[ing] the solidity of his reputation" by startling others "through a brilliantly plausible solution." Dennis Porter also emphasizes the element of startling or amazing the client, citing the body-building metaphor at the beginning of "Murders in the Rue Morgue" as an instance of marvellous performance.[22] The narrator speaks of "exhibiting" powers, as the body builder puts his body on display; the goal, as in the narrator's famous analogy between analysis and the games of checkers and whist, is to amaze others.[23]

The deployment of startling exhibition becomes more than a professionally successful method for Dupin. It also ties psychologically in to his longing for the highly visible station of lost aristocracy. Much has been written on the derivation of the name "C. Auguste Dupin."[24] Surely it is, among its other possible significances, a pun for "see auguste Dupin." "C"—also the first letter of "Chevalier"—takes an even more exalted, Roman, royal flavor from "Auguste" (C[aesar] Augustus Dupin). Dupin's name places him in a very special royal lineage indeed, the first among the Romans to be deified; as Robert Daniel observes of Dupin's abilities generally, the onomastic result "is the transformation of a human character into a god," and specifically a god who is one by virtue of his human, noble bloodline.[25] Dupin's professional manner of startling exhibition and his traumatic motive to reclaim aristocracy intersect in his name as spelled and pronounced.

The importance of Dupin's "miraculous," exhibitionist revelations may also help more fully explain his desire for only very occasional employment. Part of startling an audience requires that the startling revelation not become commonplace. It is the mark of the Sherlock Holmes parody, not the Sherlock Holmes story, for Holmes to be constantly startling his client with amazing "deductions" every few lines. While Poe's 1843 letter to John Tomlin claims that he "had no alternative but to solve all" of the ciphers sent to him at *Alexander's* and *Graham's* magazines, the published "solutions" reveal a complex pattern of giving, partly giving, and withholding solutions. Of the cryptograms in *Alexander's*, W. K. Wimsatt finds that a total of "thirty-six

ciphers were published or alluded to. Poe published the text and solution of eleven ciphers; the solution, but not the text of sixteen. Three ciphers he stated merely that he had solved. Six he had for various reasons failed to solve: one he had lost, one he had had no time to examine, one was written in pencil and 'defaced,'" and so on.[26] Giving full solutions to thirty-six mysteries out of thirty-six published in *Alexander's* would eventually have bored rather than startled subscribers. Losing some and not having time for some, giving some in part and saying that some unpublished puzzles had been solved, leads the subscriber on.

Dupin employs this same tantilizing rhetoric of pauses. Among the other techniques Dupin learns through experimenting with the narrator is the importance of putting an audience to sleep between periods of unspeakable amazement, creating the torpor in which "we . . . slumbered tranquilly" ("Marie Rogêt," p. 198). Dupin knows to give his more general public an analogous soporific between rare cases. A macoronic pun Poe cites in the initial puzzle challenge in *Alexander's* is provocative here: "Why is his last new novel sleep itself? Because it's so poor. *Sopor*."[27] The private and public sopor Dupin induces to fatten the purse for his eventual next case hints at Dupin's motivation in having become "so poor."

The situation in which Dupin's name "had grown into a household word" because he was "regarded as little less than miraculous" ("Marie Rogêt," p. 198), then, results from a complex, developing professional technique and derives from an equally complex motive. "Analysis" becomes a professional secret revealed to no one but the narrator, who himself serves as an unwitting coach in the use of analysis to provide mystification and the timing of this mystification to create maximum effect. The motive behind the professionally lucrative image of occasional miracle worker is to recapture in experience a social and financial standing unrecoverable in fact.

The goal of recovering his traumatically lost aristocracy also explains Dupin's vindictiveness against the police. At the end of "Murders in the Rue Morgue" Dupin pronounces, "I am satisfied with having defeated [Police Prefect G—] in his own castle" (p. 197). The feudal metaphor is appropriate for a "Chevalier" who has fallen from high estate and imagines having received it back. Dennis Porter emphasizes as well the importance in "The Purloined Letter" of a hereditary knight's defeating the new professional politician, Minister D—. Rosenheim's comment that the minister is also to be taken as the jack, or knave, in a suit of face cards heightens and complicates this sense of courtly stationing.[28]

When the true knight, Chevalier Dupin, defeats the modern bureaucrat, he also implicitly reintegrates that bureaucrat into the courtly hierarchy as knave, the page not yet advanced to knighthood. As part of his fantasy, Dupin also controls the nomenclature of his psychological game, starting with the narrator. After the prefect's defeat "in his own castle," the "Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin" the narrator identifies at the start of "Murders in the Rue Morgue" (p. 179) becomes the "Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin" at the beginning of "Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (p. 198). Dupin has conquered the narrator's vocabulary as certainly as he has the prefect's castle. The shift in Dupin's title from "Monsieur" to "Chevalier" underscores the seamless way in which the tales become serial. No cataclysm occurs, as Whalen would have it. Rather, Dupin's peculiar form of entrepreneurship emerges from equally peculiar social motives and develops from the start across all three tales.

The most important question to ask about Dupin's professionalism is how to evaluate it. Does it indicate some debasing of the intellect through market forces as Whalen and others would have it? A tendency seems to be emerging across a variety of fronts to fault Dupin ("duping" could certainly be another resonance of his name) and to see the Dupin stories as intentional parodies or indictments on Poe's part rather than as the celebration of "analytic" genius they have traditionally seemed. Martin claims Poe "rejected" "materialist theories of mind," and if this were the case, then clearly Dupin with his material objectives would be a fallen character.[29] But Poe did not reject materialist theories of the mind and in fact endorsed them.

Vankirk's voice from beyond the grave in "Mesmeric Revelation" claims that thought is "matter in motion"; God, as ultimate mind, "is but the perfection of matter" in a universe where "there is no immateriality" (pp. 141–42). "The Power of Words" produces perhaps Poe's most famous analogy of thought to matter in the image of the moving hand vibrating in "every particle of the earth's air" (p. 115). God's creative thought and the human creative thought that together produce the love planet at the essay's close are particulate motions and indeed are understandable only as particulate motion. In "The Power of Words" this material model of mentality verges on the materialistic. The "shining bodies" that constitute the sum of existence make up the "golden walls of the universe" (p. 114). "The Philosophy of Furniture" reminds readers of what this "gold" can buy, again in mixed

mentalist and materialist terms: "The soul of the apartment is the carpet" (p. 15). Mind stuff, matter stuff, and buying power turn indistiguishable as the soul becomes a rug, a transformation familiar from Poe's interior design arabesques like those in "Ligeia."[30]

Shulman surely echoes the concerns of many readers that "Poe's model of the mind in his critical essays" provides insufficient admission to his fiction. But Shulman is unhappy because some readers have followed Poe's critical remarks to a model of the mind that is too ethereally *spiritual*.[31] Following Poe's essayistic remarks in the opposite direction, toward an interpretation of the mind as matter, produces results consonant with the fiction, including the Dupin stories.

The pattern of considering consciousness as material informs Poe's earliest fiction, before the critical essays. Both "Bon-Bon" ("The Bargain Lost") and "Loss of Breath" ("A Decided Loss") of 1832, for instance, are fantasies of the spirit's replacement by body. Bon-Bon and Lackobreath, in their respective stories, are both far rounder than they are tall, a physical condition suggesting the corporeal in a conventional allegory of body and spirit, yet in both instances this contrast breaks down. Bon-Bon's immense belly is the "fitting habitation for his immortal soul" (p. 399). Lackobreath's lack o' breath represents a loss of pneuma, breath as traditional symbol of the soul, yet this breath- or soul-lessness appears as positive. Spirit as "shadow" (or attenuated tallness as opposed to squat massiveness) appears in both stories as negative ("Bon-Bon," p. 406; "Loss of Breath," p. 487).

The organization of both stories carries the same materialist implication. For Lackobreath to lose his breath/soul, search for it as if it were a material object, and then buy it back, receipt and all, like a material commodity (p. 489) implies an education in the soul's material constitution. In "Bon-Bon's" curious rhetorical form, the devil appears to the philosopher/chef ostensibly to lure Bon-Bon away from some spiritualist taint in his writings, only to find that Bon-Bon agrees that the soul is material to begin with. Expecting to find an argument, the devil finds instead a willing supporter. This devil, who claims he "is" Epicurus, bears a physical resemblance to another epicurean atomist in Poe's fiction. Like Dupin in his half-slumber ("Marie Rogêt") or visiting Minister D— in "The Purloined Letter," the devil wears green glasses (p. 401). Like Dupin, the devil is a spokesman for a position with which Poe fundamentally agrees. As Joseph Moldenhauer says, "sentience" associates with "material form."[32]

Those who indict Dupin for being too material have already defended him against Lemay's charge that he is an "egghead" privileging thought over matter;[33] but those who counter-accuse Dupin of privileging the material over the mental, spiritual, or imaginative have missed the fact that for Poe the spiritual is material and that matter is another name for mind. Thus Dupin's increasingly refined obsession with money and status runs parallel to his fame for genius. Dupin himself emphasizes the "very strict analogies" between the "material world" and "the immaterial" ("Purloined Letter," p. 234). Matter and mind immediately correspond; as Dupin says in "Murders in the Rue Morgue," if one is "all head and no body . . . like a codfish" (p. 197), one does not do detective work. The Dupin stories bear out Poe's mesmeric revelation that mind, including or perhaps most especially ingenious mind, forms one continuum with inert substance.

Poe's emphatic insistance on the role of the material and the materialistic in his detective tales makes them the important psychological statements they are and also connects this psychological statement to a further materialist metaphysic. The correspondence of the mental and the physical is Dupin's expressed credo and seems to be Poe's as well in such reveries as "Mesmeric Revelation." Theirs is a materialist psychology. For Dupin's genius to begin with "admiration" for a marble entrepreneur (his one childhood reminisence, in "The Purloined Letter") and for his life to be bound up with material trauma and materialistic desires and strategies only underlines the materiality of thought to begin with. Disapproving of Dupin for materialism only reflects the disapprovers' own various ideologies. The familiar critical move of treating Dupin as a poet-surrogate is similarly misleading if "poet" is taken to mean an ephemeral someone whose vocation targets the immaterial. To do so is to lose Poe's model of the mind. In an early appreciation of Poe's mystery fiction, J. Brander Matthews claimed that Poe's great advantage over previous (and subsequent) detective writers lay in his portrayal of "human interest." But the dramatization of materialist psychology in the Dupin stories shows that "human interest" is not the easy affective quality that Matthews intends.[34] Dupin's pain and his professional strategies for alleviating it do not disqualify him for genius, let alone make him "humanly interesting." Rather, they offer Poe the only way he can honestly portray how genius works.

Notes

A much shorter version of this paper was delivered at the Pennsylvania College English Association meeting, Pittsburgh, April 16, 1994.

[1] Susan Beegel, review of T. J. Binyon, *Murder Will Out: The Detective in Fiction*, *Poe Society of America Newsletter*, 18 (1990), 2; Jacques Lacan, "The Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" trans. and ed. Jeffrey Mehlman, *YFS*, 48 (1971), 67.

[2] Terence Whalen, "Edgar Allan Poe and the Horrid Laws of Political Economy," *AQ*, 44 (1992), 405.

[3] *The Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe: An Annotated Edition*, ed. Stuart Levine and Susan Levine (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 191. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

[4] Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," trans. Willis Domingo *et al.*, *YFS* 52 (1975), 101, 105.

[5] Richard Wilbur, "The Poe Mystery Case," *NYRB*, July 13, 1967, 24.

[6] George Grella, "Poe's Tangled Web," *ArmD*, 21 (1988), 268–75; see also Mark Keller, "Dupin in the Rue 'Morgue.' Another Form of Madness?" *ArQ* 33 (1977), 249–55.

[7] The "Dr. Watson" figure does have occasional champions like Terry J. Martin, who takes him as the "real" detective in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" because he has the ability to have feelings about the case. "Detection, Imagination, and the Introduction to 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" *MLS*, 20 (1989), 38–41.

[8] John T. Irwin, "Reading Poe's Mind: Politics, Mathematics, and the Association of Ideas in 'Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" *AmLH*, 4 (1992), 201–4.

[9] Shawn Rosenheim, "The King of 'Secret Readers': Edgar Poe, Cryptography, and the Origins of the Detective Story," *ELH* 56 (1989), 386–87.

[10] See Nikita Nankov, *Edgar Allen* [sic] *Poe as an American Romantic* (Des Moines: Occasional Papers in Language, Literature, and Linguistics, 1990), p. 3, and Dana Brand, "Reconstructing the 'Flanêur': Poe's Invention of the Detective Story," *Genre* 18 (1985), 49–54.

[11] Whalen, p. 402; Christopher Rollason, "The Detective Myth in Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin Trilogy," *American Crime Fiction: Studies in the Genre*, ed. Brian Docherty (Houndsmills: MacMillan, 1988), p. 12. Derrida's model of the stories' "drift and disorientation" (p. 101) emphasizes their indebtedness to a numbing variety of literary models, symbolized by the opiate atmosphere of Dupin's library, and reflected by the overt intertextual references between the three tales.

[12] Lacan, p. 67.

[13] Burton R. Pollin, "Poe's 'Murders in the Rue Morgue': The Ingenious Web Unravelled," *SAR* (1977), 239. Like Grella, though on different grounds, Pollin thinks Poe expects "Murders in the Rue Morgue" to be read as a spoof.

[14] Shulman, "Poe and the Powers of Mind," *ELH* 37 (1970), 255.

[15] Brigid Brophy, "Detective Fiction: A Modern Myth of Violence?" *HudR* 18 (1965), 25.

[16] Quoted and discussed in John A. Hodgson, "Decoding Poe? Poe, W.B. Tyler, and Cryptography," *JEGP* 92 (1993), 524.

[17] Rollason, p. 6; Sevanne Woodward, "Lacan and Derrida on 'The Purloined Letter,'" *CLS* 26 (1989), 42. Woodward's remarks are based on the conjecture that "Dupin" may be a pun on French "du pain." Brophy suggests that Dupin's style of aristocracy is a "fantasy" that society after the French Revolution "wished could he true: he offers a way of returning to the aristocratic principle without violating [democratic] reason" ("Detective Fiction," 25).

[18] Woodward plays, as do all writing in Lacan's shadow, on the dual meaning of "letter" as epistle and character of the alphabet. Thus Dupin exchanges language for financial figures in giving up the letter for money.

[19] For the detective tale in relation to the supernatural, see Peter J. Brenner. "Die Geburt des Detektivromans aus dem Geist des Unheimlichen," *LWU* 11 (1978), esp. 5–8, and Benjamin Franklin Fisher, IV, "Poe, *Blackwood's*, and 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" *ANQ* 12 (1974), 110. Syndy Conger's remarks are from "Another Secret of the Rue Morgue: Poe's Transformation of the *Geisterseher* Motif," *SSF*, 24 (1987), 9.

[20] J. Brander Matthews made an early case for overmodesty in "Poe and the Detective Story" (1907; repr. in *The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Eric W. Carlson [Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1966]), p. 92. For Poe as truly self-dissatisfied, see J. Lasley Dameron, "Poe's Auguste Dupin," *No Fairer Land: Studies in Southern Literature before 1900*, ed. J. Lasley Dameron and James W. Mathews (Troy: Whitston, 1986), p. 161.

[21] Martin, pp. 43–44, n. 12.

[22] Grella, p. 275; Dennis Porter, "Of Poets, Politicians, Policemen, and the Power of Analysis," *NLH* 19 (1988), 503–4.

[23] The narrator's reference to checkers as an "unostentatious game" may seem counter to Dupin's technique of startling and amazing his listeners, but by "unostentatious" he must mean the social and class circumstances in which the game is played and not the spectacle of play itself. Frequent, multiple "takes" make checkers much more of a show than chess. *Hoyle's Rules of Games* points out that this game, "in the 19th century . . . extensively analyzed," not only allows multiple takes of two to four pieces but requires them by rule: "When able to capture, a player MUST do so." Edmond Hoyle, *Hoyle's Rules of Games. Descriptions of Games of Skill and*

Chance, with Advice on Skillful Play. Based on the Foundations Laid Down by Edmond Hoyle, 1672–1769, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Albert H. Morehead and Geoffrey Mott-Smith (New York: Penguin, 1983), pp. 220 and 223. Poe refers to "Hoyle" disparagingly in "Murders in the Rue Morgue" as a "mechanis[tic]" rule book (p. 178) with regard to whist. What he means by "Hoyle" is impossible to say, since Hoyle himself wrote a number of rule books, and his rules have been cobbled together by various editors.

[24] A common assumption, pursued at length in John Irwin's "Reading Poe's Mind," is that "Dupin" derives from a French mathematician Poe encountered in his reading. Much earlier, W.T. Bandy reviewed this and other speculations, adding his own guess that the name is also a portmanteau word playing with names in Poe's correspondence, a letter from an "S. Maupin" about an "M. C. Auguste Dubochet." "Who Was Monsieur Dupin?" *PMLA* 79 (1964), 509–10. Bandy also argues the importance of the first initial, "C." That it is the first letter of Chevalier suggests that it abbreviates a noble title (as "M." abbreviates the bourgeois title "Monsieur": the "M. Dubochet" in Bandy's letter or "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"). Nonetheless, the opening to "Mystery of Marie Rogêt" makes clear that the "C." in point of literal fact abbreviates a first name, since the narrator refers to Dupin as "Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin" (p. 198).

[25] Robert Daniel, "Poe's Detective God," *Furioso* 6 (1951), 47.

[26] W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., "What Poe Knew about Cryptography," *PMLA* 58 (1943), 755.

[27] Clarence S. Brigham, "Edgar Allan Poe's Contributions to *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 52 (1942), 57.

[28] Porter, pp. 506–9; Rosenheim, pp. 386–87.

[29] Martin, p. 36. This statement is embedded in a very general pronouncement about Romanticism which itself requires qualification.

[30] Poe's *Eureka* is both centrally important to the question of Poe's materialism and too large to treat here.

[31] Shulman, p. 247.

[32] Joseph Moldenhauer, "Murder as a Fine Art: Basic Connections between Poe's Aesthetics, Psychology, and Moral Vision," *PMLA* 83 (1968), 289.

[33] Leo B. Lemay, "The Psychology of the Murders in the Rue Morgue," *AL* 54 (1982), 178–79.

[34] Matthews, p. 86.