1922

Poe's critical principles: their sources and development

Margaret Alterton
State University of Iowa

This work has been identified with a Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0. Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.

This dissertation is available at Iowa Research Online: https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/4265

Recommended Citation
https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.gc1xx7rn

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd
Poe's Critical Principles: Their Sources and Development

by

Margaret Alterton

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Iowa City, Iowa.

1922
BIBLIOGRAPHY

MAGAZINES

5. Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine, 1839 to 1840
11. The Indicator, 1819.
12. The Southern Literary Messenger, vols. 1 to 5.

BOOKS

1. Aristotle.
   Poetics; tr. with critical text by S. H. Butcher.

2. Bacon, Francis.
   Essays, moral, economical and political. 1st American ed.
   Oliver, Boston, 1807.


184518
Blair, Hugh.
Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres. Jacob Johnson ed.
Philadelphia, and Richmond, (Virginia) 1808.

5. Boileau-Despreaux Nicolas
Oeuvres de Boileau L'aer poetique. G. E. Stechert & Co.,
New York 1909.

The Martyrs of Science; or The Lives of Galileo, Tycho Brahe

A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas on the

8. Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de.
The history of Don Quixote of La Mancha. J.C. Nimmo, London
1885.

Chapel Hill, The University Press 1908.

Letters, conversations, and recollections of S.T.Coleridge

11. Cowper, R. P.
The theory of poetry in England; its development in doctrines
and ideas from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth

Journal of a Voyage into the Mediterranean by Sir Kenelm
Digby, A.D.1628. Ed. from the original, autograph manuscrip
the possession of William Watkin E. Wynne, eq. by
John Bruce, (Westminster) Printed for the Camden Society, 1868.

Dick, Thomas.
The Christian Philosopher, or, The Connection of science and
philosophy and religion. Robinson Pratt and Co., New York,
1835.

A blow at modern sadderism in some philosophical considerations
Lux orientalis, London, 1662.
Scepsis scientifica. Printed for E. Cotes for H. Eversden,
London, 1665.

15. Godwin.
Lives of the necromancers. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1835


17. Johnson
   The essays of Samuel Johnson. Selected from the Rambler; the Adventurer and the Idler. W. Scott, London, 189?.

18. Kant, Immanuel.
   Critick of pure reason; W. Pickering, London, 1838.


   Elements of criticism, E. Duyckinck, New York, 1823.

   Edgar Poe, sa vie et son oeuvre; etude de psychologie pathologique. F. Alocan, Paris, 1904.

22. Lessing Gotthold.
   Laocoön, Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1874.

   Poetical Works. Cambridge ed. 19-
   Prefaces and essays on poetry. ed. by A.G. George, Boston Heath & Co., 1892.


25. Lofland, John.
   Complete Works. 1839

   Life of Scott.

27. Mackenzie, Shelton,
   Noctes Ambrosianae by John Wilson, 2 vols.

   Melmoth the wanderer. A. Constable & Co., Edinburgh, 1820
   Women; or Pour et contre. M. Thomas, Philadelphia, 1818

29.
30. Oliphant, Mrs. T.K.
   William Blackwood and his Sons.

31. Pope, Alexander,
   Essay on Criticism.
   The works of Alexander Pope, containing the prin. notes
   of Drs. Warburton and Warton - London 1806.

32. Plato.
   The Dialogues of Plato tr. into English with analyses and

33. Radcliffe, Mrs. Ann,
   The Romance of the Forest. G. Clark, Boston 1835.

34. Robertson, Dr. John,
   Edgar Allen Poe: a Study.

35. Scott, Sir Walter,

36. Stewart, Dugald.
   Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. J. Monroe,
   and Company, Boston 1836-7.

37. Shelley,
   Defense of Poetry.

38. Shelley, Mrs.
   Frankenstein.

   Selections from the Tatler, Spectator and Guardian.

40. Schlegel, August William, von
   A course of lectures on dramatic art and literature;
   tr. from the original German by John Black, Baldwin, Cradock
   and Joy, London, 1815.

41. Schlegel, Friedrich von.
   The Philosophy of History, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1841

42. Trent, William P.
   William Gilmore Simms, Houghton, Mifflin & Company,
   Boston & New York, 1892.

43. Tennemann, Wilhelm,
   A manual of the history of philosophy. H.G. Bohn,
   London, 1852. (Enlarged edition)
44. Whewell, William. 
Astronomy and general physics considered with reference to 

45. Wilmer, L.A. 
Quacks of Helicon. 
Our Press Gang.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following paper is to present Poe as a student who taught himself the art of effective writing. It will attempt to discover, in the mass of material that he produced, both in his office as editor and literary reviewer, his chief lines of study, and will endeavor to point out what Poe actually did to acquire his art.
Although British periodical literature was well known and accessible to American readers during the period of Poe's critical work, and Poe's interest in the "brief article" coming from the mother country was, therefore, by no means an interest peculiar to him; yet a study of what may be said to be his rather unusual familiarity with the text of the foreign magazine reveals him as being a more serious reader than he has perhaps been generally considered.

1. Republishing of British periodicals in America was carried on extensively. Advertising notices for publishing foreign magazines occur frequently in the *North American Review*. July, 1815, Wells & Lilly, Boston, announce that they have just published the Edinburgh Review for November, 1814. Allen and Ticknor of Boston "propose to republish Blackwood's Edinburgh, and the London New Monthly Magazine at a cost so moderate as to bring them within the reach of a large class of readers who cannot afford the expense of importing the English copies". *New York Mirror*, 1832, vol. 10, p. 190, Lilly, Wait, Coleman & Holden, also of Boston, were said according to the *New York Mirror*, vol. 10, p. 159, to be "conferring a favor on literary circles this side of the Atlantic by their American editions of the Edinburgh Review and the London Quarterly". Foreign periodicals, in addition to being reprinted in America, had also, their contents republished in part. Charles Bowen of Boston planned to give in the *Select Journal of Foreign Periodical Literature* a "selection of the most interesting articles and the most important information contained in the principal foreign literary journals". *New York Mirror*, vol. 10, p. 251. The "intelligent conductor of the Albion", also "reflects from his columns, with peculiar taste and skill, the wit, eloquence, information and general spirit of the British periodical press". *New York Mirror*, vol. 10, p. 222. Littel's *Museum*, published in New York by G.C. and H. Carvill, planned, according to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, to reprint in the same way. "The plan of the Museum is certainly most excellent. It is to select and republish from all the British periodicals of high reputation, everything which is either of present or of permanent value, omitting the vast mass of matter which is local to Great Britain or not interesting to an American reader." *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 1, p. 251. Leonard Scott's Publishing House, No. 9, Fulton st., New York, advertised the reprinting of foreign magazines immediately on their arrival in New York. Cf. *Broadway Journal*, vol. p., 1845. Foster reprinted, according to the Messenger of August, 1855, in cheap and valuable form, The *London, Edinburgh, and Westminster Reviews*. Cf. *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 1, p. 651.
One of the earliest influences on Poe's conscious method was his knowledge of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and other British periodicals. Evidence points to the fact that he was an indefatigable student of their contents. In the first place, he testifies himself to his habit of "poring over foreign files". In the early days of his editorship of the Southern Literary Messenger,


3. The earliest known record of Poe's connection with the Southern Literary Messenger is a letter written April 13, 1835, by his life-long friend Mr. J.P. Kennedy to Thomas White, the editor of the Messenger: "Poe did right in referring to me. He is very clever with his pen—classical and scholar life. He wants experience and direction, but I have no doubt he can be made very useful to you. And, poor fellow, he is very poor. I told him to write something for every number of your magazine and that you might find it to your advantage to give him some permanent employment. This young fellow is highly imaginative, and a little given to the terrific. He is at work upon a tragedy (Politian) but I have turned him to drudgery upon whatever may make money, and I have no doubt you and he will find your account in each other". Monticello Edition of Poe, Introduction, p. VII. Poe seems to have had various connections with the S.L.M. White apparently employed him as purveyor for the magazine, for Poe's letters of 1835 reveal that he was securing contributions. He writes to White, June 12, 1835: "I suppose you have received Mr. Calvert's communication. He will prove a valuable correspondent." Harrison, James A., Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, (New York, 1902), Letters, p. 7. Cf. also, Letters, p. 18. He was likewise useful, it appears, in increasing the circulation of the Messenger. Ibid., p. 6. (Hereafter S.L.M. will denote Southern Literary Messenger.) He published reviews from contemporary foreign magazines. From his own remarks it can be seen that he was following the trend of British criticism. In the

4. S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 139. Publishers Notice. Poe was criticized for printing reviews of reviews and discontinued the practice. In the Supplement to the S.L.M. that Poe issued containing complementary notices from various magazines concerning the success of the Southern Literary Messenger, occur the following strictures on his printing the reviews of foreign magazines. The Norfolk Beacon says: "The critical notices in the present number of the Messenger, particularly of the North American and the British Reviews, are in bad taste." The Lynchburg Virginian makes much the same comment: "Too much space is allotted to Critical Notices in the December number of the Messenger." The critical department, in the opinion of this paper, should not "be occupied with reviews of reviews—a dish of hash, newly warmed, and served up in all its insipidity to an already palled appetite."
first place, he condemns the general tone of criticism written by British re-
viewers. He thinks that British critics were too apt to discuss the subject-
matter under review rather than to weigh the merit of the article according to
any standard of criticism. Of the review of Article XIV, The Mythology of

5. This point will be further treated in Chapter VI.

Ancient Greece and Italy, by Thomas Keightly, in the Westminster Review he says:


"This is an interesting and able paper, but has no pretensions to the name of
Review. The position of the Bacchanalians in Greek and Roman History, and
their progress, together with the dangers and impediments encountered in their
course, forms the subject of the Essay—for it is an Essay—although an admir-
able one." The Westminster Review of the same date errs, he considers, in
having the greater part of what was supposedly a critical article, taken up in
reviewing some of the leading features in Scottish history. He finds the same

7. Ibid., p. 59.

fault with The Memoires of John Napier by Mark Napier, as reviewed in the same
magazine. He considers that British criticism has adopted an arrogance of tone
that is by no means justifiable; and he defends Coleridge against the abuse of
the Edinburgh Review, saying how little different in spirit that abuse was from
the "cold and brief compliments of the warm regrets of the Quarterly. If there
be any one thing more than another which stirs within us a deep spirit of indig-
nation and disgust, it is that damnation of faint praise which so many of the
Narcissi of critical literature have had the infinite presumption to breathe
against the majesty of Coleridge." Occasionally, however, Poe expresses himself

as pleased with a British review. He commends a criticism in the London Quarterly as being "one of those exceedingly rare cases in which a British critic

9. Ibid., p. 60.

confines himself strictly to his text."

Poe likewise appears to have been in the habit of comparing the opinions of different reviewers on the same subject. In the case of The Journal of Frances Anne Butler, which was the subject of comment in the whole round of periodical literature, Poe thus compares two reviewers on the merit of the work, adding his own idea to the others. "The tone of this review is very


similar to that of the article on the same subject in the Edinburgh for July.—The reviewer is of the opinion that 'Master Fanney's Journal' was from an early period, if not from the same line, intended for publication, and that the entire thing is arranged for stage-effect. Both these suppositions are highly probable. Indeed, for our own part, we never had a doubt about the matter." He also compares the Edinburgh and the London Quarterly in their handling of the Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honorable Sir James MacKintosh.


In the second place, Poe shows that he is familiar with the contents of British periodicals other than their critical matter. He speaks of Boz, the author of Watkins Tottle, as being a "far more pungent, more worthy, and better disciplined writer of sly articles than nine-tenths of the magazine writers of Great Britain—which is saying much, it must be allowed, when we consider the
great variety of genuine talent and earnest application brought to bear upon
the periodical literature of the mother country." And, again, showing his


familiarity with the British periodical press, he says that the English as far
excel us in writing the "brief article" as "Hyperion" does a "Satyr". He would
recommend to British stories for models, those who turn their attention to

13. Ibid., p. 47.

magazine writing. Poe apparently "pored over" files of early foreign periodicals

as well as over those of contemporary interest. In a critical essay written in


May, 1835, he mentions an Edinburgh review of an early date. He would gladly,

he says, appropriate the introductory remarks of the article were it fair to do

so; but "honor among thieves!" And in his famous review of Hawthorne's

Twice-Told Tales, he refers to the existence of good tales of effect in "the


early numbers of Blackwood".

Poe's stories likewise show him to be a student of foreign magazines.

16. Lionizing was one of the tales submitted for a prize by Poe in 1833 to
The Baltimore Visitor. An account of Poe's winning this prize with this

"As I felt within me the divine afflatus, I considered this accident
rather fortunate than otherwise. I resolved to be guided by the paternal
advice. I determined to follow my nose. I gave it a pull or two upon the
spot, and wrote a pamphlet on Noseology forthwith.

All Fum-Fudge was in an uproar.

'Wonderful genius!', said the 'Quarterly'.

'Superb Physiologist!', said the 'Westminster'.

'Clever fellow!', said the 'Foreign'.

'Fine writer!', said the 'Edinburgh'.

'Profound thinker!', said the 'Dublin'.

'Great mind!', said 'Bentley'.

'Divine soul!', said 'Fraser'.

'One of us!', said 'Blackwood'.

Poe also gave to his story Loss of Breath the sub-title of A Tale

17. S.L.M., vol. 1, p. 735. As the story appeared in the Messenger, it was entitled Loss of Breath, a Tale a la Blackwood.

neither in nor out of Blackwood. But perhaps the most convincing proof that Poe was an ardent student of foreign magazines is his sketch of How to Write a Blackwood Article. In this sketch, whose satire we must disregard for the present, he gives the titles of several stories that occur through the pages of Blackwood. The tales which he mentions are The Dead Alive, The Involuntary Experimentalist, The Confessions of an Opium Eater, The Diary of a Late Physician And The Man in the Bell. The significance of these and similar tales is a
question which will also be considered later, but at the present time his men-
tion of their titles is useful evidence to show that Poe scanned the pages of
British periodicals.

Poe's letters are further evidence that he had his attention fixed on
foreign quarterlies. He discusses with Judge Beverley Tucker the value of the
general tone of British criticism and the relative merits of certain of the
chief English reviewers, Jeffrey and Wilson in particular. He writes to

24. Works. Letters. p. 23. Professor Trent gives an interesting account of
Judge Beverley Tucker's correspondence with aspiring men of letters; of
his interest in Southern literature especially as that interest touched
William Gilmore Simms. Trent, William P., William Gilmore Simms,
(Boston and New York, 1896) p. 176.

Mr. J.P. Kennedy that by Loss of Breath he intended to satirize the extrav-
gance of Blackwood.


Christopher North, the editor of Blackwood, seems always to have been
to Poe a type of the extravagant in critical commendation or blame. Poe main-
tained that North owed his tremendous popularity in the critical world more to
his great exuberance of spirits and dashing audacity than to any very profound
knowledge of critical principles. In fact, he seems to be generally of the

Review of Wilson's Genius and Character of Burns.

This opinion of North was, according to Mrs. Oliphant in her work
William Blackwood and his Sons, the general opinion of all readers of
English periodicals of North's time. She cites as an instance of his
"tremendous wrath", his expression of disgust at Henry MacKenzie's un-
favorable criticism of his Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life.
Oliphant, Mrs. T.K., William Blackwood and his Sons, (Edinburgh and
London, 1897), vol. 1, p. 269.
opinion that Judge Tucker was correct in his judgment that North was arrogant in critical matters. He intended, as has just been noted, to satirize in


Loss of Breath the extravagances in Blackwood. It is now suggested that he meant a satirical attack more particularly on Blackwood's criticism, and moreover, that it was in the figure of Windenough that he designed to satirize Christopher North; that the author of Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life, who was noted for his extravagance of critical judgments, for his caustic wit; who was elected to the professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh may possibly be seen in the "gaunt, tall, and peculiar looking form"


which Mr. Lackobreath drags from the tomb saying "---here is a wretch entitled to no earthly commissération.--Who indeed would think of compassionating a shadow? Besides, has he not had his full share of the blessings of mortality? He was the originator of tall monuments, shot-towers, lightning-rods, Lombardy poplars. His treatise upon "'Shades and Shadows'" has immortalized him. He edited with distinguished ability the last edition of "'South on the Bones'". He went early to college and studied pneumatics. He then came home and talked eternally and played upon the French horn. He patronized the bag-pipes. Captain Barclay, who walked against Time, would not walk against him. Windham and Allbreath were his favorite writers; his favorite artist, Phiz."

Of all the foreign magazines which Poe knew, Blackwood is perhaps the one with which he was most familiar. He appears to have derived from Blackwood

29. The popularity of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine is testified to in the columns of American periodicals. The New York Mirror speaks familiarly,
though in a critical vein, of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, saying that the absence of notes and explanations in that series of articles makes the meaning not always apparent to the American reader. The *New York Mirror*, vol. 10, p. 198. R. Shelton Mackenzie, in his *Noctes Ambrosianae* by John Wilson also testifies to the popularity of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in the United States: "For every reader of Blackwood's Magazine in the old country", he says, "there cannot be less than fifty in the new". Mackenzie, D.C.L., R. Shelton, *Noctes Ambrosianae* by John Wilson, (New York, 1863) vol. 1, p. XVI.

30. Palmer Cobb, in his work on the influence of E.T.A. Hoffmann on Poe, quotes the French critic, Barine, to the effect that a distinction must be made between Poe's indebtedness to sources for his ideas, or, subject-matter, and for his technique. (Cobb, Palmer. *The Influence of E.T.A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*. Published under the direction of The Philological Club of the University of North Carolina, 1908). Barine, it seems, had said that Poe owed his ideas to Coleridge and his technique to Hoffmann. Palmer Cobb, however, is of the opinion that Poe owed his ideas to Hoffmann, but as far as technical method of writing is concerned, he does not, in his conclusion, state that Poe has any debt to pay his German source. He says, "Finally, Hoffmann's influence on Poe did not extend to the latter's style. It was solely a borrowing and adaptation of motives." (Ibid., p. 104.)

Considering the probability of his indebtedness, first, in subject-matter, one is struck by the similarity of Poe's tales of effect to Blackwood material. Both Blackwood and Poe agree, using very much the same phraseology, that the horrible or terrible is a legitimate sphere for effective work for the writer of fiction. Poe is of the opinion that the impressions produced by the tales of effect in Blackwood were "wrought in a legitimate sphere of action and constituted a legitimate, although sometimes an exaggerated interest". A reviewer in


Blackwood, commenting on The Devil's Elixir by E.T.A. Hoffmann, makes the point that "the horrible is quite as legitimate a field for poetry and romance as either the pathetic or ludicrous". In fact, the English magazines are filled

with discussions of the advantages of the terrible in fictitious writing, and doubtless furnished Poe with many ideas on the subject. The same Blackwood

33. Both Palmer Cobb and Professor Gruenner are doubtless right in thinking that Poe must have read Walter Scott's essay On the Supernatural in the Foreign Quarterly Review for July, 1827. (Ibid., p. 7.)

reviewer explains that we delight in being horrified, that "the earth does not at this moment contain one individual who has not a superstitious shudder when he passes a church yard at midnight". He thinks that, this fact being true, the human mind will continue to receive a tragic pleasure from the skilful use made of these fears in fiction. The author of the story Le Revenant, also in Blackwood, maintains that it is a human instinct to wish for a first-hand experience of the sensations that would attend the laying down of life. He considers that it is this strange desire to experience that greatest of all sensations that has led painters and poets to make the estate of a man condemned to die a favorite theme of comment or description. A further critic sees in the


strangely fascinating records of physicians "good material for polite and popular literature". The Edinburgh Review, and the writer in this case is Hazlitt, 35

35. Ibid., vol. 28, p. 322, Diary of a Late Physician.

is of the opinion that Shelley is catering to this taste for the horrible: "He, (Shelley) mistook the nature of the poet's calling, which should be guided by involuntary, not by voluntary impulses. He ransacked his brain for incongruities and believed in whatever was incredible. Almost all is effort--subjects are chosen because they are repulsive; the colors of his styles, for their gaudy, changeful, startling effect, resemble the display of fireworks in the dark". The Indicator is of the belief that a writer's purpose should be to
satisfy this craving for excitement; Leigh Hunt, saying in his *How to Write a Grim Story*: "A man who does not contribute his quota of grim stories now-a-days seems hardly to be free of the republic of letters.—If he does not frighten everybody, he is nobody."

Poe and Blackwood also agree in the type of terror. There seems to be a distinction made between German and English type of terror. While much favorable comment may be read on the merits of German devilry, on the value of Hoffmann's tales in particular, yet there is also a strong plea for a terror that arises from some real experience. One critic thus states the difference: "Fairy stories please but (in England) they do not touch the soul.—The German terrible, besides that it wants this, our national *locus in quo*, takes a course commonly that the English do not pleasantly fall in with. Almost all the northern legends set out with a man's taking the bounty money of the devil; so that we guess pretty well in the beginning how he is to be disposed of in the end. And we feel but little interest about a man after he has made a bargain of this sort. He is above (or below) our sphere." Another reviewer, though he is approving of the power of the German writer, Ernst von Houwald, to produce a
"frightful sketch", yet appears to base his commendation on the reality of the horror. "When this author published his first attempt—a frightful sketch of which the scene was laid in a charnel house—we predicted that he would rise to eminence." Poe, with very much the same wording, seems to follow the type of terror that the Blackwood critic has just described. He says: "Terror is not of Germany; it is of the soul." 41

Besides agreement in the belief that terror was a legitimate sphere for effective writing, both Blackwood and Poe appear to be working out specific themes in common. Blackwood has an interesting treatment of the life-in-death theme, a theme which includes the attendant horrors of suspended animation and premature burial. I shall first present certain material from Blackwood and follow it by Poe's treatment of the same theme, noting the similarity between the two.

**Buried Alive**, from Blackwood, reads in part thus: "I had been for a long time ill of a low and lingering fever. My strength gradually wasted, but the sense of life seemed to become more and more acute as my corporeal powers became weaker. I could see by the looks of the doctor that he despaired of my recovery, and the soft and whispered sorrow of my friends taught me that I had nothing to hope.

"One day, towards the evening, the crisis took place. I was seized with a strange and indescribable quivering—a rushing in my ears—the power of
motion had departed. I heard the sound of weeping at my pillow and the voice of
the nurse said 'He is dead'. I cannot describe what I felt at these words. I
exerted my utmost power of volition to sit myself, but I could not move even an
eyelid.—The world was then darkened, but I still could hear, and feel, and
suffer.

"When my eyes were closed, I heard by the attendants that my friend had
left the room, and soon after found the undertakers were preparing to habit me
in the garments of the grave.—The day of interment arrived.—The hearse began
to move.—Dreadful was the effort I then made to exert the power of action.—
This is death, thought I. I heard a low and undersound in the earth over me and
I fancied the worms and reptiles of death were coming."

Hints to Jurymen likewise makes suggestions on the theme of life-in-death.


"We shall now pass on to a subject—which must always command the most lively
interest—that of Suspended Animation. ——hence it is as Cuvier has remarked
that the poetic fictions best calculated to insure our sympathy are those
which represent sentient beings enclosed with immovable bodies. ——there is a
propensity in the human mind to believe in these horrors because between cred-
ulity and fear there is an inherent affinity and alliance, and it may be very
safely asserted that there is nothing of which we have a greater instinctive
horror." And again from Hints to Jurymen is the same theme developed; in this
instance a living man actually showing all the symptoms of death. "On the

44. Ibid., vol. 13, p. 676.

following morning, the patient was examined by M. Battaglin, who found the
integments of the right arm almost entirely detached and pendant from the
flesh—and on the right hand, the part most injured, mortification had already commenced. A short time before his death, M. Battaglin observed with astonishment that putrefaction had made progress." And, further, in The Diary of a Late Physician: "All these circumstances which terrified the servant, who was shaking at my elbow and muttering, 'She's possessed!--Satan has her!', convinced me that the unfortunate lady was seized with catalepsy, that rare mysterious affection, so fearfully blending the conditions of life and death—presenting, so to speak—life in the aspect of death, and death in that of life!"

45. Ibid., vol. 32, p. 279.

Poe designates one of his stories with the title Life-in-Death; he gives also his opening sentences somewhat in the manner of the commencement of Buried Alive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buried Alive</th>
<th>Life-in-Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I had been for a long time ill of a low and lingering fever. My strength gradually wasted, but the sense of life seemed to become more and more acute as my corporeal powers became weaker. I could see by the looks of the doctor that he despaired of my recovery———.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;My fever had been excessive and of long duration. All the remedied attainable—had been exhausted to no purpose———.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46. Graham's Magazine, 1842, p. 200. The title of Poe's story Life-in-Death was later changed to "The Oval Portrait. In Chapter V I shall try to show that the dropping of the title Life-in-Death and the taking of a more realistic one appears to be quite consistent with Poe's idea of the power of realism as he attempted to work it out scientifically.

The Case of M. Valdemar appears to bear a striking resemblance to the patient of M. Battaglia, as detailed in Hints to Jurymen. The patient is, with the help of mesmerism, kept seven months from total extinction, even though his body manifests the conditions that only death can produce. "For what really occurred, however, it is quite impossible that any human being could have been
prepared. As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of 'dead! dead!' absolutely bursting from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute or less, shrunk—crumbled—absolutely rotted away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome--of detestable putrefaction."

47. Works, vol. 6, p. 154.

Premature burial, as Poe treats it, appears likewise to follow Blackwood's development of the Life-in-Death theme. In his article entitled Premature Burial he agrees with the author of Hints to Jurymen that the subject lies in a legitimate sphere for fiction. He says: "To be buried alive, is beyond question, the most terrific of these extremes which has ever fallen to the lot of mere mortality. That it has frequently, very frequently, so fallen will scarcely be denied by those who think. The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at least shadowy and vague. Who can say where the one ends and the other begins? We know that there are diseases in which occur total cessations of all the apparent functions of vitality, and yet in which these cessations are merely suspensions, properly so called. They are only temporary pauses in the incomprehensible mechanism."

The Life-in-Death theme in Poe's stories occurs as the essential part of the plot, sometimes as suspended animation, sometimes as premature burial, and again, as a combination of the two. He seems to have used it as a foundation upon which to build a more extensive story, weaving around the horrors of the theme almost equally great attending horrors until the effect was one of overwhelming terror. For example, in Berenice, the horror of the cataleptic
trance and premature burial are intensified and more fully developed by the peculiar disease to which the character Egaeus was a victim. This disease, a sort of monomania, which consisted in a mad desire to stare at Berenice's teeth, and, after her trance and interment, to obtain them, adds a grusomeness to the already gruesome and horrible theme.

50. As can be seen, neither Blackwood nor Poe has depended in the least on the supernatural for the effect of horror from the life-in-death theme. Coleridge, on the contrary, though he, too, is dealing with life-in-death, presents the theme from the supernatural standpoint. Leigh Hunt is of the opinion that the most appalling personage in the *Ancient Mariner* is the Spectre Woman who is called Life-in-Death. He explains this awful character, however, as Death-in-Life, and it seems as though there is a diminution in the effect of terror. He says, in his *Indication*: "He, (Coleridge) renders the most hideous abstraction more terrible than it could have otherwise been by embodying it in its own reverse. Death not only lives in it; but the unuttered becomes uttered." In the same way, re-animation as Coleridge gives it in *The Ancient Mariner* implies a supernatural element, and, in spite of what Leigh Hunt considers its power to terrify, it does not appear to equal in power of producing horror the power of Blackwood's more realistic method. Leigh Hunt, himself, though he speaks in favor of Coleridge's development of re-animation, yet testifies to the power of terrifying of re-animation when by a galvanic battery a dead body is made to undergo contortions. In the main, however, he considers the supernatural element necessary for the production of terror. He says in his article *How to Write a Grim Story*: "A ghost-story, to be a good one, should unite as much as possible objects such as they are in life with a præternatural spirit. And to be a pervegent one,—it should imply some great moral sentiment, something that comes out of the next world to remind us of our duties in this; or something that helps to carry on the idea of our humanity into after life, even when we least think we shall take it with us." (*The Indicator*, December 15, 1819. Leigh Hunt, *How to Write a Grim Story.*) It seems reasonable to think, therefore, that Blackwood and not either Coleridge or Leigh Hunt could have been suggestive in the realistic method that Poe adopted for working out this theme. It is necessary to add, however, that Poe's MS, *Found in a Bottle* appears to embody somewhat Coleridge's method, and therefore does not seem to be dependent on Blackwood, as does the realism of the life-in-death theme in the other tales.

A second theme that Poe and Blackwood have in common is the galvanic battery associated with the knife of the anatomist. A discussion on the subject in Blackwood gives several cases where they have been used as efforts to
resuscitate a supposed corpse. "Philippe Pau", says this article, "relates himself a case where--the first incision betrayed the awful fallacy under which he operated". And the same article adds: "With respect to the instance of Vesalius, we would make the general observation which will probably apply to most of the cases on record, that the movements which have been observed on such occasions are not to be received as demonstrations of life, they merely arise from a degree of muscular irritability which often lingers for many hours after dissolution, and which, on its apparent cessation, may be re-excited by the application of galvanic stimuli." Among the stories in Blackwood that develop this theme are Buried Alive, Diary of a Late Physician, and Le Revenant, all of which have a strongly realistic tone. From Buried Alive: "Presently I felt the hands of some dreadful being working about my throat. They dragged me out of my coffin.--Previous to beginning the dissection, he proposed to try on me some galvanic experiment, and an apparatus was arranged for that purpose. The first shock vibrated through all my nerves. The students expressed their admiration of the convulsive effect. The second threw my eyes open. But still I was dead?"

A third theme in which both Blackwood and Poe concur, is the coupling of beauty with disease; the viewing of the horrors, often the repulsive forms of diseased conditions, as they work to the final destruction of some beautiful young woman. It may not be too much to say that from passages from The Diary of a Late Physician, in which Blackwood exploits this idea, Poe caught the suggestion which led him to choose as "the most poetic topic in the world", the death of a beautiful woman. In order to show that Poe was indebted to Blackwood for this theme on which he built the dread disease and beauty of his Berenice, Ligeia, Madelaine, Elsanora, it may be well, first, to attempt to
say to what degree he was aware of the fascination which a physician's records of the detailing of diseased conditions hold for the reading public.

Poe doubtless knew that the series created a sensation among the London readers, since the articles are prefaced by remarks which show that they touched a chord of interest. He announces that, in his opinion also, *The Diary of a Late Physician* holds fascinating material. Dr. Warren, he says, in choosing bodily health as the basis of his series of articles, has touched on a topic which comes home to the bosoms of all humanity; that he has, in fact, opened up a vein of universal interest.

In the second place, Poe apparently sees that if the element of beauty is added to the details of the diseased conditions, a greater fascination will result. Both Blackwood and Poe appear to be striving to produce a morbid pleasure through analyzing the effects that disease has worked on the beautiful woman before them. Dr. Warren tells of his visits to a young woman of rare physical beauty who is stricken with the dread disease of cancer. The physician notes detail after detail of her condition, apparently with an almost

---

52. Poe's knowledge of this series of articles is testified to not only by his reference to the series in his *How to Write a Blackwood Article*, and the similarities between them and his work already alluded to (Cf. ante p. 6,) but also by the fact that he mentions them in several reviews. In one instance he says they were "shamefully ill-written". (Review of *Ten Thousand a Year, by the Author of The Diary of a London Physician*, *Graham's Magazine*, 1841.) In another instance he considers that there is a strong evidence in the series of a straining for effect and that this blemish disfigures what would otherwise have been admirable. (*S.L.M.*, vol.2 p. 87, Review of *Georgia Scenes.*)


54.
morbid pleasure. He says himself that "the interviews were long and painfully interesting". "I (the physician) found her one morning stretched on the crimson sofa in the drawing room; and though her pallid features and gently corrugated eye-brows evidenced the intense agony she was suffering, on my enquiring what sort of night she had passed she replied in a calm but tremulous tone --. Her pale features irradiated with a smile--sad, however, as the cold twilight of October. Her hair was light auburn and hung back neglectfully over a forehead and neck white as marble. Her full blue eyes--were now lighted with the glitter of a restlessness and agitation--. Indeed, an eminent medical writer has remarked that the most beautiful women are generally the subjects of this terrible disease."

Again, in Thunder Struck from the same series of articles, Dr. Warren notes the fascinating effect resulting from coupling beauty with disease. In this case the disease is catalepsy and the physician is now concerned with the changes that this fatal affliction has worked. The fact that was, but a short time ago, of such rare beauty, now presents a fearful spectacle. You feel the artistic effect as you read the record of this interview: "As it is now nearly nine o'clock and getting dark, I ordered candles--. 'Beautiful, unfortunate creature', thought I as I gazed mournfully on her, with my candle in my hand, leaning against the bed-post. 'What mystery is upon thee? What awful change? What awful change has come over thee? --the gloom of the grave and the light of life both lying upon thee at once!' And further on in the story: "On recovering myself,--Heavens! can I describe what I saw! Within less than a yard of me stood the most fearful figure my eyes have ever beheld. It was Agnes!--with both arms extended, as if in a menacing mood. Her hair was partially dishevelled. Her face seemed whiter than the white dress she wore. Her lips were of a livid hue. Her eyes full of awful expression--of supernatural lustre--were fixed with a petrifying stare on me. Oh, language fails me utterly! Those eyes have never
since been absent from me when alone! I felt as though they were blighting the
life within me.—As I looked at her I never once thought of Agnes P--------.

Various other reports from the physician's diary are equally detailed. In
The Scholar's Death-Bed the disease is consumption, and there is the analysis of
the disease and its symptoms, so carefully made that the effect is one of
morbid terror.

Poe, as well as the physician, seems to be attempting to produce a
morbid pleasure by analyzing with much care the changes that disease is working
in the beautiful woman. The beauty of the surroundings he also stresses.
Berenice, stricken as she was by the fatal disease "which swept like a simoon
upon her frame", becomes "not a thing to admire, but to analyze; not as an
object of love, but as the theme of the most astruse, although desultory specu-
lations".----"But uplifting my eyes, I saw that Berenice stood before me. I
remained for some time breathless and motionless, with my eyes riveted upon her
person. Alas! its emanation was excessive, and not one vestige of the former
being lurked in any single line of the contour. My burning glances at length
fell upon the face. The forehead was high and very pale, and singularly placid;
and the once jetty hair fell partially over it, and overshadowed the hollow


And from Ligeia: "The wild eyes blazed with a too-too glorious efful-
gencc; the pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the grave; and
the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sank impetuously with the
tides of the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die, and I struggled
56
desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael."

Poe appears to be following Dr. Warren not only in the similarities just noted, but in the explanation he gives in *The Philosophy of Composition* to the effect that he has designedly chosen the death of a beautiful woman as the topic that will be of universal interest to humanity. He explains the idea in the following way: "Now, never losing sight of the object supremeness, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself 'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?' Death—was the obvious reply. 'And when', I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?' From what I have already explained at some length, the answer here also is obvious.—'When it most closely allies itself to Beauty; the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world.'


In a further consideration of Poe's dependence on Blackwood in subject-matter, a similarity of several of Poe's plots with those in Blackwood may be noted. A Blackwood story furnishes part of a plot. Taking, for example, Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* and comparing it with the story *Thunder-Struck* in *The Diary of a Late Physician*, one finds many points in the two that are almost identical. One notices, first, an identity in theme. In both

1. Theme

A beautiful young woman falls into a cataleptic trance.

2. Points in the plots are strikingly similar.

(Granting that the real motif of Usher, that of the gloomy house of Usher being the symbol of the family and being destroyed with the destruction of the surviving members,—granting that this idea does not appear in *Thunder-Struck*, the bare outline of the incidents that develop the theme are identical in both.) e.g.
(a) The action takes place in a storm.

(b) Detailed analysis of the disease made in both cases.

(c) Both Lady Madelaine and Agnes P----, placed in coffins. (This point applied to the latter only in the dream that the physician has.)

(d) An apprehensive waiting for sound.

(e) The listener could not sleep—he leaps out of bed.

(f) A wild shriek is heard. (In Blackwood this was suggested.)

(g) A faint knock at the door.

(h) A death-like figure comes to life and, in Usher, appears at the door, and in Blackwood sits up in bed, both presenting, however, horrible spectacles covered with blood.

The plot of the Pit and the Pendulum appears to be gathered from several Blackwood stories. The Iron Shroud, published in the twenty-eighth volume of Blackwood details the horrors of a dungeon; the iron walls and ceiling of which, working by secret machinery, day by day closed closer on their victim.

58. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 28, p. 365, The Iron Shroud, by the Author of First and Last. The story is signed M., and is by Mudford. Mudford's stories seemed well known to American readers of Poe's time. The New York Mirror says in noticing Sharpe's London Magazine, "There is also a tolerable article by Mudford, though somewhat coarse, as is usual with him, entitled Confessions of a Suicide". (New York Mirror, vol. 10, p. 299, 1832.)

"(The dungeon) had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof and floor and sides were of iron, solidly wrought and spaciously constructed. High above there ran a range of grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal. He surveyed his gloomy dungeon—he noticed two circumstances--. The other circumstance which had attracted his notice was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of the prison.--The remaining four windows looked like the seven had looked; that is, occupying at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the center of those
four as it had at the first in the center of the seven. But he could no longer
doubt, what on the preceding day he fancied might be the effect of visual de-
ception. The dungeon was smaller. The roof had lowered—and the opposite ends
had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that
over which the three windows had extended. Some frightful purpose—some
devilish torture of mind or body—some unheard of device for producing exquisite
misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.—Another morning dawned
upon the wretched captain and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two
windows! and two days—and all would be over.—

The Man in the Bell details the sweeping from side to side of the pon-
drous bell within an inch from the face of the helpless victim. "Every moment
I saw the bell sweep within an inch of my face." "To look at the object", he
said, "was bitter as death"; but he could not prevent his eyes from following it
instinctively as it swung. The bell pealing above and opening its jaws with
a hideous clamour, seemed at one time a raving monster raging to devour him.
"In the vast cavery of the bell hideous faces appeared, and glared down on me
with terrifying frowns or with grinning mockery still more appalling. At last
the devil himself accoutred, as in the common description of the evil spirit,
with hoof, horn, and tail, and eyes of infernal lustre, made his appearance."

Poe's story, The Pit and the Pendulum, seems to embody points from both
the tales quoted above. "The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles
to my length. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a
dammed spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger!—I rolled my
eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something
unalterable—some change which at first I could not appreciate distinctly—it was
obvious, had taken place in the apartment. ——although the outlines of the
figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colors seemed
blurred and indefinite. These colors had now assumed, and were momentarily
assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and
fiendish portraits an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than
my own. Demon eyes of a wild and ghastly vivacity glared upon me in a thousand
directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre
of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.—There had
been a second change in the cell, and now the change was obviously in the form.
As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavored to appreciate or understand
what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt.—The room had been
square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute--two, consequently,
obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning
sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge
and now flatter and flatter grew the lozenge with a rapidity that left me no
time for contemplation--the closing walls pressed resistlessly onward."

A suggestion for part of the plot of The Raven likewise seems to come
from Blackwood. Poe gave, according to the poem, his raven the eyes of a demon
and made the ill-omened visitor, arriving in a storm at midnight, symbolize
remorseless destiny. Moreover, it is known that he connected his raven with
witches. Dr. Mathews, it seems, was discussing with Poe a play he had just
written called Witch Craft, and Poe suggested to him the introduction of the
raven flitting over the witch's head. "I seem to hear", Poe said during the

59. The information for this latter point is from an account published in the
Minneapolis Sunday Journal, July 10, 1921, copied from a New York paper.
Frances Aymar Mathews, niece of Dr. Cornelius Mathews, Journalist, sends
to the New York University Archives, it seems, the story as told by her
uncle of how Poe wrote The Raven.

conversation with Dr. Mathews, "the melancholy of its croak as I used to hear it
in my boyhood days at school in Stokenewington; I seem to hear the sordid flap
of its wings in my ears."
The main points of *The Raven*, as Poe wrote his poem, seem to be embodied in a critical review in Blackwood on *The Witch of Edmonton*. This raven, it will be seen, alights in a storm at midnight with the croak of a demon. And the reviewer says that the bird of ill-omen is no more distinct than are Shakespeare's witches. The review reads: "Shakespeare's witches are in a class by themselves. They are neither sorceresses nor old women. Shakespeare has created our witches for us—. Neither their characters nor their forms are distinct. No more does one see distinctly the raven that alights near his feet during some stormy midnight and on some wild moor—with *sighing* wings and the croak of a demon." 60

60. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 6, p. 410, Review of *The Witch of Edmonton*.

What points in literary technique did Poe learn from Blackwood? Barine, the French critic, according to Palmer Cobb, is of the opinion, it will be remembered, that Poe owes at least a portion of his technique to "des romantiques allemands", and to Hoffmann in particular. Professor Gruener likewise considers Poe indebted to Hoffmann for stylistic suggestions. Palmer Cobb, it will also be remembered, denies Poe's dependence on Hoffmann and other German story writers on any ground except that which concerns a borrowing of subject matter. 63


63. *Cf. ante*, p. 9, note 30.

I shall try to show, however, that Poe founded part of his method on the Blackwood sensation story as the English author gave it. In other words, I shall endeavor to show, first, that Poe followed Blackwood tale writers as they
applied critical opinions, mainly those of A.W. von Schlegel; second, that Poe, on his own part, drew Schlegelian criticism from Blackwood; third, that he derived the idea from Blackwood that the detailing of sensations arising from experience produce effective writing; fourth, that the method of the sensation story in Blackwood, in all probability suggested to him a psychologic research for a further comprehension of the principle involved. In a later chapter I shall try to point out that he found a basis for effect proceeding from sensations in a study of Locke's psychology.

In order to demonstrate that Poe followed Blackwood tale writers as they were influenced by A.W. von Schlegel's critical opinion, it will be necessary, first, to attempt to say to what extent Schlegel was known in Blackwood's magazine. According to Mrs. Oliphant, the author of William Blackwood and his Sons, Lockhart was largely responsible for bringing German criticism to Blackwood.


Lockhart went to Germany, it appears, to complete his knowledge of the German language and literature; Mr. Blackwood furnishing the funds for the journey. In return payment, Lockhart translated Frederick Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature. A.W. von Schlegel was known to Lockhart. An attack on


British reviewers, intending chiefly it seemed to arraign the method of Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, appeared in Blackwood and was first attributed to


A.W. von Schlegel. Baron von Lauerwinkel, who was said to be a famous German critic and a friend of Schlegel's, was afterwards credited with the piece. But
Lockhart himself was finally, according to Mrs. Oliphant, known to have been the

67. Mrs. Oliphant suggests that Carlyle may have derived his idea of Teufeldrokh
from Lauerwinkel, Lockhart's "apocryphal German professor". (Op. cit., p.95.)
Lauerwinkel's name continues to appear in the early numbers of Blackwood.
One of his articles, On the Periodical Criticisms of England, appears in
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 2, p. 670. Also, Remarks on the
Poetry of Moore is found in vol. 4, p. 1, and Letter to Professor Laumer
from Lauerwinkel was printed in vol. 2, p. 689.

author. A.W. von Schlegel was also known to Scott; Scott, in his Essay on the
Drama, having greatly depended on Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and

68. Scott's Essay on the Drama appeared in the eighth edition of the Encyclo-
pedia Britannica, pp. 133-169. The following note appended to a long
article entitled On the Dramatic Powers of the Author of Waverly, (Black-
wood, vol. 19, p. 152) indicates how welcome Schlegelian criticism must
have been to Blackwood critics: "Note:--I must beg leave to say that
Mr. North would confer a very great obligation on his readers, if he would
insert in one of his Numbers, the latter part of Sir Walter Scott's brief
but admirable Essay on the Drama, contained in the Supplement to the
Encyclopedia Britannica." (The 8th edition is a reprint of the 4th.)

69. Mrs. Oliphant points out Scott's connection with Blackwood. She gives a
letter, dated February 18, 1818, from Lockhart to Rev. Mr. Williams which
indicates that Scott had contributed to "each of the last five numbers of
Blackwood". She also gives a letter from William Blackwood to Scott
expressing the publisher's gratitude for Scott's interest. "Anything from
you", the publisher wrote, "whether in prose or verse, would be perfectly
invaluable to me at present." (Oliphant, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 157.)

In fact, indications point to Schlegel's being well known to Blackwood
70. critics. The following passages may be said to represent the general trend of

70. Blackwood was by no means the only periodical feeling the influence of
Schlegel. The Edinburgh Review had in vol. 40, published a long review
by Hazlitt entitled Schlegel on the Drama. The London Quarterly also
has frequent reference to Schlegel.
English opinion concerning the German writer. "They (the Schlegels) are the first aesthetic writers of our age; they are in that comprehensive passionate sympathy with everything that is noble in antiquity, and everything that is beautiful in art—in all that marks them out as the genuine, universal and un-biggoted lovers of excellence—in the whole breadth and beauty of their theory."


Again, another critic refers to him as being, with his brother, the head of the literary sect in Germany known as the "Romantic"; and, in terms equally compli-

72. Ibid., vol. 17, p. 674.

mentary, another writer refers to him thus, showing his deference for his criti-

73. Ibid., vol. 18, p. 83.

cal opinion. "Le Devocian de la Cruz is not exactly the tragedy of Calderon's which our own unassisted taste might have selected, but it is one generally ranked among his best works. The highly esteemed German critic, A.W. von Schlegel has thought it deserving of the dedication of his time and talents to trans-

74. H.M. is Henry Mackenzie.

lating it into his own language." Another Blackwood critic, signing himself H.M., and writing on the Early English Dramatists, also expresses the same feeling. He is referring to a criticism in the Edinburgh Review which, he says, displays on the part of the critic "all the philosophical eloquence of a Schlegel". Other Blackwood reviewers, however, deplore what they term


"Schlegel's philosophical criticism". There are not always, one asserts, "deep
predisposing causes for everything that occurs in the history of literature, and of all cants, the cant of philosophical criticism is the most contemptible. The Schlegels are the most critical canters of modern Europe. They account for everything." Another reviewer maintains, likewise, in a contemptuous tone, that no matter what blunder may have been committed by an author "two or three hundred years hence, no question, some new Dr. William Augustus Schlegel will arise to justify them all in a course of Lectures."

76. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 731, Review of Lyndsay's Drama of the Ancient World.

77. Ibid., vol. 13, p. 541, Barry Cornwall. There are also, dotted here and there, chance references showing how familiar a figure A.W. Schlegel was in Blackwood. e.g., "Madame de Stael's 'Germany' is in every hand; and Professor Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Literature are at least in many. (Blackwood, vol. 14, p. 381.) A passage that has apparently no particular reference, occurs in the Noctes Ambrosianae, No. IV. (Ibid., vol. 12, p. 108) Odcherty: 'Would your lordship (Byron) wish to hear a Sanscrit ode I wrote to A.W. Schlegel?'

Schlegel's principle of effect comes into Blackwood. Critics in the English magazine begin to take into account not only the idea of an effect or impression that a reader or spectator will feel from the printed page or the acted drama; they appear also to recognize a conscious method on the part of a writer to produce an impression. Dramatic critics, in fact, make effect the standard of excellence for a play. Certain reviewers speak with enthusiasm, in a series of articles entitled The Acted Drama in London, of what Schlegel calls "stage effect", which apparently has the meaning of some strong excitement, extraneous to the main thread of the piece. Miss Tree, in The Maid of the Mill.

78. Schlegel had expressed very much the same idea: "The object proposed (the object of the drama) is to produce an impression on an assembled multitude, to rivet their attention, and to excite their interest and sympathy." Schlegel, Augustus Wilhelm. (Sohn Ed., London, 1894, Black's translation.) Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, p. 37. Schlegel carries the idea of effect throughout his volume.

saws the Blackwood critic, introduces Moore's ballad of Young Love, and he is of
the opinion that he has never before heard it given with a more delicious effect.


Mr. Kemble, according to the Blackwood reviewer, played the first scene of Fazir
with considerable spirit and effect. Another series of articles, entitled


Modern British Drama, discuss the same principle. The actress in The Fatal
Unction gives the mad scene, the critic says, with "distracting effect." And

82. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 60, Modern British Drama.

in still another instance a critic speaks in high praise of the "electrical
effects of sympathy in the theatre". Other dramatic critics deplore attempting

83. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 516, Review of Modern Greece, by Mrs. Hemans. Other
instances of stage effect are found in Ibid., vol. 6, p. 386, Acted Drama
in London; vol. 4, p. 718; The Opera, vol. 3, p. 208; Acted Drama, vol. 3,

to produce an impression by stage-effect alone; they contend that a drama is
telling in its effect only when the main idea of the piece is forced upon the
mind of the spectator from every part working together for that end. One re-
viewer, in the series on the actcd drama, considers that although Marlow in
The Jew of Malta may not have given the variety of character and the moral
purpose he did in his Edward Second and in Faustus, yet he was able to engender
and sustain the same kind of effect throughout the piece. He also states it to
be his opinion that the oneness of effect he mentions is due to "that rare, and
when judiciously applied, most important quality which we have called dramatic unity". Another reviewer, in discussing the drama Virginius, speaks of the high state of interest produced on the spectator by all collateral circumstances of the play being so arranged as to bring out and heighten the interest excited by the principal event. Still another critic warns against "writing carelessly forward". Effect will not result, he contends, unless consistency is kept from beginning to end. "Shakespeare, certainly,—did not upon principle always take the easiest path to effect; and the consequence is that there is almost the same difference between his plays and those of his contemporaries as there is between the poem Don Juan and the author of Waverly, whose most singular attribute is that he is constantly contriving interest". Critics of the written drama, of poetry and of the novel likewise judge of excellence in proportion to the effect or impression produced on the mind of a reader. In an article from a series entitled Horae Germanicae one writer maintains that the faculty required for producing an effective novel or play is one of rare occurrence. It requires, he says, a "cool, cautious, artificial mood of mind akin to that of the mathematician or the algebraist". In another article the critic considers in the piece that he is reviewing, that the author has
excelled in forcing horror into the reader's perceptions by weaving into a chain "every direful incident, the effect of which forms a spell that one can not escape". And the inevitableness of this effect was ascribed, not to destiny alone, but to other "principles which carry along with them all the force of reason and conviction".

89. Cf. ante., p. 31, note 88.

Having shown that Schlegel's principle of effect was known in Blackwood, I shall now try to point out that English tale writers were influenced by that criticism. An examination of literary reviews appearing in Blackwood through the first thirty-five volumes, reveals several points, indicating it would seem, that the authors of Buried Alive, The Involuntary Experimentalist, The Man in the Bell, and of other sensation stories, constructed their tales with effect in mind; in other words, that they wrote "not carelessly forward", but with a self-conscious intent to impress. In presenting these points, the following points may be seen: first, that a growth in the English critic's appreciation of effect is plainly visible; second, that the period when effect became an accepted principle marked too, the period when the sensation story was in greatest vogue in Blackwood.

Critics in the early reviews are silent on the question of effect. They evidently do not think of an author writing with the intention of producing conviction in his readers' minds. Although they sometimes use the term effect, they appear to give it a loose, or indefinite meaning; occasionally they seem only to be quoting criticisms, not applying it. Reviews of Lalla Rookh in volume I illustrate this point. Passages from a series of articles on Greek

tragedy show the same critical spirit. But from the third volume until about

91. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 40; vol. 1, p. 592.

the thirteenth or fourteenth, critics appear to take the principle into consider-

eration. Some openly oppose effect in general; others lay an emphasis on stage
effect alone; and still others take part in a controversy over the relative
merits of a conscious method of criticism as against an uncritical attitude.

One reviewer, in volume fourteen, opposes the whole idea of effect. "To artists
the 'metaphysic' has been a down right Will-o'-the-wisp ------. It has led them
into bogs. The single word 'classical' has destroyed its thousands and ten
thousands. How many acres of canvass have been barbarously ruined by 'effect'!
How many poets have broken their backs in straining after 'dignity', and the
'heroic' according to Aristotle! If Parliament were to pass a law to cause
92 these terms to be proscribed and forgotten, it would be a public benefit."

92. Ibid., vol. 14, p. 249, On the Sources of the Picturesque and Beautiful.
The passage refers to Aristotle. Blackwood critics may have had a first-
hand knowledge of Aristotelian criticism. North refers to Pope's and
Twining's translations (31-156) of The Poetics. Other references to
Aristotle are: 13, p. 539; vol. 19, p. 220; vol. 20, p. 559; vol. 31,
p. 155; vol. 24, p. 885; vol. 18, p. 238: "Earine has the power of
managing his story very well. In his first tale, Crohoore of the Bill-book
it is impossible to anticipate the event; and yet when known, it is seen
that the whole progress of the story tended to it. This in novel-writing
is a great merit. We have the authority of Aristotle; and though
Mr. Dugald Stewart and other learned people undervalue him, I should take
his word in these matters for a thousand pounds—that the invention and
ordering of incident is a higher and rarer power than even the deline-
tion of character". (Cf. ante., p. 9, note 30.)

Another reviewer in volume three, obviously hesitates between a conscious re-
cognition of rules in criticism and a mere critical opinion, and may in that
respect, be in doubt as to the advantages of a writer's conscious intent to
impress. "We have seen Mr. Elliston in the Duke Aranza and in Archer. We were
so much accustomed to receive unmixed pleasure from this gentleman's acting
before we were either capable or desirous of judging of its merits (in the first of the article the writer calls himself no critic), that we are quite unable to think or even talk critically about it now. But we may yet be permitted to say that his return is truly delightful to us. It gives us back an image of the very spring-time of our play going; a time that we thought nothing could have restored even the resemblance of it. It is, indeed, only an image. Criticism is a good thing enough in its way, but one hour of that time was worth a whole eternity of it. Then, what did we care how the magazines or newspapers thought or spoke of the last new play? What was it to us whether it was a good or a bad one? It was a play, and that was enough for us. It made us happy—and what could we wish for more! We have learned better since then, and we are heartily sorry for it. We have pried into the arcana of nature and of art and have paid dearly for it. We have acquired just skill enough to take the kaleidoscope to pieces and find that its beautiful and ever-varying forms are composed of nothing but beads and bits of broken glass. But why should we complain? In learning to take the machine to pieces we have also learned to put it together again, so that the delight we receive in looking through it is only changed in its kind,—not destroyed." Instances of an emphasis on stage effect


other than those already mentioned, occur in: vol. 3, p. 208; vol. 6, p. 386; vol. 4, p. 718; vol. 7, p. 183; vol. 4, p. 68. After about the twelfth or

94. Volumes 1 and 2 also contain references to stage effect, but the term is not used. Volume 2, p. 660.

thirteenth volume, effect appears to become an accepted principle. The volumes in which effect is thus treated are:
From the foregoing evidence it would seem to follow that the principle of effect had a gradual growth in the pages of Blackwood.

It may now be observed that the period marking an interest in the sensation story coincides with the period when effect became a recognized part of a writer's method. From the list which I shall present, it will be seen that the sensation story does not appear in the early volumes of the magazine; that it does chiefly appear after about the thirteenth volume.


In addition to what is apparently an unmistakable identity in time, there is, moreover, the fact that certain authors testify to their intention of creating an impression on the reader. Dr. Samuel Warren takes great pleasure in knowing that his The Man about Town is exciting a sensation about the Clubs. He enumerates in a letter to William Blackwood the various effects the story is said to produce: "'Horrible!'", "'ghastly'", "'frightful'", he says are some of the expressions to which he has listened.


An identity of method may also be observed between the Blackwood critics' theory of effect and the sensation story writer's practice in producing it. The author of Le Revenant, throughout his story, preserves a remarkable consistency or unity in tone.
Blackwood appears to have furnished Poe with suggestions both for theory and practice. During the course of his literary life, Poe gave two formulated statements of his method of effective writing. In 1842 he gives in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, a statement of his method. In 1846, in *The Philosophy of Composition*, he further elaborates the explanation. He considers, he says, that an author should be able to point out step by step the processes by which any one of his compositions reached its completion. In fact, he asserts it to be his desire to have it thoroughly understood that no one part in any of his writings comes either from accident or from intuition; that (in this case he is speaking of *The Raven*) the work proceeded step by step to its ending with "the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem!"

It will be interesting, therefore, at this point, the period of his early study, to attempt to say what Blackwood suggested to him for his method as he later described it.

Poe himself seems conscious of a connection between the method of the English writer of the sensation story and Schlegel's criticism as it was reflected by Blackwood. In favor of this supposition is, first, Poe's knowledge to which we have already referred, of the sensation stories, *Buried Alive*, etc.

Second, he knew the way Blackwood critics discussed effect. We have already seen that he was familiar with the review of *The Devil's Elixir* and he could, therefore, have read the use that was made of the term. Hoffmann, according to
this review, owed the "unrivalled effect" which his work "as a whole produces on
the imagination, to nothing so much as the admirable art" with which he has
"married dreams to realities". It is then reasonable further to suppose that
Poe would have known effect as we have noted it to be discussed throughout the
magazine. Third, he combines these two points just mentioned, in his statement
99 that good examples of tales of effect were found in early numbers of Blackwood.


He could also have observed the method of the Blackwood writers. Poe could have
observed that their stories have a background of real experience. The physician
in passages from The Diary of a Late Physician, maintains that he has simply
100 described what his eyes have witnessed. The prisoner in Le Rêvevant asserts

100. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 28, p. 921. Passages from The Diary
of a Late Physician: The Man About Town.

that he is "in a situation to speak from experience, upon that very interesting
question--the sensations attendant upon a passage from life to death." He
further assures the reader that one has little impression of the sadness of the
101 reality of a criminal's last visits from his friends.

101. Ibid., vol. 21, p. 409.

He could have observed, too, that these real experiences were always
those of terror. The Blackwood writer placed his character, usually a solitary
figure, in some awful situation; he made him the victim in some terrible predica-
ment. For example, the involuntary experimentalist who it seems was a physician,
finds himself, while attempting to be of help in a great fire in Dublin, trapped
in a huge copper boiler which becomes like a fiery furnace. The Man in the Bell
details the sensations of a man who, having climbed up to a tiny loft to un-muffle the ponderous iron bell which had been muffled for tolling at a burial, is caught under the bell just as it is about to swing out from the sides of the small belfrey. "It was a dreadful situation. Over me swung an immense mass of metal, one touch of which could have crushed me to pieces." Le Revenant tells of the miserable prisoner alone in his cell, who expects to be hung in the morning. The Iron Shroud, too, has a lonely victim.

He could doubtless have followed the Blackwood writer as he described the growing sense of terror that overwhelms the unfortunate victim. In Le Revenant the steps of the increasing horror can be definitely traced. "The shock of my arrest was very slight indeed; indeed, I almost question if it was not a relief, rather than a shock to me. I do not believe I showed—for I am sure I did not feel it—either surprise or alarm." In the same dreamlike condition, the prisoner hears the charge of guilty, and the Judge's voice saying that he should be hanged by the neck until he was dead. The state of stupefaction, however, gives way to an insane fury. He jumped up and tore at his iron bars with a force that bent them. Finally his terror becomes so great that he sinks again into a benumbed condition, but in this stupor his senses are keenly alive. Experience keeps on registering sensations and he notices the merest trifles as though they were things of moment. "I noticed the lamp which the turnkey had left on the floor, and I thought even at that moment that it had not been trimmed since the night before. And I looked at the bare, naked, iron bed-frame that I sat on; and at the heavy studs on the door of the dungeon; and at the scrawls and writing upon the wall that had been drawn by former prisoners; and I put my hand to try my own pulse, and it was so low that I could hardly count it; I could not feel--though I tried to make myself feel it--that I was going to die." In The Man in the Bell the fears were
first, as the sufferer says, mere matters of fact. "I was afraid the pulleys
would give way and let the bell plunge on me. -----but these soon gave way to
fears not more unfounded, but more visionary, and of course more tremendous".

Poe could also have been aware that the victim of the predicament in
the Blackwood stories records his sensations with a minuteness of detail; that
he appears to be desirous of relating his experience with an almost scientific
accuracy. We have already indicated the morbid pleasure with which the
physician in The Diary of a Late Physician seems to note the symptoms of his
patient. The same idea may now be viewed in the light of a technical method as
an effort to make the experience become again a real experience. The involun-
tary experimentalist who, it will also be remembered, belonged to the medical
profession, even in the midst of his agony takes care to make records of his
case. "These tablets I have now before me; I have preserved them ever since as
a memorial of moments such as I trust have fallen to the lot of no other human
being. I transfer the memoranda verbatim. It will be seen that many of the
words are but half written, and that in some places entire words have been
omitted; but if any one would try the experiment of writing in such a situation,
I daresay his composition would be scarcely more correct. I began thus: 'I am
Doctor______ of _____ st. If anyone finds this, come to the copper in the
new bldg. where I am burning to death for want of a ladder. Half-past 12 o'clock.
Haste! Haste! (Two such memoranda as this I had already flung out by wts.
attached to my suspenders, but they seem to have fallen in the flames.) My will
is in the upper lefthand drawer of the bookcase. Let George_______ have the
arrangement of papers. I am wrapped in a cloud of steam from my wet clothes.
The thermometer stands at 130 degrees. It is now 26 min. to 1 o'clock. The air is
suffocatingly hot; I am drenched in perspiration. I will note all I can.
15 m. to 1C; therm. 137 degrees; 13 m. 139 degrees; 1C m. 153 degrees. This
is horrible. I can see the mercury mounting in the tube. The moisture from my clothes has all exhaled. They are now as dry as tinder & hot & hard to the touch. 5 m. past 1 o'clock. Ther 170 degrees. Have taken off both my coats and laid them over the hole—the rush of air from it agitated the hot atmosphere & made it intolerable." In the tale Le Revenant the prisoner likewise makes a record of his sensations, those coming from his present experience in his cell and, as far as he can, those coming in anticipation from the death he expects to die. "I sat down again on the bed and tried seriously to commune with myself.--I recalled to my mind that I had but a few more hours to life. I tried to recollect all the tales I had ever heard about death by hanging, that it was said to be the sensation of a moment, to give no pain, to cause the extinction of life instantaneously, and so on, to twenty other strange ideas. By degrees my head began to wander and grow unmanageable again. I put my hands tightly to my throat, as though to try the sensation of strangling. I felt my arms at the places where the cords would be tied. I went through the fastening of the rope—the tying of the hands together! The thing that I felt the most averse to was having the white cap muffled over my eyes and face. If I could avoid that, the rest was not so horrible!"

He gives it as his opinion that the proper length for a poem, stated in figures, is about one hundred lines; stated in the time necessary for


perusal, about half an hour. Although there is no evidence that from Blackwood he derived any philosophical basis for determining on the length given, a basis which it will be shown he found both in the drama and in a study of

philosophy, yet the numerical limitations in the foreign magazines were doubtless

suggestive to him. A reviewer in Blackwood counsels poets to write poems no
longer than from twenty to one hundred fifty lines. Most of our living poets,
he says, will be remembered after their death either by their short poems or by
particular passages from their long ones. He thinks that Wordsworth has made a
great mistake in writing at the length he does. Another writer discusses the

advantages of brevity in written and spoken language. He advises limiting the
length of a speech to somewhere around forty minutes. The most effective and
accomplished orations, in this critic's opinion, are always the briefest. He
thinks that even the longest of the political speeches of Demosthenes were
"spoken as they may now be read, with sufficient slowness and distinctness, in
less than one-half an hour. The following bit from the Noctes, though given

with the usual satire of the series, shows in all probability that brevity in
writing was a question for discussion with critics. The speaker is discussing
the Periodical Press:

"Shaphe'd:--For my ain pairt I never peruse what's ca'd the leadin art in a
newspaper--and to speak the truth, I'm gayen shy o' them in a
magazine too--but I devour the advertisements, which beside
lettin' you ken everything that's gaun on in a kintral respectin'
the sellin' and nifferin' o' property both in hooses and lawns,
are to my mind models of composition without ae single unnecessary
word, for every word's pay'd for, and that gies the adverteeser a
habit o' conceese thoacht and expression, better than a logic class.
Tickler:—Writing in magazines and speaking in Parliament, have quite an opposite effect—making the world wordy.

Shepherd:—An preachin's warst of a'-------.

North:—A sermon should never exceed twenty-five minutes."

Evidence points strongly to the fact that from a British periodical Poe derived the idea that an epic may be considered a succession of brief poems. He maintains, in The Philosophy of Composition, that The Paradise Lost is necessarily made up of short poetical effects, interspersed with parts essentially prose;

He also announces it to be his belief that the Iliad was originally composed of a series of ballads. An article entitled The Origin of the Homeric Poems, appearing in the Quarterly Review of 1831, makes the same point. The reviewer outlines three distinct points of view in which this collection may be placed; one of which is similar to that set forth by Poe.

He likewise, and again on his own statement, admits that he expects (as did Blackwood critics, influenced as we have seen by Schlegel) to force an effect into the perceptions of his reader. The writer, he says in his review on Hawthorne, chooses a unique or single effect which, when "wrought out" will leave its impress on the reader's mind. He obviously agrees with the criticism...
of the Blackwood reviewer and apparently with the practice of the English story writer that the best means by which this effect can be "wrought out" is by preserving consistency of tone and incident. The Blackwood critic had said, it will be remembered, "—every agonizing mood of mind, every direful incident, is forced on the reader's perception with all the vividness of reality, forming a spell from which he cannot escape". And the inevitability of this effect was ascribed, it will also be remembered, not to destiny alone, but to other "principles which carry along with them all the force of reason and conviction." 111

111. Cf. ante., p. 31, note 88.

Such a passage; and others of a kindred nature, may have been in Poe's mind when he advised the inventing of just such incidents and the combining of just those events; the writing even of just such words; and, moreover, the combinations of just that tone which would aid in constructing the effect he had chosen. 112


It will be seen that Poe, as well as the Blackwood writer, bases his method on experience. In Poe, especially in his early work, one meets again the solitary figure in some horrible situation; the growing terror; and the same method of analyzing and detailing with precision the flood of sensations that overwhelm the unhappy sufferer. As in the case of the physician, in the Diary of a Late Physician, and the medical man who was the involuntary experimentalist, Poe makes Egaeus in Berenice and the writer of the manuscript in The MS. Found in a Bottle, record the sensations that arise. He gives the text, too, the form of a systematic record, separating by stars, groups of sensations that differ strikingly from each other.

From the foregoing evidence, it is reasonable to think that Poe found
Blackwood's Magazine suggestive in matters of theme, plots, and of method of technique. As appears, however, to have considered the method as a whole inadequate for effective writing. In favor of this supposition is, first, the fact that he satirizes the detailing of sensations; he expresses himself aware of a certain absurdity in their over-use. In a footnote to a passage in Loss of Breath as the story is printed in the Southern Literary Messenger, he says: "The general reader will, I dare say, recognize in these sensations of Mr. Lacko-breath, much of the metaphysicianism of the redoubted Schelling". His passage to which he refers reads thus: "I took delight in analyzing my sensations. Memory, which of all other faculties should have taken its departure, seemed, on the contrary, to have been endowed with quadrupled power. Each incident of my past life flitted before me like a shadow. Then———.**** Rapid changes were now taking place in my sensations. Confusion crowded upon confusion like a wave upon a wave.***The night came, and with it a new set of horrors. The consciousness of my interment began to assume new distinctness."

In the second place, and intimately related with the above point, is the fact that he satirizes over-emphasis of experience in story writing. It is difficult not to believe that he is even directing satire against particular Blackwood stories. For example, Loss of Breath is apparently a "take off" on Le Revenant. The passage, "I forbear to depict my sensations upon the gallows; although here, undoubtedly, I could speak to the point, and it is a topic upon which nothing has been well said. In fact, to write upon such a theme it is necessary to have been hanged. Every author should confine himself to matters
of experience," seems to have reference to that in the Blackwood story which reads thus: "Now I am in a situation to speak from experience, upon that very interesting question—the sensations attendant upon a passage from life to death. I have been Hanged, and am Alive—I read in the daily newspapers an account of my behavior at the scaffold—that I conducted myself decently—but with firmness——". The Predicament, the sequel of How to Write a Blackwood Story, may possibly be intended to satirize The Man in the Bell. The belfry with the pendulum may be the belfry with the bell. Furthermore, although of course, one may be idly speculating, the city of Edina may be Edinburgh; Dinah may be The Edinburgh Review; and Pompey, the small and grotesque negro servant, may be Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, or even, Mr. Blackwood, the Ebony of the critics.

Again, as a further indication that the Blackwood method is inadequate for effective writing, is the fact that Poe revises his tales of effect and deletes many passages that relate sensations. He cuts from Loss of Breath the passage just given on sensations from the experience of hanging. He also removes from the version of Berenice as it was printed in the Southern Literary Messenger, a long account of Egaeus' sensations, beginning "With a heart full of 114. S.L.M., vol. 1, p. 333.

Of grief, yet reluctant and oppressed with awe, I made my way to the bed-chamber of the departed. The room was large and very dark and at every step within its gloomy precincts I encountered the paraphernalia of the grave. The coffin, so a menial told me, lay surrounded by the curtains of yonder bed, and in that coffin, he whisperingly assured me, was all that remained of Berenice." Poe had, it would seem, in this deleted passage, attempted to push the sensation method to the utmost limit. The deleted passage continues: "---with a sense of suffocation I dragged myself to the side of that bed. Gently I uplifted the
sable draperies of the curtain.

As I let them fall, they descended upon my shoulders and shutting me thus out from the living, enclosed me in the strictest communion with the deceased.

The very atmosphere was redolent with death. The peculiar smell of the coffin sickened me; and I fancied a deleterious odor was already exhaling from the body."

And, finally, Poe's continued study to improve his own writing, a study which it will be the purpose of the following chapters to present, may be cited as further proof that he thought the Blackwood method, though suggestive, was yet not wholly adequate. It has already been intimated that an emphasis on


sensations apparently led him to study Locke's psychology. That his study led him into other lines as well, is doubtless the case. One of these, and it would seem one of the first, there is reason to believe, was a study of law method for producing conviction. The following chapter will attempt to present Poe's legal interests.
CHAPTER II

LAW

An examination of the *Southern Literary Messenger* both before the time of Poe's editorship and during that period, leads one to entertain the probability of his having consciously studied law methods to increase his critical ability and to give him the power of convincing in his own writing. The evidence favoring this supposition is contained in a mass of material which apparently shows Poe to be asking advice of lawyers in literary matters; to be perusing law books with more than the casual reviewer's care; and in his critical comments to be using a lawyer's phraseology.

Judge Wirt writes to an unknown correspondent, apparently to one who

1. William Wirt, American statesman, gained great distinction by his forensic abilities and impassioned eloquence. He was retained under the direction of President Jefferson as assistant counsel to the Attorney General of the United States in the prosecution of Aaron Burr for high treason. Among his literary productions were his *Letters of the British Spy*.

had applied for suggestions that would enable him to attain a clear and forceful style in writing. It is at least interesting to speculate on the probability of Poe's being this student who had asked Judge Wirt for help. I shall first present Judge Wirt's letter to the law student.

2. *S.L.M.*, vol. 1, p. 33. The letter is entitled *A Letter from Mr. Wirt to a Law Student*.

"--------You will find a rich mine of instruction in the splendid language of Burke. His diction is frequently magnificent; sometimes too gorgeous, I think, for a chaste and correct taste; but he will show you all the wealth of your own language. --If you have access to Franklin's works, read them carefully, and particularly his third volume, and you will know what I mean by
the habits of observing and thinking. We cannot all be Franklins, it is true; but by imitating his mental habits and unwearied industry, we may reach an eminence we should never otherwise attain—learn the simple nervous language which is appropriate to that kind of thinking. Read the legal and political arguments of Chief Justice Marshall and those of Alexander Hamilton just coming out. Read them, study them and observe with what an omnipotent sweep of thought they range over the whole field of every subject they take in hand—and that with a scythe so ample and so keen that not a straw in them is left standing behind. Resolve to be the first lawyer of your age. Master the science of pleading—master Coke upon Littleton—Coke's and Plowden's Reports,—master Fearne on Contingent Remainders and Executory Devises till you can transport and play familiarly with its most subtle distinctions—you must be a master in every branch of the science that belongs to your profession—that outline of all which you will see in Blackstone's Commentaries. Do you think this requiring too much? Look at Brougham and see what men can do if well armed and well resolved. With a load of professional duties that would, of themselves, have been appalling to the most of our countrymen, he stood, nevertheless, at the head of his party in the House of Commons, and at the same time set in motion and superintended various primary schools and various periodical works, the most instructive and useful that ever issued from the British press, to which he furnished with his own pen some of the most masterly contributions, and yet found time, not only to keep pace with the arts and sciences, but to keep at the head of those whose peculiar and exclusive occupations these arts and sciences were. There is a model of industry and usefulness worthy of all your emulations. ---you ask for instructions adapted to improvement in eloquence. This is a subject for a treatise, not a letter. Cicero, however, has summed up the whole art in a few words. It is 'apte-distincte-ornate dicere'—
to speak to the purpose, to speak clearly, distinctly, to speak gracefully.

On relation to this subject I would strenuously advise you two things: Compose much and often, and carefully, with reference to this same rule of apte, distincte, ornate:—With reference to the style of eloquence that you shall adopt, that must depend very much on your own taste and genius. You are not disposed, I presume, to be a humble imitator of any man? If you are, you may bid farewell to the hope of eminence in the walk. None are mere imitators to whom nature has given original powers.--I can only tell you that the florid and Asiatic style is not the taste of the age. The strong and even the rugged and abrupt are far more successful. Bold propositions, boldly and briefly expressed—pithy sentences, nervous common sense—strong phrases—well compiled periods—sudden and strong masses of light—an apt adage in English or Latin—a keen sarcasm—a merciless personality. These are the beauties and deformities that now make a speaker the most interesting. The florid and Asiatic was never a good style either for an American or a European taste. We require that a man should speak to the purpose and come to the point, that he should instruct and convince. To do this, his mind must move with great strength and power; reason should be manifestly his master faculty—argument must predominate throughout."

My reasons for considering Poe to be the law student who had written to Judge Wirt for help in methods of writing are:--

First, he testifies to having corresponded with Judge Wirt. He writes


to Duyckinck, April, 1846, "that some time ago, Wiley and Putnam advertised for autographs of distinguished American statesmen. Is it so? I have well-preserved letters from John Randolph, Chief Justice Marshall--Wirt--and some others. I would exchange them for books." Granting Poe's well known interest
in autographs, I think he may yet have had some other purpose than merely collect


ing specimens of hand-writing, that prompted him to write to so great a number of statesmen. Is it reasonable to think that, since he addressed so many lawyers, he may have been seeking to know from the letters he would receive in reply, the style of a lawyer's writing? In the second place, selections appear from time to time through the pages of the Messenger, during the period when Poe was purveyor for the magazine and when he was editor, that follow the course of study prescribed by Judge Wirt. Poe having influence in shaping the contents of the Messenger, the choice of selections would, in all probability, follow his interest. Therefore, the text dealing so conspicuously with Burke, Franklin, Chief Justice Marshall, Alexander Hamilton, Lord Brougham and Blackstone, the chief names suggested in the letter—may be said to indicate on Poe's part that he was heeding the advice of the jurist.

Poe shows a marked interest in Chief Justice Marshall. He writes to

White, who was at that time editor of the Southern Literary Messenger while Poe was purveyor: "I will do my best to please you in relation to Marshall's Washington if you will send it on. By what time would you wish the Ms. of the Review?" Mr. White, however, must have had little interest in Chief Justice


Marshall as a subject for a contribution to the Messenger, for in a second letter Poe expresses his regret at White's refusal to publish the article. Poe writes again to Mr. White:
"----It gives me the greatest pain to hear that my Review will not appear in no. 11. I cannot imagine what circumstances you allude to as preventing you from publishing. The death of the Chief Justice, so far from rendering the Review useless, was the very thing to attract public notice to the Article. I really wish you would consider this matter more maturely and if possible insert it in no. 11". There is no evidence, however, that this review was ever printed, and the next time Poe speaks of Chief Justice Marshall is in welcoming, in a short critical piece, an address on the famous jurist, delivered by Mr. Binney at Philadelphia, and a discourse by Judge Story at Boston, both addresses being occasioned by the death of the Chief Justice. "We have read them both", Poe says, "with an interest created by long admiration and love for the subject, but rendered more intense by the manner in which the subject is displayed."

Again, Poe's interest in the Chief Justice was evidently so keen that he felt impelled to write an article himself on the jurist. A long critique on Chief Justice Marshall's life and genius appears in the Messenger two months after the short notice that Poe wrote welcoming the addresses of Judge Story and Mr. Binney, and from the remainder of Poe's short notice, which I shall now quote, it seems only reasonable to conclude that Poe wrote the long critical article. Poe says in the short notice of December, 1835:

"It is not our purpose now to review these two eulogies. A more ex-
tended notice of them and of their great subject we defer for our next number; in which we shall perhaps give a few light personal reminiscences of Judge Marshall".


Two points seem of special significance in this long review on Marshall, which I feel, from the above evidence, fairly safe in thinking came from Poe's pen. Although several quotations from Judge Story appear in the text, there is yet a marked connection maintained between Marshall and Judge Wirt, Poe not only quotes Wirt in summing up Marshall's character and remarkable power of eloquence, but he uses him as an illustration of the same kind of genius. Poe has evidently taken Judge Wirt's writings as a source for material for his characterization of Marshall. This fact may show a previous dependence on Wirt. Moreover, the passages he chooses from Mr. Wirt's characterization of Marshall, are those dwelling on the fact that conviction is produced by logical sequence in the argument.

"The---------of the U.S.', Poe quotes from Mr. Wirt in the British Spy, 'is, in his person, tall, meager. This extraordinary man, without the aid of fancy, without the advantage of person, voice, attitude, gesture, or any of the ornaments of an orator, deserves to be considered as one of the most eloquent men in the world; the power of seizing the attention with irresistible force, and never permitting it to elude the grasp, until the hearer has received the conviction which the speaker intends. How is it, you will ask, how is it possible, that such a man can hold the attention of an audience unchained through a speech of even ordinary length? I will tell you.

"He possesses one original and almost supernatural faculty; the faculty of developing a subject by a single glance of his mind, of detecting at once
the very point on which every controversy depends.—I am persuaded that his eyes
do not fly over a landscape and take in its various objects with more prompti-
tude and facility than his mind embraces and analyzes the most complex subject.

"His premises once admitted, the demonstration—follows as certainly,
as cogently, as inevitably, as any demonstration in Euclid.

"All his eloquence consists in the apparently deep self-conviction and
emphatic earnestness of his manner, the correspondent simplicity and energy of
the style; the close and logical connection of his thoughts, and the easy grada-
tions by which he opens his lights on the attentive minds of his hearers. The
audience are never permitted to pause for a moment. There is no stopping to
weave garlands of flowers to hang in festoons around a favorite argument. On
the contrary, every sentence is progressive; every idea sheds new light on
the subject. The listener is kept perpetually in that sweetly pleasurable
vibration with which the mind of man always receives new truths; the dawn ad-
vances with easy but unremitting pace; the subject opens gradually on the view;
until, rising in high relief in all its native colors and proportions, the argu-
ment is consummated by the conviction of the delighted hearers."

Poe quotes again from Judge Wirt to the effect that the imaginative
element in Chief Justice Marshall's mind aided his logical thinking; "The
flowery complexion of his writings", Judge Wirt had said, "his evident delight
in works of fancy, and the extraordinary graces of his oratory, made the
multitude believe him to be 'of imagination all compact'." Poe adds, "but he
was in truth, far more profoundly versed in the dry, intricate law of his
profession, and by far more capable of thridding its nicest subtleties than
thousands whose whole minds have been occupied with its "mystic, dark, dis-
cordant tones".

Poe's very evident interest in Franklin's method of writing may be more
or less significant in establishing him as the student who had asked of Judge Wirt suggestions for literary composition. It will be remembered that Mr. Wirt had said: "If you have access to Franklin's works, read them carefully, particularly his third volume, and you will understand what I mean by the habits of observing and thinking. We cannot all be Franklins, it is true; but by imitating his mental habits and unwearied industry we may reach an eminence we should not otherwise attain. ---- Learn the simple, nervous language which is appropriate to that kind of thinking."


In the first place, Poe searches for unpublished essays of Franklin and publishes them in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, thinking perhaps that the rarity of these articles will make them acceptable to his readers. A friend in Philadelphia, he says, copied the essays for him from the original manuscript of Franklin himself. Rare letters of Franklin, Poe also publishes; letters for which, he says, he is also indebted to his friend in Philadelphia. He acknowledges that the letters from Anthony Afterwit and Celia Single were first published in "the Doctor's *Weekly Penn Gazette*, which was commenced in 1727", yet he is of the opinion that since they are not in the 1809 or the 1825 edition of the author's works, no apology is necessary for printing them in the *Messenger*.

In the second place, Poe publishes such passages from certain of Franklin's manuscripts that bear particularly on writing:

"'How shall we judge of the goodness of a writing? Or what qualities should a writing on any subject have to be good and perfect in its kind? Answer:--To be good it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader by improving his virtue or his knowledge."
The method should be just, that is, it should proceed regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly, without confusion.

The words used should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided they are the most generally understood.

---The words should be so placed as to be agreeable to the ear in reading.

Summarily,---it should be smooth, clear, and short.

For the contrary qualities are displeasing.

But take the query otherwise.

An ill man may write an ill thing well; that is, having an ill design he may use the properest style and arguments (considering who are to be his readers) to attain his ends.

In this sense, that is best wrote which is best adapted for attaining the end of the writer.13

---


Though there is not with Burke, any more than with Chief Justice Marshall or Franklin, evidence definitely connecting Poe with Judge Wirt's recommendation to the law student, yet indications of Poe's more than ordinary familiarity with Burke's writings lead one to speculate on a possible connection. It will be remembered that Judge Wirt had said: "You will find a rich mine of instruction in the language of Burke. His diction is frequently magnificent; sometimes too gorgeous, I think, for a chaste and correct taste; but he will show you all the wealth of your own language." Poe shows himself able to turn

readily to particular passages in Burke. In August, 1836, he speaks of Judge Hopkinson's article on the Right of Instruction, published that month in the Messenger, making reference to certain opinions of Edmund Burke; and he says he may as well copy one or two of the paragraphs to which he supposes allusion was made. He publishes several selections from Burke's speech at the Guildhouse in Bristol. Again in September, 1836, on solicitation, he chooses "another passage


or two" from the same speech of Burke at Bristol which will settle, he thinks,


any misunderstanding of Burke's meaning in the selections he published the month preceding. Poe appears, moreover, to exhibit his knowledge of Burke with some little pride; with what seems to be an evident desire to make it apparent that it is Poe, the editor, who is familiar with legal matters. He appends a note to the answer of the above solicitation for further light on Burke's meaning, in which he says that since some misapprehension has arisen, "it may be as well to state that all after this word 'Editorial' is strictly what is professes to be." Somewhat significant, too, may be the fact that several months previous to these references to Burke, Poe was commissioned by Judge Beverley Tucker to ask White of the Messenger to procure for him Burke's works in three volumes, and to have them lettered on the back with the word Ardmore. Poe could, therefore, since he was in the office of the Messenger,


have had access to the books.

An interest centers around Blackstone in the Southern Literary Messenger
several months after the printing of Judge Wirt's letter to the law-student.
White, who was then editor, had, it seems, expressed dissatisfaction with many of the contributions to the Messenger and had also admitted his inability to cope with the difficulty. Apparently he did not know the best way of excluding the hopelessly poor writing or of improving that which showed promise. "The rights and duties", he said, "of the editorial chair, especially in the infancy of a literary work, are extremely delicate."

A long letter signed X.Y., purporting to be from a correspondent, and printed in the Messenger the month following the editor's statement of dissatisfaction, offered suggestions designed to meet the situation. X.Y. advises

Mr. White to be more selective in choosing his contributors. "Print only for poets", he said, "and poets will write for you." He censures the boldness of scribblers who rush into print. "A man who has sense enough to write a good book", he says, "often has too much sense to publish it." And he cites the example of Blackstone, who, a genius and a poet, yet forebore publishing his verses. Not until his death and his unpublished manuscripts were examined was it known that the great English lawyer had written poetry. And Blackstone's

A Lawyer's Farewell to his Muse is printed in the Messenger—-we may not be wrong in thinking---by the correspondent who was offering the editor suggestions for improving the standard of writing.

To name Poe as X.Y., who was evidently starting a war against poor writing, is of course only a matter of conjecture, yet evidence points so strongly
to the probable truth of this assumption that the matter becomes at least interesting. Poe as X.Y. would have the same chance to be identified with Judge Wirt's law student, as Poe in his interest in Chief Justice Marshall and Franklin.

In the first place, X.Y. and Poe both call themselves a purveyor for the Messenger. It has already been noted that Poe, before he came to Richmond, occupied that office. Poe and X.Y. were also interested in combating the ignorance of pretentious writers. Poe, the same year in which X.Y. was writing, discussed with Judge Beverley Tucker the most efficient way of demolishing scribblers, and Poe and X.Y. both bitterly denounce the power of literary cabals to influence public opinion; X.Y. saying, "It is not fair to judge of the poetical talents of our northern neighbors by the laboured dullness of a Barlow, or by the writings of a certain literary cabal which is trying to push its members into notice by mutual puffing and quoting." In a later chapter it will be seen that Poe, throughout his whole literary life, tried to demolish scribblers; that as critic and editor he pledged himself to denounce and combat what he called literary heresy in its every form.

X.Y. and Poe likewise agree that study is necessary for excellence in writing. X.Y. says in referring to Blackstone: "What a lesson to our dilitanti who, even after adopting that profession, cannot bravely face and grapple with its difficulties, but remain entranced by the Circean draughts and Syren song of the lightest and most frivolous of the Muses." Poe's attitude toward the need of study on the part of the writer will be discussed in the next chapter.

Of some value, perhaps, in establishing Poe as X.Y., is the evidence of similarity in their handwriting; both admitting that they rarely dot an i
or cross a t. X.Y. writes to Mr. White, in a bitter tone, apparently following a rebuke from the editor on the score of illegible writing: "I shall do better in the future. While you continue to publish what I send you, I shall continue to cater for you. In doing this, I shall henceforth cross the t's and dot the i's in my copies, although this should have been omitted in the original. 'I was was to think!', indeed, as Burns says, what small critics would do for want of such mistakes." Compare X.Y.'s admission with the following from Poe, written to Mr. White the same year: "I will pay special attention to what you suggested in relation to the punctuation, etc., of my future MSS." Poe further testifies, in a paragraph on the autograph of H.T. Tuckerman, of his contempt for too scrupulous care in punctuation, remembering, perhaps, his unpleasant experience with Mr. White on the subject: "He (Tuckerman) has contributed much of late days to the Southern Literary Messenger, with which journal perhaps the legibility of the Ms. has been an important, if not the principal, recommendation. His chirography is neat and distinct and has some grace, but no force."


B.B. Minor, a later editor of the Messenger, also testifies to Poe's failure to dot his i's and cross his t's. He writes to Professor James Harrison, Poe's biographer: "He never altered his final composition—he never dotted an i nor crossed a t."

22. Works, Biography, p. 221.

Evidence that would seem to connect Poe more surely with Blackstone than any so far considered, and hence with Judge Wirt's recommendation for study, is the facility he shows in quoting from law-books and his apparent understanding of intricacies in questions pertaining to law. Judge Wirt had
said, It will be remembered: "Master Coke upon Littleton—Coke's & Plowden's Reports, master Fearne on Contingent Remainders & Executory Devices, till you can sport and play familiarly with its most subtle distinctions—you must be a master in every branch of the science that belongs to your profession—that outline of all which you will see in Blackstone's Commentaries."

Poe's review of Robinson's Practice, a law-book by Conway Robinson which appeared in 1836, indicates a familiarity on his part with law books other than the one actually undergoing criticism. He speaks of the improved arrangement in the classification of the present volume over that of the former by the same author, issued three years before. On account of this improvement, he says, it is easier to find the doctrine desired on any given point. And in regard to subject-matter, he considers Robinson's Practice superior to the Revised Code of Tate's Digest.


A knowledge of law doctrines may, without doubt, be imputed to Poe from the ease with which he discusses decisions in the cases cited in the book he is reviewing. For example, he considers the author "particularly successful" in the points that he decides in regard to certain cases. "In his abstracts of cases", he says, "the author is particularly successful—he sometimes gathers from them doctrines which the reporter has overlooked, and which a cursory reader would, therefore, be little apt to discover. For example in pp. 20, 21, he states these two points, as decided in the case of Blow v. Maynard, 2 Leigh, 21: 1st, that a fraudulent donee of personality is accountable for it and its increase, and, also for hires and profits accruing since the donor's death, as executor de son tort; just as a rightful executor would be who had taken possession at the owner's death." Poe quotes other instances.
Of still more import in attributing to Poe a knowledge of law books is the fact that he ventures to criticize the author in some parts of his work. In one instance, he says Robinson has failed to give general principles where they would be naturally expected. "Some quarrel", Poe says, "we have with the judicial law which principally fills the book. A head in the table of contents refers us to a page where we expect to find a full elementary exposition of at least the leading doctrines that fall under that head; we see, perhaps, only a single case, or a judge's dictum, not at all realizing the promise of the reference, by unfolding all the pertinent general principles. Thus, under the caption "When statement of a transaction must be taken altogether", instead of finding a general rule laid down on the point indicated, we find only a case briefly stated, from which we are left to deduce a rule if we can. (pp. 329-330.)" Indeed, in one case, Poe even questions the validity of the lawyer's decision. He says he (the author) "has gainsayed" a "well settled doctrine"; explaining his meaning in the following way: "Under the very next head, the well-established principle that 'An answer is no evidence for the defendant, as to everything it affirms, not responsive to the allegations of the Bill, but that it is evidence so far as it responds to those allegations'—is whittled away to the position that it is not evidence as to any affirmative matter, touching which the Bill seeks no discovery. Now, if the Bill positively alleges one thing (whether it calls for a discovery or not) and the answer as positively alleges the reverse, such denial stands for proof and must be rebutted by testimony: and so, we conceive, do the cases clearly evince, which are cited by our author himself; Beckwith v. Fulter, etc.—and even Taylor V. Moore, whence he quotes (and quotes truly) in the form of a judge's dictum, the position in question—not to speak of 1 Call, 224, 390; the dicta of Roane and Carrington in the case of Rowton v. Rowton, 1834-5, and many other authorities. The prin-
ciple in its true extent, is well illustrated by the case cited from 1 Johnson's Reports, 580, where an Answer alleging usury, of which the Bill had said nothing, was held no evidence. The case from 2 Leigh, 29, is infelicitously adduced. The point professedly quoted from it was there adjudged, it was one maintained by one judge who (we say it with a deference heightened by affection as well as by respect) seems to us to have therein gainsaid the well-settled doctrine we have referred to, and therefore, to have erred." And, at the conclusion of his article on Robinson's Practice, as if to furnish unmistakable proof that he has criticized the decisions of the author aright, Poe mentions a decision that has evidently been overlooked.

Since the foregoing lines of study—Chief Justice Marshall, Franklin, Burke, and Blackstone—may, as has been seen, be traced back to the outline of study made out by Judge Wirt for the law student; and since these lines of work have been found to be those in which Poe appears interested—it seems reasonable to think that Poe may have been the law student to whom Judge Wirt wrote. Granting, then, that this letter was addressed to Poe, it becomes reasonable further to conclude that Poe was investigating law methods for his own writing.

Poe may also be said to have learned a method and style of criticism from the legal profession. There is evidence leading to the supposition, that on the advice of Judge Beverley Tucker, he made his critical comments judicial.

24. Suggestions from Judge Tucker in regard to a convincing style occur in many of his lectures delivered at William and Mary College. In one instance he says: "The other sort of analysis may be termed logical. It is that method by which different propositions are so arranged as that no one of them shall ever be brought under consideration until all others which may be necessary to the right understanding of that one, have been established and explained. Of this last description are Euclid's elements, in which it is interesting to observe that no one proposition could with propriety be made to change its place; each one depending for its demonstration on all that has gone before." Professor Trent's reference to Judge Tucker has already been noted.
In the first place, it is known that he had weighed with Judge Tucker the value of critical methods employed in foreign quarterlies. Possibly the distinction between mere opinion and the critical art as founded on principles drawn from the study of masters of criticism, a distinction which, as we have seen, grew up in British periodical literature, was in Poe's mind when he asked Judge Tucker to suggest means for combatting the ignorant writer. Whatever may be the truth of this supposition, he received in reply to his query: "I did not mean to deny the efficacy of a certain style of demolishing scribblers. I merely said it was not judicial." In the second place, Poe frequently expresses Judge Tucker's contention, namely, that criticism should be judicial. He insists on method in critical analysis. "The wildest and most erratic effusion of the Muse, not utterly worthless, will be found more or less indebted to method for whatever of value it embodies; and we shall discover, conversely, that in any analysis of even the wildest effusion, we labor without method only to labor without end."

He likewise maintains that a critic should demonstrate his position. "We make use of the word 'demonstrate'", he says in an editorial article in The Broadway Journal, "for it has always been a point with us to sustain as far as possible, by evidence or argument, whatever propositions we put forth. But has the 'Gazette' in the present instance, been equally careful? Do we understand it
as inclined to dispute the accuracy of any statement, or the validity of any
deduction embodied in the critique to which it has referred? If so, we are pre-
pared to try the case upon its merits. If, however, it is the simple opinion of
the 'Gazette' which is thus pitted against our own, we are by far too modest to
say another word upon the subject—and must submit to the stern necessity of
letting the whole matter remain precisely where it is." Moreover, his

29. Broadway Journal, vol. 2, p. 93, Editorial Miscellany. At the beginning of
volume 2 of the Broadway Journal, Briggs had withdrawn from editorship,
Watson was in charge of the music department and Poe of the literary part.
(Cf. Chapter VI.)

constant practice in critical matters bears out a lawyer-like method. In one
instance he says it can be demonstrated that the mind of man cannot create; in

30. Cf. Chapter IV.

another that the critical position he assumes in asserting that only the
simplest language should be used for subjects of grandeur, is a proposition "as
susceptible of demonstration as any in Euclid". The fact, too, that he was


properly commended by Judge Tucker for the style of criticism he had adopted,
might seem added proof that he had consciously tried to work out a lawyer-like
method, and that, apparently, from the jurist's approval, had succeeded. Judge
Tucker, it appears, wrote to White of the Messenger, January, 1836, in warm

32. Works, vol. 1, Intro. p. XI. Poe's review referred to is in Works, vol. 1,
p. 122.

"Mr. Poe's review of the writings of a trio of these ladies (Mrs. Sigourney,
Miss Gould, and Mrs. Ellet, January, 1836) in your last number, is a specimen of critique which for niceness of discrimination, delicacy of expression, and all that shows familiarity with the art, may well compare with any I have seen."

We shall next consider what it was that Poe taught himself from his study of law. In other words, we shall try to determine on the principles of literary technique that Poe deduced from his legal interests.

Two principles of literary practice Poe appears to discover in his investigation of a lawyer-like method. One of these concerned the relation which clearness bears to brevity, and the other the advantages of a strictly logical structure. While it is true that, as we have seen, he had found both these principles discussed in the pages of Blackwood, the latter being the culminating point in the movement toward a conscious literary technique that grew up in the magazine, yet it was in law that Poe apparently found these principles strikingly illustrated. For it was a writer's need of logical sequence and brevity that Judge Wirt apparently wished to convey in his words to the law student. "You ask", Judge Wirt said, "for instructions adapted to improvement in eloquence. This is a subject for a treatise, not for a letter. In relation to this subject, I would strenuously advise you to two things: Compose much and often, and carefully, with reference to this same rule (Judge Wirt had spoken before in the same letter of Cicero's rule) of ante, distincte, ornate, dicere. Bold propositions, boldly and briefly expressed—pithy sentences, nervous common sense—strong phrases—well compacted periods—sudden and strong masses of light. We require that a man should speak to the purpose and come to the point, that he should instruct and convince. To do this, his mind must move with great strength and power; reason should be manifestly his master faculty—argument must predominate throughout."

So clearly must Poe have recognized the value of the lawyer's principles
of brevity and logical sequence that, in one of his own articles when he wished to ascribe these qualities to Chief Justice Marshall, we find him quoting some wording of them from Judge Wirt, a wording which Judge Wirt had himself applied to Chief Justice Marshall. "Every sentence is progressive; every idea sheds new light on the subject—the dawn advances with easy but unremitting pace; the subject opens gradually on the view; until the argument is consummated by the conviction of the delighted hearer."

33. Cf. ante., p. 6.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Poe began to use the same principles on his own independent effort, and in his endeavor, in all probability, he was translating into law terms the Blackwood method of producing effect by logical structure and brevity of expression. In his reviews of this period, the period of his connection with the Southern Literary Messenger, when his law interests are most noticeable, we find such criticisms as the following from his review of Robinson's Practice: "There is not enough compression in some parts. In this volume, it is true, not a tithe of the statute law is quoted that over-burdens the former one; but when he does cite a statute, the author still gives it to us in all the exuberance of legislative verbosity. Thus he fills the third part of a page with the law of lapsed legacies; (p. 9) when, considering that only the substance was essential, it must more clearly and as satisfactorily have been couched in five lines, as follows: 'When a legatee—'. And he takes three-fourths of a page (copied from the Revised Code) to say that 'a surety may in writing notify the creditor to sue upon the bond, a bill or note, which binds the surety; and unless the creditor sue in reasonable time and proceed with due diligence to recover the sum due, the surety shall be exonerated.' (pp. 132-133) In the name of all that is reasonable, why should
not a writer disencumber his pages of the rubbish of howbeit, provided, notwithstanding, nevertheless, and aforesaid, when by so doing he might save himself and his readers so much time and toil."  

And the same point is made in the following review; namely, that brevity produces clearness. "The authors of the works here reviewed have attempted to unfold and to show that worthlessness of those technical mysteries which have so long enveloped the science of Law. 'The Forms of Deeds, etc.' is from the pen of Mr. Okey. He gives several examples of English and French deeds—printing them on opposite pages. The difference in conciseness is said to be four to one in favor of the French, while in clearness they admit of no comparison. The greater brevity of the French documents is attributed to the existence of a Code. The Mechanics of Law Making insists upon the necessity of reform in the arrangement, language, classification, and contents of the British Acts of Parliament, and in the agency of which the laws are prepared, made, promulgated, superintended, enforced, and amended. The review is brief, but concurs heartily in the necessity alluded to." In the review on Bland's Chancery Reports, Poe likewise complains of the lack of brevity. He says: "Many of its cases are inordinately voluminous. They might all, we are full sure, have been shortened by two-thirds with great advantage to their perspicuity as well as to the reader's time, patience and money."

But perhaps there are no better instances that show how plainly Poe was drawing on his study of law than the following criticisms, the first one being on Dr. Bird's Neck of the Woods: "But Dr. Bird's great excellence is in
the ingenuity and contrivance of his story. This could not be so told as not to
be interesting. State the leading facts of the case with the formality of a
lawyer; let the parties be A, B, and C, let no spoken word, no incident or cir-
cumstances be introduced to enliven the narrative or to illustrate the character
and we shall still listen eagerly to hear the event, and in the end sit in quiet
satisfaction,—a result in strict conformity with poetic justice and brought
about by natural means. The reader easily works the equation by extinguishing
these superfluous opposing quantities and feels that all that is essential to
the story has happened just as it ought." And again, in reviewing Conjectures

36. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 254, Review of Dr. Bird's Nick of the Woods. This review
has not been ascribed to Poe.

37. Graham's Magazine, 1843, p. 203. This review is not listed in Works. It
has been mentioned by Professor Campbell as perhaps belonging to Poe.

Concerning Tasso, Poe says: "We must declare our regret that Mr. Wilde did not
more clearly express his own opinion and that he did not start by stating
briefly what he wished to prove, and go on step by step to prove it. This would
have rendered the book more popular with general readers, and perhaps more clear
and satisfactory to all." Likewise from the same review: "The patient industry
with which Mr. Wilde has collected his materials cannot be too highly commended
and is surpassed only by the clear and luminous manner in which he lays the
whole evidence before the eye of the reader, and by the ingenuity with which
he makes his deductions. Nothing, indeed, can be more lawyer-like than the
conduct of the whole case; not, as we would be understood to say, that there
is anything technical in the style; still less that there is anything of wire-
drawn argument or forced construction; but simply that the arrangement of
facts is evidently the result of practice in the art of collecting and exhibit-
ing evidence in the most direct and intelligible form, and that the method

of arriving at the end is as distinctly that which could be applied only by a clear reasoning mind not unaccustomed to such pursuits."

Continued suggestions pointing to Poe's legal interest appear from time to time during the course of his literary work. One of this is his use of technical law expressions. In one instance he says that "cui bono" is a legal phrase, meaning "for whose advantage", and that the term is mistranslated in "all the crack novels". He arraigns the author of Norman Leslie quite after

38. Ibid., 1842. Review of Emerson.

the manner of a prosecuting attorney. "We will dismiss the 'Editor of the Mirror' with a few questions. When did you ever know, Mr. Fay, of any prosecuting attorney behaving so much like a bear as your prosecuting attorney in the novel of Norman Leslie? When did you ever hear of an American Court of Justice objecting to the testimony of a witness on the ground that the said witness had an interest in the cause at issue?"


We are doubtless right in concluding from the evidence presented that Poe studied law principles with the purpose of improving his own writing and of forming a critical standard. We have no basis for assuming, however, that he derived from this study more suggestions for literary composition than those of logical sequence and clearness as it results from brevity. The following chapter will endeavor to show that Poe found further aids for effective writing in a consideration of the drama.
CHAPTER III
UNITY IN THE DRAMA AND THE FINE ARTS

Unity of effect, Poe maintains, is the artist's governing principle. The drama may be said to have led him, I shall try to show, to a deeper consideration of the means a writer may employ to produce an effect on his reader's mind, than he apparently found in Blackwood, or testifies to having gained in his study of law. Indeed, evidence points to the fact that after a study of dramatic principles, he is convinced that the brief article is, in its nature, allied to a dramatic composition, and depends for its effect on the same rules that govern the drama. He is even of the opinion that the unities, especially those of time and action, find their most perfect manifestation in the writing of a brief article. And so intimate does he appear to think is the connection between the short story and the drama, that his ideas, when composing his short pieces or when commenting on what he presents as the proper method in their production, seem often tinged with notions of dramatic representation. The fine arts appear also to have been a field for his study of unity. There is reason to believe that he studied paintings of eminent artists, and, moreover, that he assumed the rôle of art critic with a seriousness that could only have been born of the conviction that he was confirming a well-known standard of criticism.

Much of Poe's understanding of the essential features of the drama came from A.W. von Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.1 Poe had met Schlegel in the pages of Blackwood, but it is safe to assume that he went beyond Blackwood criticism for a knowledge of the German critic. Professor

1. Professor Prescott is of the opinion that Poe probably read Schlegel as early as 1831, basing his assumption on the fact that Poe's expression the bee Sophocles doubtless drawn, he says, from Schlegel's calling Sophocles the Attic Bee, appears in his Letter to B------. (Prescott, F.C., Poe's Critical Essays. Henry Holt and Company, p. XXX.)
Prescott points out Poe's indebtedness to Schlegel, but he seems not to have gone beyond mentioning certain general grounds of dependence. He speaks of Poe borrowing from Schlegel the principle of unity or totality of interest; of gleaning from the Lectures certain notions and curiosities for *Pinakidia*; of having obtained from that source most of his knowledge of Greek and Latin literature and important notions in regard to poetry. But more than general dependence can be established. It is highly probable that it was due to a study of Schlegel that Poe turned from the method of producing effect by logical sequence or a strict following of causal relations in the argument to a consideration of effect through unity. Poe appears to agree with Schlegel in the points that follow.

Unity in the drama, Schlegel says, cannot be taken in the sense in which Aristotle has attempted to represent it, that of a beginning, middle, and end. Such a "plurality of connected events" or "concatenation of causes and effects,"


virtually reach no necessary completeness. Corneille, in Schlegel's opinion,


also errs in his definition of unity, placing it as he does in the idea of connection between cause and effect. It is true, Schlegel admits, that logical coherence, or the causal connection is essential to the drama, yet he feels that if this is the drama's fundamental principle, then effect is diminished and true excellence is impossible. But, on the other hand, effect is greatly increased, according to Schlegel, if all the events are gathered under one point of view and denoted by a single name. This conception of unity involves, he says, the idea of *One* and *Whole* and is properly sought in a "system of meta-
Poe, as has just been said, is apparently following Schlegel in his change from strict logical procedure for producing effect to that of a comprehension of ideas under a single point of view. In his review of Macaulay's *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* he sums up what he feels to be the weakness of the rigidly logical style. Macaulay has erred, he says, in depending too entirely upon logical sequence in his argument. In fact, this *closeness* of logic is the trait for which, in his opinion, Macaulay is especially remarkable. He leaves no minute gap which the reader might have to fill up with thought. He thus preserves the chain of his argument at the expense of his subject as a whole. But, Poe says, "'Truth for truth's sake' is seldom so enforced." It is scarcely too much to say that the style of the profound thinker is never too closely logical. And he cites the instance of George Combe "than whom a more candid reasoner, never, perhaps, wrote or spoke—than whom a complete antipode to Macaulay there certainly never existed." Poe then analyzes Macaulay's argument and tries to show that in its close reasoning the author has forgotten "the very gist of his subject", the one main point about which all details in the argument turned.

The source of this mistaken method of producing effect, (for Poe is
evidently putting it forth as an error), he feels to lie in a tendency of the public mind towards logic for logic's sake. People are apt, he says, to be caught by the closeness of the logic and they comprehend the points and the sequence of the argument, but in yielding assent to the progress of the argument, the one great truth, the purpose of the chain of reasoning, is often lost. And Poe, in another place, expresses the same idea. "Few minds can immediately perceive the distinction between the comprehension of a proposition and an agreement of the reason with the thing proposed. Pleased at comprehending, we often are so excited as to take it for granted that we assent."

It can doubtless be seen from what Poe has just said that he believed, with Schlegel, that while logical coherence in an argument is essential to forcing conviction, it is still not the main point of the writer's art. The oneness of the argument, the comprehending of all the details under one head, in short, the unity of the piece, is the sole and rightful means of producing effect.

Not only was Poe indebted to Schlegel for his changed perception of producing effect, a change from fully relying on logical structure to that of depending on the intrinsic unity of the piece, but we find indications that he was also using Schlegel's explanations of the means of attaining a unified whole. Through this advance in the study of unity, he seems to be studying the fundamental principles of dramatic writing. Accordingly, the mechanism of the drama, the unities of time and action and what he believed to be attendant considerations--namely, the object of the dramatic author, the means of attaining that object, the beginning and length of a piece--begin to appear in Poe's works.
The dramatic writer, according to Schlegel, and the writer of the brief article as Poe explains it, agree in the object they propose for their undertaking. Poe may not for this point have followed the text of Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature to any greater degree than he followed Blackwood criticism, yet it is highly probable that the definite statement Schlegel gives to the object of the dramatic writer caught his attention. Schlegel thus expresses the idea: "But how does a dramatic work become theatrical, or fitted to appear with advantage on the stage? In general, the answer to this question is by no means so difficult. The object proposed is to produce an impression on any assembled multitude, to rivet their attention, and to excite their interest and sympathy. In this respect the poet's occupation coincides with that of the orator." Poe's statement, to which reference has been made, emphasizes, it will be seen, the points of the dramatic writer. "A skillful literary artist," says Poe in his review on Hawthorne, "must in constructing a tale conceive with deliberate care a certain unique or single effect to be wrought in." In addition to this statement of the object of the literary artist, Poe gives throughout his work as a critic, a constant reiteration of the same dramatic principle.

The drama and the short story or short poem likewise coincide in the nature of the impression to be produced. In both cases the impression must be a unique and single effect. Schlegel's discussion of this essential of dramatic writing has already been referred to in considering the influence he brought to bear in turning Poe from a strictly-logical method to a further understanding of unity. Further points on unity of interest will now be presented. He follows De la Motte, it seems, in substituting this term for

11. Cf. Chapter I.
Aristotle's unity of action. In fact, quoting from the Poetics what he considers to be Aristotle's treatment of the term, he states it to be his belief that the three unities have not been rightfully defined. In general, his main criticism appears to be that Aristotle's "beginning, middle, and end" make no provision for direction towards a single end; that Aristotle's understanding of action is something that merely takes place, or in other words, as something that is entirely external. Therefore, says Schlegel, "completeness" would be "altogether impossible". But Schlegel offers it as his opinion that unity of action must be founded in a higher sphere of ideas; that it must take into account not simply external order of events, but a "more mysterious unity than that with which most critics are satisfied." It is best explained, he thinks, by the unity which appeals only to the understanding, and is neither visible to the eye nor palpable to the touch. As an example of this type of unity, he cites the organic unity of a plant or an animal which consists in the idea of life. This unity, he contends, while itself is incorporeal "nevertheless manifests itself through the medium of the corporeal world". Then he transfers this conception of unity to a dramatic piece and says: "The separate parts of a work of art, and (to return to the question before us) the separate parts, consequently, of a tragedy, must not be taken in by the eye and ear alone, but also comprehended by the understanding. Collectively, however, they are all subservient to one common aim, namely, to produce a joint impression on the mind." Poe obviously follows Schlegel in this comprehension of unity. In the first place, it has already
been noted at the beginning of this chapter that he was undoubtedly influenced by Schlegel to turn from a strictly logical sequence of thought to a comprehension of ideas under a single point of view. In the second place, he seems to be aware of Schlegel's dissatisfaction with Aristotle's treatment of the unities. A short passage in the *Southern Literary Messenger* summarizes what Schlegel presented as Aristotle's inadequate view.

Schlegel, p. 237.

"It is amusing enough to see Aristotle driven perforce to lend his name to these three Unities, whereas the only one of which he speaks with any degree of fullness is the first, the Unity of Action. With respect to Unity of Time hemerely throws out a vague hint; while of the Unity of Place he says not a syllable."

It is impossible not to consider Poe as responsible for the insertion of this passage in the Messenger, for, although he was not editor at the time, yet he was an active purveyor for the magazine (Cf. Chapter on Law) and he was also known, as we are just now considering, to be studying Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. Furthermore, Poe gives Schlegel credit for the principle and he thus shows he is consciously applying dramatic criticism to his own writing. "In pieces of less extent", he says in his review of Mrs. Sigourney's *Zinzendorff and Other Poems*, "the pleasure is unique, and in the proper acceptation of the term—and thus the effect will depend especially upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel 'the unity or totality of interest'."

15.

The beginning of a drama and the beginning of a short story or poem also appear to have points in common. Schlegel thus explains that the dramatic writer must begin at once to produce the effect he intends: "The dramatic poet
as well as the orator must, from the very commencement, by strong impressions, transport his hearers out of themselves and, as it were, take bodily possession of their attention." And Poe on his part is of the opinion that the "skillful literary artist" must from his "very initial sentence", start to bring out the effect he intends to produce. If he fails to begin at once, Poe says, then "he has failed in his first step."


Unity of time in the drama seems to have given Poe further light on the question of the length of a composition. From Blackwood we have already noted, Poe found notions for numerical length and for length expressed in time limitations. From law, we have also observed, he derived the idea that clearness and brevity bear a certain relation to each other. The drama appears to add to these former suggestions a physical and psychological point of view. While it is true that the length of a composition in its psychological bearings was evidently a common topic among certain critics, e.g., Kames and Blair, and doubtless Poe was aware of their comments, yet it is obvious that Poe found Schlegel's


20. Poe refers to Kames and Blair as though familiar with the method they pursue in their criticism. He likens the "magnificent critiques raisonnees" of Augustus Wilhelm Schlegel and of Frederick Schlegel, to those of Kames, of Johnson and of Blair. (Graham's Magazine, 1842.) The New York Mirror notices in 1832 the reprinting in America of Kames' Elements of Criticism and Blair's Rhetoric. Kames, the notice says, has translations affixed to quotations in foreign languages. (The New York Mirror, vol. 10, p. 385, 1832.) Kames thus discusses the point referred to: "I am ready to show that a representation with proper pauses is better qualified for making a
deep impression than a continual representation without a pause. This is
evident from the following considerations. Representation cannot very long
support the impression of reality; for, when the spirits are exhausted by
close attention and by the agitation of passion, an uneasiness ensues which
never fails to banish the waking dream. Now supposing the time that a man
can employ with strict attention without wandering, to be no greater than is
requisite for a single act—a supposition that cannot be far from the truth—it
follows that a continued representation of longer endurance than an act,
instead of giving scope to fluctuation and swelling of passion, would over­
strain the attention and produce a total absence of mind." (Kames, Lord,
Elements of Criticism. Edinburgh: Printed for A. Millar, London, and
A. Kincaid and J. Bell, Edinburgh, 1765, vol. 1, p. 436.) Locke, in a
reference from Kames, may also have been suggestive to Poe. "The mind is so
constituted that it can by no effort—keep its attention long fixed on the
same object." (Ibid., p. 152.) Blair likewise speaks to the same point.
"Sublime---is an emotion which cannot be long protracted."

discussion helpful. "The writer must diligently avoid", said Schlegel, "what­
ever exceeds the ordinary measure of patience or comprehension." Poe expresses

21. Schlegel, op. cit., p. 37. It is interesting to note that Aristotle does
not affix any time limit to a dramatic composition. It is true that he
draws a comparison between the necessity for the magnitude of a living
organism being such that it may be embraced in one view, and the length
of a plot being such that it can easily be embraced by the memory; but he
uses no principle in determining the length. He only requires, he says,
that the length shall admit of the whole being "perspicuous". And again,
that in tragedy the length should confine itself, as far as possible, to a
single revolution of the sun. Indeed, he distinctly states that "the
limit of length in relation to dramatic competition and sensuous presentment
is no part of artistic theory." (Aristotle, The Poetics of Aristotle.
London and New York, Macmillan and Co. 1895; Translated by E.H. Butcher,
p. 31.)

the same idea in demanding for the tale only that length which will not result
in the reader's weariness.22 And in the following he appears to specially empha­
size length in the light of unity of time: "Without excessive and fatiguing
exertion, inconsistent with legitimate interest, the mind cannot comprehend at
one time---the numerous individual items which go to establish the whole."


Unity of action, as Poe applied it to the composition of a brief article, appears to be the outgrowth of a combined study of Schlegel and Aristotle. The question seems to resolve itself into a consideration of the dramatic plot.

24. Professor Prescott comments on Poe's reference to Aristotle; in The Letter to B-----. he asserts that Poe maintaining poetry to be "the most philosophical of all writings" is a misunderstanding of and misquotation from The Poetics. He is of the opinion that in this regard Poe's reference to Aristotle is "casual and second-hand." (Prescott, op.cit., p. 324.)

It has been pointed out that Poe was aware of Schlegel's dissatisfaction with Aristotle's definition of unity of action; and, moreover, that he considered Schlegel to have "rightly" termed that one of the unities, the unity or totality of interest. While there is not evidence sufficient to prove that Poe later came to feel Schlegel had misunderstood Aristotle's definition of unity of action, yet certain indications point to that probability. In the first place, he advances the opinion that Schlegel errs in considering the dramatic plot in the light of intrigue. "The somewhat over-profound criticisms of Augustus Wilhelm Schlegel," he says, have discussed the plot in bearings of complication, mystification, in short, of intrigue, to the utter avoidance of the simple and direct. Such a conception is, he thinks, the conception of N.P. Willis in his
drama Tortesa, is after the manner of Cervantes and Calderon, and is, he further says, nothing short of folly. In the second place, he announces it as his conviction that Schlegel's unity or totality of interest has in


is "disjointed—and evanescent". Lowell, he contends, has produced in his

29. *Works*, vol. 3, p. 120, Review of Bulwer's *Night and Morning*.

prose efforts mainly rambling plots, in which "a certain disjointedness may be observed."


Schlegel adopted Aristotle's explanation of unity of action; nevertheless he denies Aristotle's treatment of the subject beyond the "beginning, middle and end" which relate solely, he says, to causal relationships and not to direction toward a particular end. If we are safe in assuming his indebtedness, then Schlegel's "mysterious unity" is included in Aristotle's unity of action.

The Postics, pp. 33 and 83

"The plot being an imitation of an action must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that if one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole.

The plot manifestly ought to be constructed on dramatic principles. It ought to have for its subject a single action, whole and complete within itself. It will thus resemble a living organism and produce its proper pleasure."

Poe is evidently firmly convinced of the applicability, even the necessity, of the dramatic unities of time and action to the effective brief article. Unity of time, as we have seen, he considered to be denied by length, and on this score Poe considers that the novel cannot be a dramatic composition.
"Without becoming fatigued, the mind, he says, cannot comprehend at one time --- the numerous individual parts which make up the whole. Unity of action confounded as we have seen in Poe's mind with unity of effect, and, again, with the dramatic plot, he considers to be "denied by a constant shifting of scenes and a continued effort to "bring up" events to a certain moment of time. On this score, he advances the opinion that Bulwer's theory of dramatic composition is altogether erroneous; that the efforts the English novelist makes in his prefaces to "pre-coax" one to believe he has attained plot perfection and dramatic excellence, is at least a "bad practice". Indeed, Poe states it as his belief that although Bulwer, could he see these comments, would doubtless loftily maintain for his Night and Morning dramatic qualities, yet the novel contains only the deficiencies and not the essential features of the drama. On the contrary, unity of time and unity of place, in Poe's estimation, may only properly be applied to the brief article. If a writer's intention is to be dramatic, why can he not, Poe asks, content himself with the brief tale? That is a species of composition, he says, which admits of the highest development of artistical power.

Poe's application of dramatic criticism in his own critical work has already been noted. In theory he has constructed both tale and poem on fundamental principles of the drama. In practice, what did Schlegel and Aristotle mean to Poe? In the first place, the drama obviously influenced him in his stories to begin more directly to make the impression. The long prologue in The MS. Found in the Bottle does not appear in other tales. It might seem from this fact, that The Ms. represented the period preceding that period when Blackwood was the predominating interest. In fact, it agrees with the Blackwood
tale of effect in possessing the long prologue, which in both cases seems to be used to establish a groundwork of reality. Compare the opening paragraphs of The MS. and several of the sensation stories in Blackwood, with those of Berenice:

"Of my country and of my family, I have little to say. Ill usage and length of years have driven me from the one and estranged me from the other. Hereditary wealth afforded me an education of no common order, and a contemplative turn of mind enabled me to methodize the stores which early study diligently garnered up. Beyond all things, the works of the German moralists gave me great delight; not from my ill-advised admiration of their eloquent madness, but from the ease with which my habits of rigid thoughts enabled me to detect their falsities. --- After many years spent in foreign travel, I sailed in the year 18__, from the port of Batavia, in the rich and populous island of Java, on a voyage to the Archipelago Islands.---Our vessel was a beautiful ship of about four hundred tons, copper-fastened, and built at Bombay of Malabar teak."

As can be seen, the beginning of The MS. is quite similar to the beginnings of the Blackwood sensation stories. In The Involuntary Experimentalist the setting of the story is given in a prologue of considerable length: "The destruction by fire of the distillery of Mr. B. in Dublin, some time since, will be in the recollection of many of our Irish readers.---I am a medical man, residing, etc'. In The Man in the Bell, the same prologue is used. "In my younger days, bell-ringing was much more in fashion among the young men of_____ than it is now. Nobody, I believe, practises it there at present except the servants of the church, and the melody has been injured in consequence. Some fifty years ago, about twenty of us who dwelt in the vicinity of the cathedral--- ---.

In Berenice, however, the impression to be made appears to be in the writer's mind from the start. "Misery is manifold. The wretchedness of man is multiform. Over-reaching the wide horizon as the rainbow, its hues are as
various as the hues of that arch—as distinct, too, yet as intimately blended.
Over-reaching the wide horizon as the rainbow! How is it that from beauty I
have derived a type of unloveliness?—from the covenant of peace, a simile of
sorrow? But, as in ethics, evil is a consequence of good, so, in fact, out of
joy is sorrow born." A semblance of a prologue appears in Eorania, yet it may
be noted that only such facts as are necessary to enable one to grasp the thread
of the story are given. And, moreover, these facts are so permeated with the
impression to be made, that they do not detract from the oneness of effect.
Egeaeus details certain points relating to his family and ancestral home, yet
he so inter-weaves into these facts misery and madness that they enhance rather
than diminish the effect of the misery and madness that starts from the very
beginning. The towers of his ancestral halls were gloomy and gray; his family
was a race of visionaries; the books in the library were of a peculiar nature.
He relates facts of his birth, and recollections of his earliest years, yet
with the same oppressive sense of misery and overhanging madness. He continues
with his boyhood and education and the same gloomy madness hangs over his head.
"I loitered away my boyhood in books and dissipated my youth in revery; but it
is singular, that as years rolled away and the noon of manhood found me still
in the mansion of my fathers—it is wonderful what a stagnation there fell upon
the springs of my life—wonderful how total an inversion took place in the
character of my commonest thought." In Shadow, there is apparently no semblance
of a prologue. The shadow of death overhangs the tale from the "very initial
word."

In the second place, the influence of the drama is seen in the change
from a solitary figure overwhelmed with sensation crowding on sensation, to
what may perhaps be said to be more of an imitation of an action. Although the
sensation method is never completely abandoned, yet the solitary figure gives
way to several acting characters. *Metzengerstein* marks an advance in plot interest; *The Cask of Amontillado* may be said to be a little drama.

It remains now to show that Poe, in working out his stories, held dramatic representation in mind. He intermingles dramatic terms with the writer's efforts at perfection. "Most writers—would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought,—at the careful selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio."


Not only did Poe study unity in the drama, but there are indications to show that he found the same principle extending throughout the Fine Arts as well. In favor of this conclusion is the testimony offered by his criticism. In the first place, he speaks of unity in literature and unity in the plastic arts as controvertible terms in criticism. All the rules of the plastic arts, he says in his review of *Peter Snook*, founded as they are in a true perception of the beautiful, "will apply in their fullest force to every species of literary composition". And, again, in the same article, he considered the satisfaction a literary critic receives from a narrative in which an unusual fact is developed, to be analogous to the "unalloyed pleasure" that the artist derives from meaningful strokes of the brush. Moreover, it is to be noted that throughout his critical reviews, Poe continued to use the painter's conception of
unity as a standard for literary excellence. A striking example of this method of criticism appears in his comments on Dickens' Watkins Tottle written in 1836.

35. S.L.M., June, 1836.

The Pawnbroker's Shop, one of the articles in Watkins Tottle, well illustrated, Poe thought, the artist's idea of unity of effect, and to make his point plain he contrasted it with another article on the same subject by Colonel Stone. In the one, the reader is conscious, Poe said, that the anecdotes introduced by the author bear only a shadowy relation to their subject; while in the other, in the work of Dickens, the effect is one of a gradually perfecting picture, in which the Pawnbroker's Shop, in its wretchedness and extortion, is the main idea. To this idea, the reader feels all the groupings and fillings in are subservient. And Poe adds: "So perfect and never-to-be-forgotten a picture cannot be brought about by any such trumpery exertion or still more, trumpery talent, as we find employed in the ineffective daubing of Colonel Stone. The scratchings of a school-boy with a slate pencil might as well be compared to the groupings of Buonarotti." Of quite as much interest in revealing Poe as an art critic, is his review of The Invisible Gentleman. Conscious of unity in this composition, he expressed himself in painter's terms. "The merit", he said, "lies in the chiaro' scuro, in that blending of light and shadow where nothing is too distinct, and yet where the idea is fully conveyed." And, again, in his review of 1836, of the American in England, he uses the technical language of the artist.


37. S.L.M., June, 1836. One of the articles in Peter Snook.

The author was right, Poe said, in not putting in upon his canvas all the actual lines which he might have discovered in his subject. He comprehended that only by toning down or even totally neglecting certain portions of his object, could he bring out the portions by whole sole instrumentality the idea of the whole composition could be conveyed. In Poe's opinion, the author of the American in England was well aware that "the apparent and not the real is the province of the painter". Likewise, in 1839, in reviewing Tortesa, a drama by N.P. Willis, he


warmly compliments the author on the fine ideal elevation of his work, a point, which according to Poe, is "forgotten or avoided by those who with true Flemish perception of truth wish to copy her peculiarities in disarray." Unity in the artist's terms appears again in 1842, in the statement of critical theory.


More decisive, however, than the testimony of the literary reviews which show Poe to be working with the painter's technique, was his criticism on art itself. He undoubtedly wrote some of the articles on the Fine Arts in the Broadway Journal. Professor Harrison lists La Sortie du Bain, though he does not publish the piece. Professor Campbell thinks that Poe may have written many, if not all the articles on art in the second volume of The Broadway Journal.

41.

Although it will be seen that Poe could not have written all the articles that Professor Campbell suggests, it can yet be shown that he was responsible for a certain number in both volumes. Briggs, the originator of The Broadway Journal, withdrew from his editorship at the end of the first volume. Several reasons
point to the fact that it was doubtless he who was principally concerned with the Fine Arts department during the time he was editor. In the first place he names no one as the head of the art department. In his announcement of his plans for the conduct of his magazine, he mentions only the musical editor, Henry C. Watson. Of the three, Briggs, Poe and Watson, Watson could not then have been the one chosen for the work on art. Briggs, however, is known to have been himself an art critic; Poe saying of him in the compilation of papers known as the Literati: "Among the principal papers contributed by Mr. B., (Briggs) were those discussing the paintings at the last exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts in New York." A further reason assigns to Briggs the Art Department of the first volume. In the second number of the Broadway Journal, four weeks before the selection of assistant editors, appeared an article on The Art Union Pictures which was presumably from Briggs' pen, for the author speaks of filling a "vacant department of editorial labor." Briggs also prided himself, according to Poe, on his "personal acquaintance with artists and his general connoisseurship", and
48. Doubtless Briggs in his office as editor, and owing to his fondness for artists, may have been responsible for Page's articles on The Use of Color that appeared in the early numbers of volume 1 of the Broadway Journal. was, moreover, a member of the Art Union. We may safely assume then, that Briggs interested himself in the Fine Arts Department of the first volume of the Broadway Journal.

I shall now endeavor to show that Poe wrote certain of the articles on art in the second volume. A controversy arose between Briggs and Poe. Poe disagreed with Briggs concerning principles of art. It will be remembered that Poe had expressed his disapproval of the principles of Flemish painters, saying that they erred in their attention to detail. That they failed to conceive of their art as governed by the principle of unity, seemed to be his main contention. He now applied this same criticism to Briggs, both as writer and art critic. "If Mr. Briggs has a forte, it is a Flemish fidelity that omits nothing, whether agreeable or disagreeable; but I cannot call this forte a virtue.--I may be permitted to say that there was scarcely a point in his whole series of criticisms on this subject (Briggs' criticisms of the paintings at the last exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts in New York) at which I did not radically disagree with him. Whatever taste he has in art, is, like his taste in letters, Flemish."


Briggs on his part, attacked Poe. The trouble grew and the magazine was temporarily suspended, organizing again with Poe as chief editor. Watson remained,

50. Harrison, op.cit., p. 211.

51. Works, Biography, p. 212.
however, presumably in his capacity of musical editor. Poe and Watson, therefore could alone be responsible for the editorial articles on art in the second volume. Evidence suggests that they collaborated in the department of Fine Arts. In one number, the department consists of two articles; one signed P. and the other W.

On this testimony, Poe was undoubtedly author of the criticism on The Ivory Christ, the sculpture brought, as the article states, from Italy by C. Edwards Lester, American consul at Genoa. Later, October 25, 1845, Poe became the sole editor of the Broadway Journal. It is much more to be supposed then, that after obtaining full control of the magazine, his efforts would be equal, if not increased, to insure its success. Before this time when he had secured only a third pecuniary interest in the paper, Poe writes in a letter to Thomas that he is working fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and that his hopes are high for the final success of the Journal. He writes to Griswold: "It will be a fortune if I can hold it." One may further assume that he would take advantage of his full control to allow only the expression of his own views to enter the magazine. With this assumption we may be safe in assigning to Poe, after the date of his full editorship, not only La Sortie du Bain, but also some remarks concerning Titian's
56. The last number of the *Broadway Journal*, however, Poe says was entirely the work of Thomas Dunn English. (*Works, Biography*, p. 248.) "The last number of the *Broadway Journal*—the work having been turned over by me to another publisher—was edited by Mr. English. The editorial portion was wholly his and was one interminable Paean of his own praises. The truth of all this will no doubt be corroborated by Mr. Jennings, the printer."


Venus. Corroborating evidence is also found in regard to *La Sortie du Bain* in the criticism on *The Ivory Christ*. In the latter piece, Poe speaks of his prospective article on *La Sortie du Bain*: the article which, it will be remembered, Professor Harrison lists as Poe's. Other articles on art in the *Broadway Journal* may also be attributed to Poe. In his few remarks on Titian's Venus he mentions having written a former article on the same subject. He says in the columns of the Fine Arts Department: "Under this head we have very little to observe. Titian's Venus, concerning which we had some remarks in a previous number, is again being exhibited in Broadway." The first article on the same subject is in the first volume of the *Broadway Journal*. This fact is significant since it shows Poe to be writing on art during the time of Briggs' editorship.

Another contribution on art may possibly be ascribed to Poe. In the series of comments on the paintings at the American Art Union, published in *The Broadway Journal* of September 13, 1845, is an announcement of a future critical account of *The Ivory Christ*, and it is to be noted that the remarks are identical with Poe's introduction to his criticism on *The Ivory Christ*. This part of the series...
of comments must, then, be Poe's. It is difficult to say whether the remaining pieces in the series are by Poe, or whether Watson is the author. The Death Struggle, one of these pieces, however, contains a critical point that is characteristic of Poe. The picture has unity, the critic says. In fact, this principle characterizes, as I shall now try to show, all the art criticism that I have attributed to his pen.

Unity as a literary criticism, in 1845, the date of Poe's articles on art in the Broadway Journal, was not the unity of his early criticism. From the purely dramatic criticism that he found in Schlegel and Aristotle, the principle passed, as I shall show in the next chapter, through a philosophic stage, and later through a period characterized more particularly by scientific investigation. It is this last stage in an understanding of Unity that is used for the criticism of Art products in the Broadway Journal. The Ivory Christ, Poe thought, was an expression of truth. The figure depended from the cross, he said, precisely as the human form would depend under the circumstances. The contraction of the muscles, more particularly, in Poe's opinion, about the calf and toes, were absolutely in the truth of their expression. In short, the whole figure was perfect. And of La Sortie du Bain he speaks of the perfection of proportion. In like manner is unity discussed in The Death Struggle. He says in this instance, that the "anatomy is well made out".

What did Poe study to acquire his knowledge of art? It can be shown, in the first place, that he studied art magazines. He speaks in his essay An Nastic Printing, of having a leaf of the London Art Union before him. Another reference to the London Art Union in a series of articles entitled A Charter on Science and Art in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine, may also show that Poe was
a fact which proves that Burton and Poe were working together on the articles. Since Burton's interests were said to be quite contrary to scientific study, it may be reasonable to attach this series more closely to Poe. There is also reason to believe that Poe made a conscious study of pictures, applying to them his knowledge of principles of art. In favor of this assumption is the testimony found in a long article written in 1839 entitled Half an Hour in the Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia. The piece is signed By a Philadelphian. The identity of the critical points contained in this article and those of both Poe's literary and art criticism before and after the date of its publication, leads one to suggest Poe as the author of the article. In the first place, both the Fine Arts piece and Poe agree that talent is not to be praised simply because it is native talent. The article reads: "The first thing that engages our attention is Alston's huge painting of the dead man restored to life by touching the corpse of Elisha. (catalogue No. 46.) The painter is what the cant of the times denominates a 'native artist', and it is therefore a high offence against patriotism, honor, good feeling and the seven cardinal virtues in a lump, to bestow on the performance anything else than the 'honied words of praise'. Phew! The delineator of such a monstrosity ought to be rolled up in his canvas and both of them burnt together on the altar of beauty." And Poe gives expression to the same idea. In 1836 he wrote: "We set up a hue and cry about the necessity of encouraging native writers of merit----. In a word, so far from being
ashamed of the many disgraceful literary failures to which our own inordinate vanities and misapplied patriotism have lately given birth, and so far from deeply lamenting that these daily puerilities are of home manufacture, we adhere pertinaciously to our original blindly conceived idea, and thus often find ourselves involved in the gross paradox of liking a stupid book the better because sure enough, its stupidity is American." This point will be further treated in a later chapter.

Beauty, in the opinion of the author of *Half an Hour in the Academy of Fine Arts*, is the most fitting subject for art. He is criticizing Alston's picture of the dead man restored to life. "The taste which selected this subject for the pencil was unacquainted with that strict boundary line within which the graces have encircled this art. Pleasure is the sole end of painting, beauty is the sole source of unqualified pleasure; beauty, then, is the supreme law of this and of all the other arts of design. The Greeks I take to be the despotic law-givers for the world in all that concerns art; they painted not to display their skill or exhibit a resemblance, but to produce an object whose loveliness should gratify the spectator. *Impression*, which most modern artists seek, was not their aim; beauty was their constant Latium; and if they ever selected subjects of a tragical nature, they softened down the terror under the control of beauty." Poe, likewise, makes the same contention. The sense of the beautiful, he says, is an important condition of man's immortal nature. On this score he criticizes Longfellow for the choice of his theme. He makes
beauty the foundation of his definition of poetry.

Unity in the composition is necessary to the painter's art. *Death on the Pale Horse*, the writer condemns since it lacks this principle. "Let us give one glance to 'Death on the Pale Horse', which stands in the next room. I have always had a profound contempt for West, as the most commonplace and wooden of painters; but this figure compels admiration.---Yet the picture is a leap, not a flight of genius, in the filling up of the canvas, in the unworthy idea of a particular death in the midst of a general wasting of the world,---we detest the essential meanness of West's imagination,--that innate groveling temper from which he never long escaped. Almighty heaven! when the incarnate spirit of destruction was galloping on his pallid courser over the earth robed in night, and his extended fists flashing hell-fires, and universal life was fainting beneath his deadly breath, was it a time to think of lions snapping at horses' noses or bulls tossing boys? Faugh! I could kick the unworthy courier out of the picture------." With Poe, unity was, as we have seen, the basis of his study of the critical art.

The student of the pictures discusses *indefinitiveness*, making it a standard by which to judge *The Dead Man Restored to Life* by Alston. "The artist can exhibit but a single moment of time and a single point of view, and his production, moreover, is to be often examined and long dwelt upon. The portrait painter should, therefore, seize that expression of the face which is the most strictly natural, which is the center and hinge of every other phase of the countenance to which every other phase can be referred and from which all can be derived. The historical painter should select the moment of the story which is the most pregnant with future meaning and leads on to higher
and further interest; the most elevated point of excitement should not be chosen, but the prelude to it. A common artist in Greece painted Medea slaying her children; Timonachus more wisely showed her meditating their death. Something must be left to the fancy or else pictures become lifeless and the art ceases to be poetic, and becomes merely mimetick. The sculptor of Laocoön chisels a sigh; imagination superadds a shriek; had he exhibited a shriek, imagination could do nothing. The business of art is to stimulate interest, not to satisfy it. Now Mr. Alston has seized a passion and a state of it which admits of no progression of wonder; the next moment and a second glance will destroy it. There is no climax of emotion, no aggrandizement of interest; there is no future to the story; the present comprises and includes all: the drama is fairly over and the excitement ended. Had he shown us a fiend or giant thus rising on his astonished enemies, we should have been chained in expectant interest; now there is nothing to follow; the next instant will unknit the corrugated brows of the bystanders, and turn surprise to simple joy. The subject in fact is poetical and not pictorial; but as the painter did select it, he should have shown us the dead man rising before the company were aware of it, so that we might be arrested in wonder as to what they would think when they perceived the miracle."


Poe’s remarks on *indefinitiveness* are strikingly similar. Music, he says, demands a certain "wild license and *indefinitiveness*—an *indefinitiveness* required by every musician who is not a mere fiddler, as an important point in the philosophy of his science. Give to music any undue decision, imbue it with any very *determinate* tone, and you deprive it at once of its ethereal, its ideal, and I sincerely believe, of its intrinsic and essential character."

Identity of critical views is also seen in the connection between **music** and **proportion**. The author of the article on the Fine Arts says: "This picture, (Holy Family, after Raphael D' Urbino) calls to mind the notion of Byron, or Browne, of the **music** of a beautiful face. The forms are disposed in commingling curves with such liquid grace, the dark and manly face of Joseph and the age-brown and care-withered, yet pleasing countenance of Elizabeth, relieve so harmoniously the young and glowing cheeks of all the rest, that **musical** is the epithet that at once occurs to every spectator. The expression has been charged with a false license of metaphor, but it is strictly true to the laws of mind, and if metaphysics ever come to be written by a man who knows how to think, it will be stated that all sensations and impressions, thoughts, sounds, odors and all others, present themselves to the mind as images; and, being homogeneous, may of course be compared. Go over an overture in your mind, and you will find that it is a picture. I went, many years ago, to see old Beethoven, and found him sitting before an enormous instrument which he called his piano-organ; consisting of an organ with a bank of forte-piano keys above, of which the wires were at the side,—an affair of his own contriving. He was in glorious spirits, and resuming his seat at my request, begged me to choose a subject, then exclaimed immediately, 'Wait, I'll play you a cathedral; it shall be Strasburgh, for I know it by heart, and I will do what Napoleon meditated, for my cathedral shall have both towers'. He began; planting the solid masonry with the deep tones of the organ, and running out the tracery at the same time with the gay notes of the piano. Every limb of the old gentleman was in action; both elbows frequently on one instrument while the fingers were on the other; he held also in his mouth a wand which he called his tongue-finger, shod with lead enough to weigh down any of the organ keys on which it fell, and this he directed with astonishing success. I can only say that I recognized every part of his
musical structure, and felt the same emotions which the present building had excited."

70. Ibid., vol. 5, p. 80.

Poe also expresses his conviction that there lies between music and proportion, a connection the philosopher, the scientist, the painter, and the poet can both detect and appreciate. In the chapter on Science, I shall present evidence to show how the idea grew up in his mind. We shall see there his correspondence with Judge Tucker on the subject, who, it will be seen, appeared to be the one who first brought the matter to his attention. Judge Tucker did not, it seems, offer any explanation of what he learned, as he said, only from the "accuracy" of his ear; and we shall, therefore, see in what fields Poe further sought a reasonable solution for the suggested problem. In philosophy he appears to find illuminating discussions of the principle of equality and of proportion; deriving from them what he states to be a satisfactory interpretation of the music of the spheres. In natural science he meets with the physical law on which he considers the connection between music and proportion rests. In short, it will doubtless be seen in the later chapter, that Poe, on the basis of this connection, defines and illustrates his whole theory of a metrical art.

A point other than identity of criticism to establish Poe as the author of Half an Hour in the Academy of Fine Arts, is the very evident fact that the writer is a literary critic who is studying art from a standpoint of literary technique. In the main he argues for the superiority in power of producing effect of the poet over the painter. In the first place, the poet is more universal in his appeal. "When the painter tells us of the impression which his Genevieve produces, every reader can appropriate the emotion to
himself; and each calls to mind the particular lady whom he most desires, and
the poem seems to him precisely and exclusively applicable to her because the
same passion has been felt by all, though produced by qualities as various as
the nature of each. But of all these causes, the painter is limited to a single
set; and what he places on his canvas can affect only that fraction of beholders
who may happen to agree with him in definite notions of the highest beauty—a
number in any case small, and farther narrowed by the power of moral qualities
in warping the natural conceptions of ideal fairness. His most beautiful
woman must be an individual." The poet is again placed over the painter since
he is permitted to describe persons by impressions rather than by delineations.
"Look at old Homer; what do we know from the poet of the face or form or her
who 'for nine long years had set the world in arms'? Have we anything about the
'bright black eyes'? Not a bit. 'She was the most beautiful woman in the world'
says Homer, and there's an end of it. But when we see the cold and hoary sages
of the council rising to look after her as she leaves the room,—when we
reflect that she was all that Venus could contrive, all that Paris could demand,
all that Menelaus wished for,—when we remember that for her Achilles struck,
for her great Hector died,—then we feel how wise was the forbearance of the
poet, and how superior is poetry when rightly managed, to the best performances
of the painter. We see Helen as we see the wind, only by the commotion which
her presence occasions. Ah! those old fellows knew what they were about." Mor­
over, the writer of the Fine Arts article was not only a literary critic, but
his literary interests led him into a field in which Poe, at the time the
article was published, was known to be actively engaged. The interest in both
cases centers around Pope. In the first place, the writer of the article con­siders Pope's work of 'demolishing scribblers'. He says, "Poetry never won
richer laurels than when Sandy Pope fought her battles." He disagreed with
Lessing, who, he said, quoted "with triumph" from Warburton to the effect that Pope disapproved of the pictorial essays of his youthful muse. But the writer of the piece on the Fine Arts contends that Pope, in calling description a "heavy feast of sauces" was only satirizing the manner usually practiced. Indeed, in his opinion, Pope was a master of the art of pictorial description. He cites as a striking instance the moonlight scene in the book of Pope's translation of Homer. Poe, as has been said, was also interested in Pope's work of elevating the standard of literature. That he followed Pope for the betterment of American letters, I shall now try to show. Poe was familiar with the Dunciad for in discussing versification, he quoted nine couplets from the first book of the satire. He stresses the importance of Pope as a satirical critic.

---


The critical art in America, he says, should no more neglect its duty than in the "days of the Dunciad". The form of Pope's satires are also known to Poe. In his review of Wilmer's *Quacks of Helicon* he accuses Wilmer of imitating the "sarcastic epistles of the times of Dryden and Pope." Poe even sees a following of "the most trivial points"—"the old forms of punctuation, the turns of phraseology, the tricks of rhythm, the arrangement of the paragraphs." It is probable that he also knew the Art of Sinking in Poetry, and that he learned


75. The satire in which Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot collaborated. This point will be further considered in Chapter VI.
from it, that the use of magnifying and diminishing figures would produce an
effect of bathos. Poe applied this criticism to Drake's poem To a Friend
"Stanza the fourth, although beginning nobly, concludes with that very common
exemplification of the bathos, the illustrating natural objects of beauty or
grandeur by references to the tinsel of artificiality". He also uses the same


principle in his criticism of The Fall of Niagara, by John J.C. Brainerd. That


poet, it seems, had compared the majestic fall of the cataract to water poured
from the hand of the Deity. "The third line embodies an absurd and impossible,
not to say, a contemptible image. We are called upon to conceive a similarity
between the continuous downward sweep of Niagara and the momentary splashing of
some definite and of course trifling quantity of water from a hand; for,
although it is the hand of the Deity himself which is referred to, the mind is
irresistibly led by the word 'poured from his hollow hand' to that idea which
has been customarily attached to such a phrase.---Thus bathos is inevitable."

78. Other references to bathos, Forke, vol. 2, p. 95; vol. 1, p. 306.

Poe also knew Pope's art of versification, and there is reason to suppose that
the writer of the Fine Arts article had the same knowledge. Two years before
the publication of the article on Fine Arts, Poe spoke of Pope's understanding
of countertbalancing fluctuations that have been used for the relief of monotone.


He gave several examples from the Dunciad to show that Pope made free use of
this to produce the metrical effect of equalization. It will be remembered that
this connection of music with proportion was noted as an identity of critical
views between Poe and the author of the Fine Arts article. It is therefore con­
ceivable that the student in the Philadelphia art gallery, having already shown
himself a student of Pope, may have derived some part of his idea of the connec­
tion between music and proportion from Pope also.

Quite as convincing, however, as the identity of criticism in establish­
ing Poe's authorship to the *Half Hour in the Academy of Fine Arts*, is his
account of his contributions to the magazine in which it was published. Burton,
the chief editor, had accused him, it seems, of supplying only two or three
pages of manuscript a month. Poe replied by tabulating month by month the num­
ber of pages that he wrote. He overestimated, however, the number of his pages


by nine, making the total number 132 instead of 123. Poe's larger count than
the tabulated list actually allows, admits the possibility of his having

81. Ibid., p. 163. The 123 pages is quoted as being the correct number.

evidence is contained in the same letter to Burton. The Fine Arts article was
written in August, 1839, the early part of Poe's association with *The Gentleman's
Magazine*, and it was this early period that Poe refers to as having written
long articles. "Upon the whole, I am not willing to admit that you have greatly
overpaid me. That I did not do four times as much for the magazine as I did
was your own fault. At first I wrote long articles which you deemed inadmiss­
ible, and never did I suggest any to which you had not some immediate and

82. decided objection." The fact that Burton "deemed" the long article "inadmissibl
need not, it would seem, preclude their having been published, since the article in question was signed with a pseudonym.

82. Ibid., p. 166.
83. By a Philadelphian.

A reasonable conclusion following this consideration of the article on the Fine Arts, may possibly be that, owing to the identity of criticism existing between Poe and the writer of the article, the fact that the art student was also a literary critic, the evidence that Pope was a common interest, and Poe's testimony that he wrote more for Burton's Magazine than would seem from the account that was given, it would seem the art student and Poe were the same person. It may further be concluded that Poe was finding principles in the drama and in the fine arts to improve his standard of literary criticism.
CHAPTER IV

UNITY IN PHILOSOPHIC TERMS

Poe's interest in philosophy was an added influence on his literary art. By this study he enlarged and strengthened his comprehension of the principle of unity—the principle which, as has been shown, he had found explained to a certain extent in Blackwood, and further elaborated in the drama.

Current literary criticism was doubtless one source from which Poe drew the idea that philosophy was an important factor in attaining excellence in writing. He may have been familiar with A.W. von Schlegel's suggestion that


the principle of unity as applied to literature was best sought for in a system of metaphysics. A fuller development of the idea, there is reason to believe,

2. Schlegel, p. 244, Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.

he found in his readings of both Wordsworth and Coleridge. It becomes, then, a matter of moment to attempt to say to how great an extent Poe knew the critical opinions of writers of his time. First of all is the testimony of his own reference to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Professor Prescott has pointed out that Poe had an early knowledge of Wordsworth's Prefaces to the Lyrical Ballads.


He shows that Poe, evidently in a spirit of hostility, quoted in the Letter to B


certain passages from the Prefaces. A further investigation, however, reveals
other instances of Poe's early indebtedness to Wordsworth. His early announce-
ment that popularity is no test of literary merit bears a striking resemblance
to Wordsworth's long discussion of the subject in his essay *Poetry as a Study.*

London, 1876) vol. 11, p. 129. The date of this essay is 1815. Poe could,
therefore, have been familiar with it in an earlier edition.

He took Wordsworth's standpoint that the sale of a book was no proof of its
value as a literary production. In his answer to Theodore Fay, the author of
Norman Leslie, the popularity of whose book he had ridiculed, Poe thus states

6. Theodore Fay was one of the editors of the *New York Mirror.* Poe considered
Fay's book to be, as he says, the very worst book ever published, and he
doubtless thought its popularity confirming testimony of the truth of

Wordsworth's argument: "Mr. Fay wishes us to believe that the sale of a book is
the proper test of its merit. To save time and trouble we will believe it, and
are prepared to acknowledge as a consequence of the theory that the novel of
Norman Leslie is not at all comparable to the *Memoirs of Davy Crockett* or the
popular lyric of Jim Crow." Poe appears to have found another passage from the

7. *S.L.M.*, vol. 2, p. 340. Other references to Poe's idea that popularity
was no test of excellence: *Review of Charles O'Malley.* (Works, vol. 4, p. 88)
*Review of Dickens' Barnaby Rudge.* (Works, vol. 4, p. 40.) This point is
more fully developed in a later chapter.

Prefaces suggestive. This passage deals with Wordsworth's distinction between
the fancy and the imagination. Wordsworth, praising the advantages of the
imaginative or indefinite element in poetry over those of the fanciful, con-
siders it a poetic excellence not to limit the range of thought by any definite
imagery. "Having to speak of stature, she (Imagination) does not tell you
that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was
twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled
those of Teneriffe or Atlas; because these, if they were a million times as high, are bounded." Poe also sees the advantages of the indefinite element in

8. It has already been shown that for this principle Poe is undoubtedly indebted to readings of Lessing's Laocoon. (Cf. Chapter III.) But he is apparently also indebted to Wordsworth's Essay, Of Poetry as Observation and Description. (Cf. Wordsworth's Prose Works, vol. 2, p. 141.)

poetry. His discussion in his review of Drake's Culprit Fay appears to follow


in idea, Wordsworth's discussion; in certain places one can even detect a verbal similarity. For example, in attempting to show that fancy and not imagination has prompted Drake to employ definite imagery and that the poet has sacrificed much beauty by his choice, he says: "Their mistake (meaning the mistake of those who had admired the poem chiefly on the grounds of what they thought to be its imaginative quality) would be precisely analogous to that of many a schoolboy who admires the imagination displayed in Jack the Giant-Killer, and is finally rejoiced at discovering his own imagination to surpass that of the author, since the monsters destroyed by Jack are only about forty feet in height, and he himself has no trouble in imagining some of one hundred and forty feet."

From Poe's very evident acquaintance with the Prefaces, it is not surprising, then, that we find him considering with Wordsworth their main thesis; namely, that of the connection between philosophy and literature. Indeed, nowhere is his attentive study of the Prefaces so evidenced as in his agreements and disagreements with this point. His growing belief that poetry, in a sense, rises from a ground-work of metaphysics, a sense which this chapter will endeavor to explain, has at its start a positive denial of the connection. In 1831, he bitterly protests against Wordsworth's doctrine that poetry is a study. He says: "As for Wordsworth, I have no faith in him.---He was to blame in wearing
away his youth in contemplation with the end of poetizing in his manhood. With the increase of his judgment the light which should have made it apparent has faded away. — Against the subtleties which would make poetry a study — not a passion — it becomes the metaphysician to reason — but the poet to protest."

10. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 502. Prescott explains that the Letter to B— was first prefixed to Poe's poems issued in 1831. The letter is dated "West Point, 1831". It is reprinted in the S.L.M. of 1836, at the volume and page given in this note. Prescott considers that the Letter to B—is a protest against Wordsworth's contention that poetry is a study. (Cf. Notes to Prescott's work, p. 324.)

"Learning", he adds, "has little to do with the imagination — intellect with the passions — or age with poetry." At this time he expresses his conviction that poetic fervor cannot be understood by the cool judgment of a critic. But in 1836 he appears to reverse his opinion, and in an article entitled Genius he

11. S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 297, Genius. Dr. John W. Robertson in his bibliographical study of Poe, suggests the probability of Poe's authorship of the article entitled Genius. He points out that the Editor's note appended to Genius is similar to that which follows The Letter to B—, which Poe had published in the S.L.M. In both these notes, the editor apologizes for the opinions expressed, saying that of course he cannot be held responsible for them. Had the similarity ended with these notes, Dr. Robertson adds, it would be impossible to assign to Poe the authorship of Genius. But he thinks that he can see in it marks characteristic of Poe; the article dealing, as he says, with the definition of poetry and "containing equally pronounced ideas as to its true object." (Robertson, M.D., John W., Edgar A. Poe, A Study. San Francisco, 1891., p. 251.) But additional proof of Poe's authorship can doubtless be presented. In the first place the article appears to mark a turning point in Poe's attitude toward study. Poe's work of 1831 maintained that a poet wrote only through inspiration; his reviews, beginning 1835, assert that a poet owed his excellence to arduous toil (S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 330, Culprit Fay.) It shows, too, an attitude toward Coleridge differing from that in 1831 and similar to that in 1856. (S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 330). Corroborating evidence is likewise found in Poe's definition of the word industria. It has, he says, a more variable meaning than is usually given it, a mental rather than a physical exertion, and really signifies what moderns attach to the term genius. (S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 392, Review of Anthon's Sallust.)
Genius, Poe says in 1836, is not wholly a question of natural talent or of "strong inclination". It is rather a decided preference for any study or pursuit, which enables its possessor to give the close and unwearied attention necessary to insure success. When this constancy of purpose is wanting, the brightest natural talents will give little aid in acquiring literary or scientific eminence; and where it exists in any considerable degree, it is rare to find one so ill endowed with common sense as not to gain a respectable standing." He quotes the words of many master writers testifying to their dissatisfaction with their first literary efforts and to their arduous attempts to attain greater perfection. Moliere, he thinks, gives testimony that speaks for the need of a writer's painstaking effort. "Voila, s'ecrit Moliere, en interrompant son ami a cet endroit, voila la plus belle verite que vous ayes jamais dite. Je ne suis pas du nombre do ces esprits sublime dont vous parlez, mais tel que je suis, je n'ai rien fait de ma vie dont je sois veritablement content!" Pascal, too, he describes as spending much time in "revising and correcting what to others appeared from the first almost too perfect for amendment." And Gray was "never content with the polish which repeated revisions were able to give his works." He cites the conclusion of Boileau's Second Satire, saying it is appropriate to his purpose. "Un sot, en ecrivant, fait tout avec plaisir----." Poe is apparently satisfied that writing is a matter of studied effort; that, to borrow in part the testimony of those whose words he was quoting, it needs "close and unwearied attention". He, therefore, concludes that successful writing must be viewed with philosophic bearings, and to this end, it can be shown he sought help from various sources.
Not only from current opinions of literary critics did Poe learn to connect philosophy with literature, but there is reason to believe that he was also indebted to his study of the writings of philosophers of his own time and of periods preceding. Twice in his article *Genius* he shows that he is familiar with Dugald Stewart. "The following quotation", he says, in the article referred to, "is from the seventh chapter, sixth section of Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,*" and in characterizing the composition of Robert Hall, he again has reference to Stewart. "I am tormented with a desire to write better than I can, ' said Robert Hall in a letter to a friend; and yet his works are said by Dugald Stewart (himself an admirable writer in points of style) to combine the beauties of Addison, Johnson, and Burke, without their defects, and to contain the purest specimens of the English language." In an editorial note Poe quotes from Stewart: "Dugald Stewart justly observes that by confining our ambition to pursue the truth with modesty and candor, and by learning to value our acquisitions only so far as they contribute to make us wiser and happier, we may perhaps be obliged to sacrifice the temporary admiration of the common dispensers of literary fame; but, we may rest assured, it is thus only we can hope to make real progress in knowledge or to enrich the world with useful inventions." In a note to the same editorial article, Poe gives the

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


*Philosophy of the Human Mind* as the source of the following quotation: "It requires some courage, indeed, as Helvetius has remarked, to remain ignorant of
those useless subjects which are generally valued'; but it is a courage neces-
ary to men who love the truth, and who aspire to establish a permanent reputation.

16. The passage may be found on page 16 of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

Poe, likewise, was familiar with Locke. It has been already noted that he may

17. It is an interesting fact that Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding was
the first book published by Harper Brothers. The book, says the S.L.M. of
September, 1839, vol. 5, p. 629, was eminently successful and thus afforded
a happy prognostic of the future career of the publishing firm.

have been guided to Locke from acquaintance with the Blackwood sensation story
based on experience. He appears to derive from a study of Locke certain sugges-
tions concerning the origin of ideas, certain notions that are applicable to
literary technique. Though a second-hand knowledge of Locke may have come to
him through the pages of Dugald Stewart, whose work is filled with Lockian
philosophy, there are indications that point to Poe's first-hand knowledge of
that philosopher. He says himself that he has read Locke's Essay on Education:
"In the perusal of Locke's Essay on Education a short time since, I noticed the
word 'guess' made use of three times in our way. In section twenty-eight he
says 'Once in four and twenty hours is enough and nobody, I guess, will think
it too much.' Was John Locke a Yankee?" Poe also appears to be familiar with

18. S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 388. This passage appeared during Poe's editorship and,
since it forms a part of Verbal Criticisms and is unsigned, it seems only
reasonable to conclude that Poe was the author.

Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. He speaks confidently of Hazlitt's
being a just criticism of that work. In another instance, Poe claims a know-


ledge of Locke's treatment of the Memory. A further indication that he knew Locke from a first-hand reading, is the fact that he gives Locke credit for the principle of personal identity which he makes the thesis of *Morella*, one of the tales of the Folio Club. "That identity which is termed personal, Mr. Locke, I think truly defines to consist in the sameness of a rational being. And since by person we understand an intelligent essence having reason, and since there is a consciousness which always accompanies thinking, it is this which we call ourselves—thereby distinguishing us from other beings that think, and giving us our personal identity." He appears, moreover, in his article *Genius*, to summarize certain passages from Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. The following parallel columns will make this point clear.

|-------------------------------------|-------------|

"Our senses do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them.—This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses and derived by them to the understanding I call *Sensation*. Secondly, the other fountain, from which experience furniseth the understanding with idea, is the perception of the operation of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations when the soul comes to reflect on and consider to furnish the understanding with another set of ideas which could not be had from things without, and such are Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing, and all the different actings of our own minds which we, being conscious of and observing in ourselves do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas, as we do from bodies affecting our senses. As I call the other sensation, so I call this *Reflection*—the"
ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself. By reflection, then—I would be understood to mean that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them; by reason whereof there comes to be ideas of these operations in the understanding. These two, I say, viz. external material things, as the objects of sensation, and the operations of our own minds within as the objects of reflection; are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings. The term operations here I use in a large sense as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought.

Would you have a man reason well, you must use him to it betimes, exercise his mind in observing the connection of ideas, and following them in train. Nothing does this better than mathematics.---For, in all sorts of reasoning, every single argument should be managed as a mathematical demonstration; the connection and dependence of ideas should be followed till the mind is brought to the source on which it bottoms."

Poe thus seems to conclude that knowledge originally comes from the senses.

This study which Poe made of philosophy apparently led him to consider not only the presence of the philosophic element in poetry, but also the relation which the two bear to each other. In other words, his study of philosophy appears to resolve itself into a consideration of the distinction between subject-matter and technique.

Poe disagrees with Wordsworth's view of connecting philosophy with subject-matter. He understands Wordsworth to think that metaphysics in its connection with poetry means instruction. Working from this basis, he began in 1831,


an attack on didacticism—an attack which, it will later be shown, he kept up consistently throughout his literary career. He likewise disagreed with
Wordsworth in the view that technique springs from subject-matter. He did not comprehend, in this early period, the philosophical import of Wordsworth's subject matter chosen from "real life." He says, in direct contradiction to the

validity of Wordsworth's experiment: "The dull scenes of real life can never be suffered to chill under the ardor of a romantic imagination. And as the poet finds truth too plain and unadorned to satisfy his enthusiastic fancy, he is impelled to seek subjects and scenery of a more faultless nature and brighter hues than this world affords." Though, as has been shown, he agreed with Locke that argument, or the combination and comparison of abstract ideas, is derived from the senses, he yet does not in this early period of philosophic study connect the point with the subject-matter. Instead, he stresses philosophy chiefly in its bearing of technique; Coleridge doubtless being one influence that led him to this view.

In favor of the supposition that from Coleridge came the suggestion of connecting philosophy mainly with the technical side of writing, is the evidence of Poe's critical work of 1836. He speaks in his review of Drake's Culprit Fay
of the value in the production of a fine poem of the "powers of Causality". He is strongly of the opinion that Coleridge possessed this power in abundance, this "metaphysical acumen". Since he could not in any way have considered the subject matter of The Ancient Mariner or of Christabel to be philosophical, he must have meant that Coleridge was metaphysical from the standpoint of technique. In the review of the Book of Gems he again reveals himself a student of


Coleridge's attitude toward philosophy and literary technique. Donne and Cowley, he says, are not metaphysical poets in the sense in which Coleridge is. With them, ethics were the end; with Coleridge, ethics are the means. "The poet of the Creation wished by highly artificial verse to inculcate what he considered moral truth—he of the Ancient Mariner to infuse the Poetic Sentiment through channels suggested by mental analysis. The one finished by complete failure what he commenced in the grossest misconception—the other, by a path which could not possibly lead him astray, arrived at a certainty and intensity of triumph which is not the less brilliant and glorious because concentrated among the very few who have the power to perceive it." And, further, with an apparent effort to comprehend more fully the bearing of philosophy on technique in writing he launches forth into a study of the question from the pages of the Biographia Literaria.

In the first place, Poe's reading can be traced to the place in the Biographia Literaria where Coleridge explains the idea of unity in variety. It has already been noted by Professor Prescott that Poe's definition of the imagination may, perhaps, be an "echo" of Coleridge's definition of the same faculty.
In idea, at least, as the following parallel columns indicate, the two appear to be strikingly similar.

**Biographia Literaria—Coleridge**
P. 144

"The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am."

**Review of Culprit Fay—Poe**
S.L.M., vol. 2, p. 298

"Imagination is, possibly in man, a lesser degree of the creative power in God."

This definition, which we may grant Poe knew, was given by Coleridge in summary of a previous explanation of a principle back of the working of this mental faculty. It is reasonable to think that Poe, knowing the summary, would in all probability read the preceding pages leading up to the summary, and would, therefore, have been familiar with this discussion of unity. Another fact leads to the supposition that Poe had an early knowledge of these pages in the Biographia Literaria. In his Letter to B— he quotes a passage occurring in Coleridge's discussion of the point in question. Poe would, therefore, have been familiar with the principle of unity in variety as it was explained by Coleridge. Granting this knowledge on Poe's part, there is reason to believe that he could consider with Coleridge the principle back of the imaginative faculty. He would have found it explained to be the working of two contrary counteracting forces, first as an abstract idea suggested as Coleridge says from astronomical law, and
second, as a fact in our mental life. The significance of this knowledge that


we are doubtless justified in attributing to Poe, will appear in a later chapter.

33. See Chapter on Science.

The application of a philosophical understanding of unity in variety to

literary technique was, doubtless, a further point in Poe's study of Coleridge.

In the first place, he could well have found, during his study of the pages in

question, Coleridge's promise to explain the bearing of the principle on criti-

icism in the fine arts. He could, also, have read the fulfillment of this promis-

34. *Biographia Literaria*, p. 128.

35. Coleridge clearly expresses in the following passage the action of the two

counteracting forces in terms of literary technique. "The office of phil-

osophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the

privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself, constantly aware that dis-

tinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any

truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts, and this

is the technical process of philosophy. But having done so, we must then

restore them in our conceptions to the unity in which they actually co-

exist; and this is the result of philosophy. A poem contains the same

elements as a prose composition; the difference, therefore, must consist

in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object

proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference


indications point to the fact that Poe made an original research for the pur-

pose of enlarging his understanding of the relation of philosophy to the art of

writing. There is, first, the testimony of his very probable knowledge of

36. At the end of Chapter XII, *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge announces that
he intends, in his explanation of the imagination, "to go back much further than Mr. Wordsworth's subject required or permitted." At the end of Chapter XIII, he says he has been deterred by a very "judicious letter" (which he publishes in full) from giving all the explanation he had intended. He will, he says, give only the "main result" reserving "for that future publication a detailed prospectus of which the reader will find at the close of the second volume." The editor adds in a footnote: "Mr. Coleridge did not issue this prospectus." (Biographia Literaria, p. 144.)

have wished to supplement Coleridge's study. Another indication is the fact that a large body of material in the Southern Literary Messenger appears during the time of Poe's editorship which bears evidences of a more or less systematic search having been made into philosophy. That the student conducting this research may have been Poe is a likely supposition, since the articles in general follow the line of interest which I have just shown to be Poe's; namely, that of the relation of philosophy to technique. In addition to this reason is the fact that some of these articles are signed P., and one in particular bears the stamp of the editor's note.

This original research shows itself in an evident effort, on the part of the student, to extend his knowledge of classical writers. A list of Greek authors, chronically arranged, appears in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1836.


It is signed P. and gives information concerning the titles and number of works extant of Greek writers, beginning with Homer. A second list, citing editions of the classics "fittest to enter a literary collection of the Roman and Greek authors" also appears in the Southern Literary Messenger of the same year. Poe had, without a doubt, called for the compiling of this list, since a letter indicating that it was in answer to the editor's request prefaces the article.


39.
39. Poe was Editor. The letter is signed E.W.J., South Carolina College. The information contained in the list appears to be drawn largely from Brunet's Manual, which is one of the sources mentioned in the article.

The student advances in his effort to acquire a knowledge of classical literature as is shown by a number of short contributions all bearing on the subject. One short piece, entitled Greek Song, bears the signature P., and reveals an interest in versification which, as the following chapter will show, was preeminently an engrossing subject with Poe. Another piece, Palæstina, signed P., contains references to Tacitus. Pinakidia reveals Poe in his interest in classical literature. At least thirty-three of the selections in this compilation deal with classical subjects. Even the name of this collection indicates a leaning toward the classics. Poe says: "We have chosen the heading Pinakidia or Tablets. It was used for a somewhat similar purpose by Dionysius—-". In addition to these pieces which from their signatures are unmistakably Poe's, there are six other pieces unsigned that, owing to their connection with the classics, might


41. See Chapter on Science.

42. Professor Harrison has admitted this piece into his edition of Poe's Works, vol. , p. .


be considered as either revealing the Editor's choice in contributed matter, or, even as proceeding from his pen. We may doubtless be justified in naming Poe as the student who was investigating classical literature.

Poe's interest in classical learning appears in this original research to limit itself to philosophy of the ancients. There is reason to believe that he wrote three articles entitled *Philosophy of Antiquity*. In favor of this supposition may be cited Poe's known tendency to philosophize on any or all subjects. Of some importance, too, may be the fact that after Poe withdrew from the editorship of the Messenger, the last number of the series of the *Philosophy of Antiquity* was made to occupy an insignificant place in the magazine. Important evidence is also contained in the similarity which the thesis of these articles bears to Poe's known work of the same period. His critical reviews of 1835 and 1836 were largely occupied, it will be remembered, with the literary principle of unity. He had used Schlegel's unity of effect and unity of interest as criteria for praising or condemning the work that came under his notice. The author of *Philosophy of Antiquity* also dwells on unity. It will be shown that he considers unity as a principle of the universe in the way that Pythagoras, Xenophon, Zeno, and other ancient philosophers explain it. While he gives Schlegel, Tennemann, Tredmann, and Lempriere as his sources, it appears from comparing the articles in question with Tennemann's *Manual of the History of Philosophy*, that that philosopher furnished him with practically all the
The starting point of philosophy was the question concerning the origin and the elementary principle of the world."

"According to Thrales the principle of the world is water. He is said to have been induced to adopt this in consequence of some partial experiments. There was, besides, another principle, prime mover of all things, which he called 'nous'. To him we are indebted for that best and most ancient of maxims, Know thyself.

"Friend and townsman of Thrales was Anaximander. He lit his lamp at the same light and cast its blaze on the same subjects. His point de depart is infinity, which he surmained all-containing and divine without determining it more precisely. Perpetual changes of earth and of things can take place in infinity. These were his principles, but from them he developed multitudes of doctrines which it is not now important to examine. He bent his attention to astronomy, and nearly similar were the doctrines of Pherecydes of Syros. He called his trinity of principles God, time and matter. He attempted to explain animated bodies and matter. He considered the soul as imperishable.
be immortal. Anaximander and Pherecydes were the first philosophers who committed their thoughts and opinions to writing."

"Numbers were defined by the Pythagoreans to be the principles of all things; this school being disposed by their mathematical studies to make the system of external things subordinate to that of numbers, agreeably to their axiom. Numbers are equal and unequal. The elementary principle of the latter being unity, that of the former duality. Unequal numbers are limited and complete; equal ones unlimited and incomplete. The abstract principle, then, of all perfection is unity, and limitation that of imperfection, duality and indeterminateness.

The ten elementary numbers which are represented in the Tetractys, and which embrace a complete system of numeration, contain also the elements of a perfect system of nature."

"The Pythagoreans, like their predecessors, considered the world to be a harmonious whole consisting, according to a system of Decades, of ten great bodies revolving around a common centre, agreeably to harmonious laws; whence the music of the spheres, and their explanation of the symbolical lyre of Apollo. The centre, or central fire (the sun) in other words, the seat of Jupiter, is the most perfect object in nature, the principle of heat, and consequently of life; penetrating and vivifying all things. According to the same system, the stars also are divinities; and even men have a sort of consanguinity with the Divine Being. They considered the daemons as a race intermediate between gods and men, and attributed to them a considerable agency in dreams and divination; always, however, assigning as ultimate causes of all things, destiny and the deity. They ennobled their notion of the deity

Anaximander and Pherecydes were the two first philosophers who wrote their doctrines out."

"So deeply was he (Pythagoras) impressed with the importance of numbers, that he imagined all nature regulated by them, or as he expressed himself 'things are an imitation of numbers', which he divided into equal (artioi) and unequal (perittoi). Unity is the principle of the first, and duality of the second. Unity he assumes as his emblem of completeness, as the number corresponding to the Deity in the physical world, as the representative of the sun, and in his moral code it stood for virtue. Duality is a result of unity and is incomplete. It is the emblem of imprecision, and is in all things the opposity of unity. By combinations of the unity and duality were formed the tetractys, in which all Nature's course was traced."

"Pythagoras, like his predecessors, considered the world as a harmonious whole (its very name was Kosmos or order) subdivided into imperfect parts, according to his tetractys, each revolving around a common center, and following harmonious laws. From their motion he derived the music of the spheres. The central fire, the sun, he called the watch-house of Jove—the most perfect thing in the physical world, the source of heat, and first cause of all vitality. The stars, according to his theory, are emanations of the sun, and are divinities. The soul of man, adopting the Promethean fable, is likewise an emanation of the sun. Man's soul is therefore divine.---An important role in this philosophy was performed by demons but the prime mover of all things was God and (ha-te) his will.
by the attribution of certain moral qualities such as truth and beneficence.

**Doctrine of the Soul**

The soul is also a number, and an emanation from the central fire, resembling the constellations to which it is allied by its immortality and its constant activity; capable of combining with any body, and compelled by destiny to pass successively through several. This theory of the *metempsychosis*, borrowed (it is probable) from the Egyptians, Pythagoras appeared to have combined with the doctrine of moral Retribution. Thus to the Pythagoreans we are indebted for the first attempt, however rude, at an analysis of the operations and faculties of the mind. The Reason and Understanding ( ), they placed in the brain; the appetites and the will ( ) in the heart.

p. 65

The doctrine of Pythagoras had great influence with the most eminent philosophers of Greece (and in particular with Plato) from the excitement, direction, and method it communicated to their speculations. Subsequently, however, it became the fashion to call Pythagorean all that Plato, Aristotle, and others after them had added to the doctrines of Pythagoras, even opinions which they themselves had started; and to this medley of doctrines of various origin was super-added a mass of superstitions."

p. 66

"The philosophers whom we have hitherto considered, started from experience; and, conformably with the testimony of the senses, assumed a substratum the multiplicity of changeable things of which they endeavored to trace the origin and connection with the eternal. Now, however, a school arose at Elea, in Italy, that ventured to pronounce experience a mere appearance, because they found creation incomprehensible, and they endeavored to

Pythagoras first ennobled the idea of the Deity by attributing to it the moral properties of truth and good will to his creatures.

The soul is an emanation of the Deity, therefore it cannot perish. What, then, becomes of it? As an answer to this question, he adopted the *metempsychosis*.

To him we are indebted for the first Psychological analysis which is this: first reason, or (nous), second, intelligence or (phrenes)—the seat of these two is in the brain; third and last, the appetites (thumos) which exist in the breast.

The doctrines of Pythagoras had a vast influence over the most eminent philosophers of Greece, over Plato particularly, by the road it had opened to thought, by the direction of his views, and choice of his objects. In later times they attributed to the old pythagoreans all that Plato, Aristotle, and others after them had written. And to this heterogeneous mass of opinions, they added crowds of superstitious ideas."

S.L.M., vol. 3, p. 158

"Heretofore philosophy has been empirical. Its object was to show the connection of the contingent and variable with the absolute and invariable. We are about to behold at Elea or Valia, in Magna Graecia, a school whose first dogma was that experience was vanity, and perception useless, because they give no idea of change, which is one of the
determine the nature of things as the one sole substance, merely from motions of the understanding. According to that view, the one immoveable esse is the only true being. The idealistic pantheism was developed by four remarkable thinkers, who, as regards their personal history, are but little known to us.

Xenophanes of Colophon was the contemporary of Pythagoras, and about the year 536, established himself at Elea or Velia, in Magna Graecia. According to him all things that really exist are eternal and immutable. On this principle he looked upon all nature as subject to the same law of unity. God, as being the most perfect essence, is eternally One; unalterable, and always consistent with himself.

The same philosopher (on the principle of experience) proposed to explain the multifariousness of variable essences by assuming, as primitive elements, water and earth. He appears to have hesitated between the opposite systems of empiricism and rationalism, and bewailed the incertitude which he regarded as the condition of humanity.

Parmenides of Elea who travelled with Zeno to Athens about 460, enlarged upon the above system. He maintained that the Reason alone was capable of recognizing Truth; that the sense could afford only a deceptive appearance of it. From this principle he deduced a two-fold system of true and apparent knowledge; the one resulting from the reason, the other from the senses. His poem on Nature treated of both these systems; but the fragments of it which have come down to us, make us better acquainted with the former than the latter. In the former, Parmenides begins with the idea of pure existence which he identifies with thought and cognition—and concludes that non-existence cannot be possible; that all things which exist are one and identical; and consequently that all movement or change exists only in appearance. But appearance itself depends upon an unavoidable representation. To conditions of all things. It attributed the existence of the universe to intelligence, which was considered as the only thing real—an antique Berkeleyism. This pantheism, or identification of God and his creation, was formed by four philosophers of whom we are about to treat.

Xenophanes of Colophon—maintained that all that really exists is eternal and immutable; that the world is a harmonious whole; God to be the most perfect of all things—infinité, illimited, and like unto nothing of earth.

Like his predecessors, to explain multiplicity and variety, he adopted the elemental theory. His causes were earth and water. He seems to have been undecided about the systems of empiricism and rationalism, and was wont to complain that uncertainty was the lot of man.

Parmenides developed the same system with more precision. According to him, reason is the only criterion of truth and reality. The senses, on the contrary, give but a fleeting shadow of the truth. From this dogma, he derived the existence of a double system of knowledge—one true and the other His poem on nature treated of one of these systems, but more particularly of the former.

In the derivation of the first system of knowledge, Parmenides has his point de départ in pure being, which he identifies with knowledge and thought, and concludes that want of existence, thought and knowledge (pure) are equally impossible; that all that exists is one and identical; also, that which exists is eternal,
account for this appearance conveyed by the senses, Parmenides assumed the existence of two principles, that of heat or light (etheral fire) and that of cold or darkness (the earth).---.

Melissus of Samos adopted (possibly from the teaching of the two last philosophers) the same system of idealism, but characterized by greater boldness in his way of stating it, and in some respects, by profounder views.

Zeno, of Elea, an ardent lover of liberty, travelled with his friend and teacher, Parmenides, to Athens about the LXXX Olympiad, and appeared in the character of a defender of the idealism of the Eleatic school, which could not but seem to people at large, strange and absurd; endeavoring with great acuteness, to prove that the system of empiric realism is still more absurd.

First, because, if we admit that there is a plurality of real essences, we must admit them to possess qualities which are mutually destructive of each other; similitude, for example, and dissimilitude; unity and plurality; movement and repose. Secondly, we cannot form an idea of the divisibility of an extended object without a contradiction being involved; for the parts must be either simple or compounded; in the first of which cases the body has no unity, being at the same time finite and infinite. Thirdly, innumerable difficulties result (according to Zeno) from the supposition of motion in space.

"By thus opposing reason to experience, Zeno opened the way to without beginning and variation, filling all space and illimited; and consequently he concluded that matter is impossible. This consequence was the connecting link between his physics and metaphysics.

"By opposing rationalism and empiricism, he may be considered as a
scepticism; at the same time laying
the foundations of a system of
logic.

The speculations of the Eleatae
were subsequently pursued in the
school of Megara. They did not fail
to meet with opponents, but their
real fallacy was not so readily dis­
covered. Plato, by making a due
distinction between ideas and their
objects, approached the nearest to
the truth."

p. 75

"Leucippus, a contemporary,
possibly also a disciple of Parmen­
dides, opposed the system of the Elea­
tae; which he unjustly accused of
contradicting itself by advancing
the exclusive and narrow doctrine of
, a doctrine which
agreeable to experience, maintained
the existence of motion and plurality.
He asserted also, the existence of a
matter filling all space, and con­
stituting the element of reality; by
the division of which we arrive at some­
thing indivisible--while at the
same time he taught the existence of a vacuum--; opposed to material
reality, yet possessing a certain
reality of its own, and endeavored
to account for the actual state of
the world by the union( ) and
the separation ( ) of
material reality, within the limits
of this void. Accordingly, the
elementary principles of this system
of materialism are the atoms, vacuum
and motion; and we recognize in it
none but corporeal essences. The
atoms, the ultimate elements of what
is real, are invariable, indivisible,
and imperceptible, owing to their
reality; they occupy space and possess
form infinitely diversified; those
which are round possessing also the
property of motion. It is by their com­
bination or separation (he continued)
that all things have their origin and
are brought to their dissolution;
their modifications—and properties
being determined by the order and
position ( ) of the atoms;

devotee of the skeptical code. In later
days this system was resumed at Megara,
and its popularity then and there was
not less than at the time and place of
its origin. It was not, however, ad­
mitted without controversy, but for
Plato was reserved the honor of unveil­
ing its errors, all of which spring
from the confusion, by the author, of
ideas and their objects."
and takes place in consequence of a law of absolute necessity."

The writer of the articles, as the text shows, concludes that the point which these philosophers have in common is that of unity. However widely these systems varied, he says, whether they belonged to the empirical school or whether they came under the head of the idealists, they still saw unity as the elementary principle of existence.


The thesis of The Philosophy of Antiquity agrees, too, with The Classics which we felt justified in attributing to Poe; the latter article containing a long discussion of unity, philosophically considered. "The eternal spirit of the universe", says the author in this article, "is a beauty and unity of design."


Of not less value in assigning to Poe an interest in ancient philosophy and in thinking him the author of The Philosophy of Antiquity is the existence of an argument favoring philosophic study that runs consistently throughout the body of material under consideration. The general agreement seems to be that many advantages attend the concentration of the pursuit of philosophic truth. In the first place, several of the articles cite the need from the point of view of the limited time allotted to human life. The editorial article, entitled Selection in Reading, warns the reader that, owing to the brief space of his existence, he should "confine his ambitions to pursue the truth with modesty and candor." "The Classics discusses the same point in length. The ancient

50. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 141, Editorial Note Selection in Reading.
philosophers, says this article, understood that philosophic truth was the "most important and natural inquiry which would present itself to a being of limited powers of knowledge and enjoyment, and whose existence, at most, is brief." In the second place, the pursuit of philosophic truth is said to develop the spiritual life. The value of our acquisitions in knowledge, says the editorial article Selection in Reading, is in proportion to their power to make us wiser and happier. An elaboration of the same subject is in The Classics, the article asserting that ancient philosophies furnish the best means of attaining happiness. These means are rules of virtue, "cold, cautious inductions of philosophy", but the "eloquence of Plato breathed into them, radiant and impressive arguments to exalt our spiritual beings". The opening words of the first article on the Philosophy of Antiquity may also have a similar import. Philosophy is there spoken of as a boon for which modern times have every cause to be grateful. From the foregoing evidence, it may not be unreasonable to suppose that Poe was the author of the articles The Philosophy of Antiquity, and that he was the student who was interesting himself in ancient philosophies.

I shall now try to show that Poe's interest in classical learning was again narrowed, this time into what would seem a profound and concentrated understanding of unity; not unity in the general sense one might have inferred...
during the course of the proof brought forward to establish him as a student of ancient philosophy and the author of the articles mentioned; but unity in the sense of unvarying law, a law that governs the universe, by what may be called an approach to a scientific method.

It is of special interest to observe how Poe works out in this early period of study what seemed to him a reasonable understanding of unvarying law in the universe; for, at this beginning of philosophic research, he shows himself laying the ground-work for his later disposal of the matter in *Eureka*. In the next chapter it will be seen that the doctrine he now encounters among ancient philosophers he uses as, in his belief, did LaPlace, for an hypothesis on which to build with as much scientific certainty as he was able.

55. Cf. next chapter.

It will be remembered that Poe had already met Coleridge's transcended interpretation of unity and variety. He had found Coleridge placing most emphasis on these forces as they exist in the human intelligence; Coleridge asserting that they lie back of and explain the creative imagination; likening them, with terms borrowed from astronomy, to centrifugal and centripetal forces in nature. He had found, moreover, that Coleridge had declared his system came from that of Plato, but was "Plato purified". He now transfers his study from Coleridge's explanation, which as was said at a former point in this chapter he doubtless found unfinished, and considers the question, as we have seen his study of Tennemann shows, at first hand with Pythagora, Plato, Leucippus, and other ancient philosophers. He is evidently impressed with Pythagoras' doctrine that the world is a harmonious whole—that its very name means *kosmos* or order. This unified whole, however, he finds Pythagoras saying, is subdivided into imperfect parts, each revolving around a common centre and following
harmonious laws. And the unvarying law displayed in this working of variety in uniformity is, he agrees with the ancient philosopher, fittingly described as the music of the spheres. He is likewise interested, he says, in the doctrine of

56. Cf. ante, n. 18.

Zeno. He quotes Tennemann to the effect that Zeno, the apologist for the Eleatic system, provides for the opposing forces of unity and variety, in that all entities are said to possess similarity and its opposite; unity and plurality; motion and repose. He considers also that the school of Leucippus is deserving of special notice, since its doctrine so nearly corresponds with the atomic theory of his own day. It will be seen in the following chapter that Leucippus has perhaps been strikingly suggestive to him in the idea of all atoms in the universe tending toward an ultimate indivisibility; for in Eureka he seems to think, apparently following Leucippus' doctrine, that this final indivisibility of atoms is a physical example of unity; and that the combination and separation of atoms in the course of their return to oneness, accounts for creation and destruction of worlds. But he speaks of Plato with most enthusiasm. "Plato was the philosopher", he says in The Classics, "whose beautiful conception of the spirit of the universe" was "at once so poetical and sublime." He dwells


with apparent delight on the order and system that Plato sees in the universe; quoting from The Republic, in his story of the Colloquy of Monos and Una, several passages on music as a method of Athenian education, and following the quotation by an explanation that, in his opinion, Plato meant by music not only its ordinary meaning, but creation in its widest sense; or, as he says in

58 Marginalia, proportion and adaptation generally. He is apparently convinced that
by giving the Platonic word the translation of proportion and not its usual meaning of music, the real sense of music of the spheres comes to light, and with it the Platonic sense of unvarying law that is working in the astronomical world. In the latter part of this chapter, it will be seen that Plato's doctrine of the Many and One, a principle than which in Poe's opinion no better example of variety in unity could be found, was suggestive to Poe as a literary principle. As a summary of Poe's appreciation of Plato, it may be well to quote his words from The Classics. Plato was "the author whose psychologic system presaged the Christian revelation as the morning twilight betokens the coming sun."

---


---

**CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY**

There is evidence pointing to the fact that Christian philosophy had an influence on Poe's literary art. In the article on The Classics he advises the study of Christian philosophy. In another instance he refers to Christian philosophy as the "truest of all philosophies". There is some indication that he was familiar with the Cambridge Platonists. From Dr. Henry More he quotes an argument on "true miracles". Of Thomas Burnet, the author of

---


62. Democratic Review, April, 1846, Marginalia.
Theoria Sacra, he appears to have some knowledge. He thinks with the critic in the Edinburgh Review that the continued mis-spelling of that philosopher's name by the editor of the book in which it appeared, betrayed an ignorance of the seventeenth century writer. Of Burnet, Poe doubtless had a better acquaintance than one might infer from the point just brought forth. He could have read in the Southern Literary Messenger of 1836, in a series of articles on fanciful theories of the universe, Burnet's theory rather fully explained. In a later chapter, the one concerned with Poe's scientific views, it is even suggested that Poe may himself have written the articles referred to. Should there be any truth in this supposition, he would then have had considerable knowledge of the philosopher in question. To Cambridge commentators, who have opened up the field of Platonist writers, especially to Parson and Parr, he acknowledges a debt of gratitude. Modern Christian philosophers were also known to Poe. Of Abraham Tucker, a Christian philosopher of the nineteenth century, he speaks with enthusiasm. Tucker is, he says, the one who of all modern philosophers best understood the meaning of Plato. Of Dr. Thomas Dick he appears to have
considerable knowledge. Referring the reader, as he does in one instance, to
the "excellent observations of Dr. Dick in his Christian Philosopher", he
testifies it would seem, to a more than casual acquaintance with that philosoph­
er's work. Somewhat later in this chapter it will be shown that Poe was
strikingly indebted to the writings of Dr. Thomas Dick. The Bridgewater Treatises

likewise appear to have engrossed Poe's attention. He outlines the plan and
conditions under which the Treatises were written. Paraphrasing Poe's account

of the plan, we find him saying in his review of :

Francis Henry, earl of Bridgewater, who died sometime in the beginning of the
year 1829, directed certain trustees mentioned in his Will to arrange for the
publication of one thousand copies of a work On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness
of God as Manifested in the Creation. Eight thousand pounds were to be invested
in public funds to be paid by the President of the Royal Society of London to
such a person or persons as he, the President, should appoint to write, print,
and publish the work. This work was to be illustrated by such reasonable arguments as, for instance, the variety and formation of God's creatures, the construction of the hand of man, discoveries ancient and modern, in arts, sciences and the whole extent of literature.

Apparently Poe followed with interest the series of articles which re-

70. *The Edinburgh Review*, vol. 58, p. 423, thus explains the issuing of a series of articles: "The late President of the Royal Society, Davies Gilbert, Esq., requested the assistance of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and of the Bishop of London in determining upon the best mode of carrying into effect the intention of the testator. Acting with their advice, Mr. Davies Gilbert appointed the following eight gentlemen to write separate treatises on the different branches of the subject as here stated.


On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Physical Condition of Man—John Kidd, M.D., F.R.S., Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford.


The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design—Sir Charles Bell, K.H., F.R.S.

On Animal and Vegetable Physiology—Peter Mar. Roget, M.D., Fellow of and Secretary to the Royal Society.

On Geology and Mineralogy—The Rev. William Buckland, D.D., F.R.S., Canon of Christ Church, and Professor of Geology in the University of Oxford.


On Chemistry, Meteorology and the Functions of Digestion—William Pront, M.D., F.R.S.

sulted from this plan. On one occasion he speaks of the appearance of the "seventh Bridgewater Treatise", in two volumes. It is by the Reverend William Kirby, the naturalist, he says, and treats of the History, Habits and Instincts of Animals. In the same review he considers the treatise entitled *The Universe and Its Author*, "one of the most admirable essays ever penned." He speaks critically of Dr. Roget's book on *Animal and Vegetable Physiology*, He does not
think that it is "the best of the Bridgewater Treatises", though he "has heard it so called". He also criticizes the Bridgewater Treatises on the score of one of their fundamental tenets. They have failed to perceive, he gives as his opinion, that the Divine system of adaptation is mutual.

Unvarying law which Poe had found in Plato's system and in other writers of antiquity, he now finds characteristic of Christian Philosophy. It will be shown in a later part of this chapter that Poe found Plato explaining creation on the basis of the many resulting from the one. In Christian philosophy, Poe sees the same principle in operation.

He affirms with the Christian philosopher that God is the only creating power in existence. He criticizes Coleridge for attributing to man's imaginative faculty the power to create. He was familiar with Coleridge's assumption that the imagination in man was "the repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am". But he considers, in opposition to Coleridge's "dogmatic" opinion, that it is the deity alone who creates. In

---

73. Democratic Review, 1844, Marginalia. This point will be explained in a later chapter. See chapter on Science.
74. Biographia Literaria, p. 144. For the probability that Poe knew this particular passage in the Biographia Literaria, cf. ante. p. 12.
75. Biographia Literaria, p. 144. For the probability that Poe knew this particular passage in the Biographia Literaria, cf. ante. p. 12.
1836, however, he admits the possibility of man possessing this power in a "lesser degree." In 1840, he decisively denies to man's mind the power of creating. The fancy, he says, as nearly creates as the imagination; and neither creates in any respect, all novel conceptions being merely unusual combinations.


He summarizes the point thus: "What the Deity imagines is, but was not before. What man imagines is, but was also. The mind of man cannot imagine what is not."


In another instance he states that he adopts the Godhead as the starting point in the scheme of creation. And in The Classics, he dwells upon the "creative mind of God."

Poe is next of the opinion that God, the creating principle, manifests His power in the universe according to unvarying law. It is reasonable to suppose that he formed his idea from discussions in such of his sources as we have noted, of the intention of the Deity, of His premeditated design, and of the divine law in terrestrial and astronomical adaptations. There is no doubt that from the London Quarterly, already referred to, he became aware of the definition of the term Christian philosophy; the essay on the Universe and Its Author, defining it to be information regarding the universe that proceeds from the researches of scientists, as well as from the revelations of enlightened faith. The essay, on this point, reads as follows: "The re-examined and
accumulated results of the researches of geologists, and of the combined labors of astronomers and mathematicians, cannot have been intended for the mere entertainment of those who have devoted themselves to such pursuits. They point to a higher destiny. The more successfully the sciences have been cultivated, the brighter and more numerous have become the signs, and we may add, the demonstrations of the existence of an Omnipotent Intelligence by whom all things are made." He was aware, too, of the meaning of terrestrial adaptations, as the article in the Edinburgh Review explained William Whewell's *Astronomy and General Physics*. The reviewer comments on the point thus:—"The first 83.

---


Terrestrial Adaptations which Mr. Whewell considers are those in which the structure of plants is adjusted to the length of the year, or the time of the earth's revolution around the sun; and he maintains that these are so indicative of design that any change in the length of the year would throw the botanical world into utter disorder." Astronomical adaptations, he likewise considers. "The invariable regularity with which the earth accomplishes its orbit is in itself a striking proof of the divine perfection with which that orbit was traced out. A difference of ten days at one time, or three weeks or a month at another, in the length of our year, would disappoint the labors of the husbandman, and render every attempt at chronology abortive. The dexterity, if we may use such a phrase, with which the earth preserves its path in space, without encountering any of the numerous comets which are perpetually wandering in all sorts of orbits through all the firmament, is the result of a provision that must have been made before one of those enormous masses was launched upon its course."
But perhaps the most concise statement of this doctrine of adaptation with which he was doubtless familiar, he found in Dr. Dick's work. The section on the__Wisdom and Intelligence of the Deity reads: "In surveying the system of nature with a Christian and a philosophic eye, it may be considered in different points of view. It may be viewed either as displaying power and magnificence of the Deity in the immense quantity of materials of which it is composed, and in the august machinery and movements by which its economy is directed; or, as manifesting His wisdom in the nice adaptation of every minute circumstance to the end it was intended to accomplish." Dr. Dick further brings out the idea that the more one studies physical law as it manifests itself in nature, the greater will be the understanding of God's unvarying law. In order to understand "Almighty power", he says in The Christian Philosopher, a definite train of thought must be pursued. One should commence with those magnitudes which the mind can easily grasp, and proceed through all the higher gradations of magnitude. One should fix his attention on every portion of the chain until he arrives at the object or magnitude of which he wishes to form a conception. By the "light of science" one must endeavor to form a conception of the "bulk of the world in which we dwell". He must contemplate "those magnificent globes which float around us in the concave of the sky". From the solar system he
must extend his view to the starry heavens "those trackless regions of
immensity". Poe must also have met the idea of mutuality of adaptations dis­
cussed in one of the reviews of the Bridgewater Treatises. The fitting of
means to the end, and reciprocal adaptation is either our vegetables are suited
to our year, says the article in question, or our year to them. "In either case
we see a law of mutual adaptation which demonstrates the necessity of previous
design." It is interesting to note that Poe, at a period following this early
study of the Bridgewater Treatises, asserts that the point of mutual adaptation
was not mentioned in any of those articles. He may have encountered the idea


89. Schlegel may have led Poe to an investigation of Kant. He says in his
Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, in discussing the source of
pleasure derived from tragedy: "With respect to everything connected with
this point, I refer my hearers to the Section on the Sublime in Kant's
Criticism of the Judgment—to the complete perfection of which nothing is
wanting but a more definite idea of the tragedy of the ancients, with
which he does not seem to be very well acquainted." (Schlegel, op. cit.
p. 69.) If Poe studied Kant, he could have found reciprocity of action
discussed in Kant's volume referred to, page 277.

truth of this latter supposition, he endeavors, as we shall see in the next
chapter, to prove its existence in the physical world by producing scientific
data.

It is not difficult to detect Poe's indebtedness to his sources. In
some instances it will be shown, he preserves only the idea; in others, he
practically reproduces the wording of his model; while in some cases, especially
when he is following Dr. Dick, he appears to carry over into his own writing a
certain reverence of tone that is strongly apparent in that philosopher. Poe
agrees with the Christian philosopher that the design and intention of the
Deity are manifestations of unvarying law. "To look upwards", he says in his review of Drake's Culprit Fay, "from any existence, material or immaterial, to its design, is perhaps the most direct and unerring method of attaining a just notion of the nature of the existence itself. Nor is the principle at fault when we turn our eyes from Nature even to Nature's God." And anyone, he says,

in his article The Classics, who has trained his mind in Christian philosophy can understand how nature manifests God's unvarying law; such a man "looks out upon the stars 'those isles of light' which repose in the liquid blue of the vaulted heavens, and they speak to him of wisdom and love, of beauty and peace. He walks abroad amid the works of nature, and traces in all her hidden harmonies a beauty and unity of design which speak but of one spirit, and that the infinite and eternal spirit of the universe." Contrasting the perfect adjustment according to the Divine plan, with that governed by human intelligence, he sees on the side of the human a receding from perfection--the presence of chance relations, and he says: "He (the Christian philosopher) compares the order and beauty of the physical universe, which submits all its motions to the divine will, with the moral government of man--at once the sport and victim of his own caprices."

Poe also affirms that scientific study of the universe will reveal to one the power of the unchanging Creator. He speaks, in his article on The Classics, of the need of studying "the great chain of truth". Each link which is discovered seems, he says, "in the enthusiasm of the vision, another step on that
ladder by which man mounts from earth to heaven”. Each hidden harmony which is
discovered in nature “is another thought of the divine mind”. The knowledge thus
discovered serves to bind one, he adds, “still more closely in that communion
into which the Creator permits” one to enter with Him. It serves to bring one
closer to Him who is pure, perfect, and unchangeable. On another occasion, he
asserts that the love of scientific truth is a human instinct. From the con-
templation of the wonders and beauties of the universe, man becomes possessed
with the “unconquerable desire to know.”


Increase of this scientific knowledge of the universe, both Poe and the
Christian philosopher contend, will result in increase of man’s reverence and
veneration for the Creator’s power. In the first place, both agree that man’s
disposition to regard the superiority of the Divine Being with veneration is a
human instinct. How nearly they agree in this thought may be judged from the
following parallel columns.

| "Man is every moment dependent upon a Superior Being for every pulse that beats. | "We discover in all men a disposition to look with reverence upon superiority, whether real or supposititious. It has been justly considered a primitive sentiment. It is, indeed, the instinct given by God as security for his own worship." |

| Profound veneration of the Divine Being lies at the foundation of all religious worship and obedience." | "Thence (from this sentiment) spring immediately admiration of the fair flowers, the fairer |

In the second place, both agree that this reverence for the Deity concerns it-
self with the wonders and glories of his work.

| "We must contemplate him through the medium of those works by which he displays the glories of his nature to the inhabi- | "Thence (from this sentiment) spring immediately admiration of the fair flowers, the fairer
tants of our world. I have already exhibited a few specimens of the stupendous operations of his power, and there is surely no mind in which the least spark of piety exists, but must feel strong emotions of reverence and awe at the thought of that Almighty and Incomprehensible Being who impels the high masses of the planetary globes with so amazing a rapidity through the sky. Even these manifestations of Deity which are confined to the globe we inhabit, when attentively considered, are calculated to rouse, even the unthinking mind, to astonishment and awe. The lofty mountains and expansive plains, the mass of waters in the mighty ocean——".

Poe and the Christian philosopher are likewise of the opinion that reverence for these wonders and glories increases as knowledge of the Creator's work increases.

"But in order to reverence God alike, we must know him; and in order to acquire the true knowledge of him, we must contemplate him through the medium of those works and dispensations, by which he displays the glories of his nature to the inhabitants of our world. In proportion as we enlarge the sphere of our contemplations, in a similar proportion will our views of God himself be extended, and a corresponding sentiment of veneration impressed upon the mind."

"Mingled up inextricably with this love and admiration of Heaven and Earth is the unconquerable desire—to know."

There are some indications that Poe made an original research into the doctrines of Christian philosophy. He appears to be endeavoring to find the same unity in the God of the Old and New Testament that he found in the God of the ancient philosopher. In Pinakidia are over thirty passages which deal with the Hebrew Jehovah, or the Christian's God. Several of these passages merely show an interest in subjects allied to Jewish history. Others seem to be attempts to ascertain an idea of the degree of acquaintanceship that existed between the Greeks and Jews in Biblical times. In Lucian, he says, is given the account of the Deluge that most nearly resembles the one given by Moses.
The heathen poets are mentioned three times in the New Testament. "Aratus in the seventh chapter of Acts, Menandes in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, also Epimenides". Dionysius, he says, mentions in a letter dated Heliopolis, in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad (the year of Christ's crucifixion) a total eclipse of the sun at noon. "Either', says according to Dionysius, 'the author of nature suffers, or he sympathizes with some who do'". Josephus agrees with St. Paul in supposing man to be compounded of body, soul, and spirit. The distinction, Poe says, is an essential point in ancient philosophy. There are passages also which indicate that Poe was endeavoring to understand the Jewish conception of God as a unit. The full meaning of Jehovah, he says, is "the self-existing essence of all things."

Thus Poe may be said to be gathering from Christian philosophy, as it was shown he did from the philosophy of the ancients, belief that the universe is governed by unvarying law.

The literary bearing of Poe's interest in ancient and Christian philosophies may now be made apparent. There is reason to believe that his study was connected in his mind with the needs of literature. He is of the opinion that the study of philosophy is the great want of American letters. He is so deeply impressed with this fact he says, that he "could not help suggesting briefly the various points of view from which its importance may be viewed". It has already been noted that he expressed himself strongly of the belief that study, and in all probability by study he meant philosophic study, would increase a writer's chances for a permanent reputation.
Evidence points to the fact that Poe felt literary form to be philosophic in its nature and bearings. From unvarying law that he testifies to having found in philosophy, both ancient and Christian, he seems to have worked out a theory of technique. From Coleridge, too, as the Biographia Literaria reflected Platonic doctrines, he appears to have derived suggestions for his theory of literary form growing from philosophic truth. In working out the theory of

literary form, Poe maintains that he can recognize in poetry a double nature; it may be regarded in the light of its imaginative element, its ideality; it may also be viewed in its every-day acceptation, as the poetry of words. He states it as his opinion that the aspects are very intimately related to each other; that the imaginative element arises from and is the test of the latter; and that both aspects are different sides of the same question. In other words, they are both matters of technique. Nowhere does Poe more fully explain the difference between these two aspects than in the following passage; "A poem", he
says, "is not the Poetic faculty, but the means of exciting it in mankind."


The imaginative element in poetry, Poe denominated the Poetic Sentiment. I have already noted that the reverence and veneration which Christian philosophy affirms to be man's natural instinct to worship superiority in the Deity seemed to Poe a quality of the sentiment he thinks to be poetical. He had found, moreover, that the Christian philosopher expressed his consciousness of man's innate desire to know more of the wonders and glories of the Deity's creation. And in evident sympathy with both phases of man's instinctive longing, Poe had defined the sentiment of poetry as the unquerable desire to know, as the hope of a higher intellectual happiness beyond. Plato's Dialogues were also suggestive to Poe in working out his theory of the poetic sentiment. Poe's known acquaintance with Plato's writings and the similarities in idea in the points about to be detailed, lead one to suppose that he was following Plato's doctrines for this aspect of literary form. Both Plato and Poe agree that man, by instinct, longs for absolute Beauty. The discourse in Phaedrus on the natural impulse of "the wings" to soar aloft into the upper region, there to allow the soul to obtain the vision of heavenly beauty, may have suggested to Poe that man by nature thirsts for supernal beauty and loveliness. This burning thirst, Poe says, belongs to the immortal essence of man's nature. Both Plato and Poe also agree that this instinctive longing for perfection manifests itself in an elevation of the soul. Passion, or earthly love, plays no part in this heavenly aspiration. In
proof of this point may be cited the fact that they both maintain the fitness of the Uranian, as distinguished from the Dionaean Venus, to be the theme most worthy of praise. Plato, in the speech of Pausanias, affirms that we should not praise Love in an indiscriminate manner. If there were only one Love that would be well enough. But since there are more Loves than one, he promises to tell of that Love which is deserving to be the theme of our praises. It is the heavenly Aphrodite, the daughter of Uranus, and not Dione, the daughter of Zeus, rightly names common and considered as the earthly Love. One Love degrades and one Love exalts. The earthly Aphrodite "has no discrimination, being such as the meaner sort of men feel—that is, of the body rather than of the soul". The heavenly Aphrodite, on the contrary, is the Love of the soul, and in that there is great honor. Poe, in his article on the Poetic Principle, appears to follow Plato's point in regard to the most worthy theme for poetry. Love, he says, the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionaean Venus, is "unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes". He agrees, moreover, with Plato that this Love tends to exalt the soul; that Passion or the earthly Love tends to degrade it.


103. Ibid., Symposium, vol. 1, pp. 551-553.

104. Poe makes the same point in regard to Mrs. Welby's poems. (Works, Miscellaneous, vol. 16, p. 56.) A passionate poem, he says there, "is a contradiction in terms". Professor Prescott notes that Poe gives Coleridge credit for affirming Poetry and passion to be discordant. But as Professor Prescott says, the idea does not appear to come from Coleridge, who distinctly states that poetry always implies passion. Passages in Coleridge, however, Prescott adds, vaguely indicate that poetry arises in the control of passionate feeling. (Notes to The Poetic Principle, Poe's Critical Essays, p. 345). From the above evidence, however, it seems reasonable to think that Plato and not Coleridge was Poe's source for the
idea that poetry and passion are contradictory terms. (Cf. *Works*, vol. 4, p. 258.)

In further analyzing the Poetic Sentiment, Poe appears to have followed Plato in considering that the beauties of earth induce in man this longing for "supernal beauty". Plato says in discussing the vision of heavenly beauty that he who sees the beauty of earth is transported with the recollection of the true beauty. A shudder runs through him and he is overcome with awe. But, according to Plato, the loveliness of this world transports only the initiated soul into the vision of the true beauty beyond. Poe is also of the opinion that the beauties of this world induce in the poet a longing for the loveliness to come.


They inspire him with a prescience of the glories beyond the grave. "The bright orbs that shine in Heaven—the slanting of tall Eastern trees—the blue distance of mountains—the suggestive odor that comes to him at eventide from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans illimitable and unexplored", are the "ambrosia", he says, which nourishes the poet's soul.


Both Plato and Poe agree that this longing for absolute beauty is, on the part of the lover and the poet, a longing for immortality, and therefore the

108. Plato, in Agathon's speech in the *Symposium*, identifies Love with the poet. (p. 566.) "In the first place he (Love) is a poet, and he is also the source of poesy in others, which he could not be if he were not himself a poet. And at the touch of him, everyone becomes a poet, even though he had no music in him before; this also is a proof that Love is a good poet and accomplished in all the fine arts."
soul struggles to create. The tale of Diotima in the Symposium unfolds to
Socrates the natural instinct which the soul possesses to long for immortality.
The instructress in love informs him that mortal nature sees "birth in beauty"
and that souls seek to perpetuate themselves in beauty as well. Such creatures,
she explains, are "poets and all artists who are deserving of the name inventor."


Poe is also of the opinion that the longing for the beauty above indicates a
longing for immortality. It is, he says, a consequence and an indication of
perennial life. He considers that a necessary consequence proceeding from this
longing for immortality is the desire to create. Poets, therefore, "struggle
to invent novel combinations among those forms of beauty which already exist,
or by novel combinations of those combinations which our predecessors, toiling
in chase of the same phantom, have already set in order."


The poetry of words, or the second aspect of literary form that Poe
feels to spring from philosophy, he distinguishes from the Poetic Sentiment in
that it is the practical result of that sentiment. So evident is his conviction
that a distinction exists between these two aspects, that he is of the opinion
that one may exist without the other. He explains this point in the following
passage. "The Poeta Nascitur, which is indisputably true if we consider the
Poetic Sentiment, becomes the merest of absurdities when we regard it in refer-
ence to the practical result. We do not hesitate to say that a man is highly en-
dowed with the powers of Causality--that is to say, a man of metaphysical
acumen--will, even with a very deficient store of Ideality, compose a finer
poem (if we test it as we should by its measure of exciting the Etic Sentiment)
than one who, without such metaphysical acumen, shall be gifted, in the most extraordinary degree, with the faculty of Ideality." From Christian Philosophy  


he appears to have derived the idea of form in the sense of Divine adaptation. How closely he followed Dr. Dick in this idea may be judged from the following parallel columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Christian Philosopher</th>
<th>Poe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;In surveying the system of nature with a Christian and a philosophic eye, it may be considered as manifesting His wisdom, in the nice adaptation of every minute circumstance to the end it was intended to accomplish.&quot;</td>
<td>S.L.M., vol. 1, p. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Thus its effect will depend (he is discussing the poetry of Mrs. Siou CART) in a very large degree, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Thus its effect will depend (he is discussing the poetry of Mrs. Siou CART) in a very large degree, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other instances Poe states practically the same thought, with a little different wording. For instance, in the criticism of Judge Tucker's George Falcombe he says: "The adventures of the trio in pursuit of the missing document eminently display in the author of George Falcombe that rarest of all qualities in American novelists and that certainly most indispensable invention. Its interest is intense. Its most distinguishing features are invention, vigor and exceeding ingenuity and finish in the adaptation of its component parts". In the following example, in his criticism of Halleck's Pozzaria, he uses the term circumstances to designate the parts of a piece—a point similar to the Christian Philosopher's mode of expression. "Force is its prevailing characteristic, a force consisting in a well-ordered and sonorous arrangement of the metre, and a judicious dispos-


113. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 310.

114. Ibid., vol. 1, p.
of this period, one can again see the influence of Christian Philosophy. "In regard to the story, or that chain of fictitious incident usually binding together the constituent parts of a Romance, there is very little of it in this book."

From Plato he seemed to find a technique in the explanation of "the Many and One in Nature". He obviously finds in the myth of heavenly beauty, the same principles of art that Plato himself affirms to have found therein. Socrates explains to Phaedrus that the myth of the longing of the soul for heavenly beauty really contained rules for the art of rhetoric. The myth had, in his mind, a serious meaning. In these chance fancies of the hour, he said, were involved two principles which may be applied to the art of rhetoric. These principles were first, "unity of particulars in a single note; and, second, that of division into species. Socrates acknowledges that he is a great lover of these processes of division and generalization. He says they help him to think and to speak; and if he finds any man who is able to see a "'one and a Many'" in nature, him he follows and he walks in his footsteps as if he were a god.

Doubtless this explanation of the rules of rhetoric is what Plato means further on in Phaedrus where he speaks of the true rhetoric being that which is acceptable to God. He says (p. 483) "rhetoric has a fair beginning here." In the closing pages of The Republic, Plato hints at the possibility of poetry attaining to this perfection. (The Republic, p. 322) (Phaedrus, vol. 1, p. 483.)

In following Poe in his evident indebtedness to Plato's explanation of the "Many and One in Nature", it will be seen that the question resolves itself
into a common protest against imitation in literature. Both Plato and Poe are
determined to drive out the imitating poet. They both agree that exact repeti-

118. The Republic, p. 322. Poe makes a consistent attack on imitation which
extended throughout his literary career. Cf. Chapter VI.

tion, as in a mirror, is not the highest type of art. Socrates, in his dialogue
with Glaucon concerning the nature of imitation, ridicules the apparent crea-
tions of him who creates by repeating exactly what is before him. That way,
he says, is easy enough. In fact, there are many ways in which the feat might
be quickly and easily accomplished, none quicker than that of turning a mirror
round and round. Such a method, he assures Glaucon, would soon make the sun

119. Ibid., p. 308.

and heavens, the earth, animals and plants. Poe also maintained that exact

repetition is not poesy. The "eyes of Amaryllis", being repeated in the mirror,
the "living lily in the lake", or the forms and colors and sounds and sentiments
being merely recorded, while undoubtedly productive of pleasure, will not pro-
duce a true poetic effect. The poet, therefore, Poe says in the Landscape

120. Works, vol. 4, p. 71.

Garden, will not concern himself with the details of Nature; he will not endeav-
or to "imitate the colors of the tulip or to improve on the proportions of the

lily of the valley". As a summary of his attitude against exact repetition may


be cited the following from the Review of Longfellow's Ballea's: "He who shall
merely sing with whatever rapture, in harmonious strains, or with however vivid
a truth of imitation, of the sights and sounds which greet him in common with all mankind—he, we say, has yet failed to prove his divine title". In his article on the Poetic Principle, with the same intention of criticizing exact repetition on the poet's part, Poe changes the phrase "truth of imitation", to "truth of description".

Coleridge expresses very much the same idea and doubtless drew on Plato for the point. "Images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant." (Biographia Literaria, p. 153.)

In a further analysis of the nature of imitation, Poe appears to follow Plato. Both suggest the same remedy to the imitating poet—a remedy, which if applied, Plato says, will permit "our sweet friend, and the sister arts of imitation to exist in a well-ordered State". The remedy suggested consists in proving their title to the name of poet, not by imitating the world of sense, but by being inspired by the beautific vision, the interpretation of which
myth, Plato explained as we have seen, to involve an understanding of the prin­
ciples of unity and variety. Poe suggests the same remedy to the imitating

128. It is suggested that Plato’s allegory of the underground den may have the
same interpretation as his myth of the soul longing for the vision of
heavenly love. In both the soul attains to realities, leaving the world
of sense. (The Republic, p. 217.) In both, the soul ascends to the in­
tellectual world and in both it attains the vision of heavenly beauty.
(Plato, Phaedrus, p. 474.) The myth in Phaedrus is explained as involv­
ing principles applicable to rhetoric. The allegory of the den may then
perhaps be said to have the meaning. On this supposition, Plato may mean
that the imitating poet, if mindful of rules of true art, these rules
which are a part of human nature, which produce the many from one, or,
in other words, which see variety in uniformity, may be welcomed into a
"well-ordered state". (Phaedrus, vol. 1, p. 433.)

129. The poet, he says with Plato, must "prove his divine title". To give this
proof, the poet should not, as he shows Longfellow to do, fail to understand the
true Beauty and content himself with exact repetition of the details of Nature’s
loveliness; but he should work from a basis of what constitutes the true Beauty,
that is, he should "not demur at the great labor requisite for the stern demands
of high art". He should not demur at the "unremitting toil and patient elabor­
ation which, when soul-guided, result in the beauty of Unity, Totality, Truth."

130. Poe extended the suggestion concerning the evils of exact repetition,
which it is highly probable he learned from Plato, to cover attendant evils of
plagiarism and conservation. In a later chapter it will be seen that Poe’s
attack on Longfellow grew out of no personal animosity for the New England
poet, but out of what he felt to be violations of natural law by which he con­
ceived the poetic mind to work.
From the foregoing evidence we may be safe in concluding that Poe drew from philosophy certain suggestions for literary form. The following chapter will show that Poe endeavored to base these principles in natural law.
Chapter V.

Unity and Variety a Scientific Law in the Physical World

The principle of unity and variety which Poe felt, from his research into ancient and Christian philosophy, to be a philosophic truth, he now apparently wishes to see as a scientific fact, as a law operating in the physical world. There is evidence to show that, although, apparently convinced of the truth of the philosophic law he had been investigating, he sought for its confirmation in scientific study. Again and again he declares that what he intuitively feels to be a law pervading the universe, receives corroborating testimony from science; that what he feels to be unity, is to him as certain in its existence and in its operation as is the working of any science to a scientist. He says in The Landscape Garden, in discussing the principle of unity by which the artist arranges his material, that these sentiments of art afford as absolute a demonstration to the artist as does the science of mathematics to the mathematician. ¹


Before attempting, however, to ascertain Poe's method of comprehending unity and variety as a scientific law of the universe, it may be well to review what is known of his interest in scientific matters. Sara S. Rice in her E. A. Poe Memorial Volume, sums up what is known of his scientific interests in 1833. ² She states these facts in the words of John H. B. Latrobe, ³

². Rice, Sara S., Edgar Allen Poe Memorial Volume Extracts from the appear in Works, Biography, p. 108.

³. who gives, according to the author of the Memorial Volume an account of his conversation with Poe concerning the basis for the story of Hans Phaal.
Poe spoke most enthusiastically, Mr. Latrobe says, of certain scientific re-

search he had made for the story of his voyage to the moon. He entered into a somewhat learned disquisition upon the laws of gravity, the height of the earth's atmosphere, and the capacity of balloons. He grew more and more animated as he described the voyage, until, at last, he reached the point in space where the moon's attraction overcomes that of the earth. In the recital of the bouleversement of the car, at this point, he became so excited, spoke so rapidly, stamping his foot by way of emphasis, that Mr. Latrobe acknowledges that he quite fancied himself on an actual voyage to the moon.

More conclusive evidence that Poe interested himself in scientific study is the fact that he took as early as 1835, from the pages of the Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society of London, a compilation of scientific papers dating from the year 1665, much of the scientific knowledge that appears in the story alluded to above, Hans Phaall. He appears to have put this material first into the form of notes. Comparing Hans Phaall with

5. Harrison publishes these notes with the title Poe's Unpublished Notes
6. Harrison is of the opinion that these notes refer to Eureka, Poe's work of 1848, although he says they may be outgrowths of Poe's studies for Hans Phaall. He says that "Notes on Eureka" is endorsed on the MSS. in handwriting not Poe's. Ibid.

these notes, which Prof. Harrison has printed under the title of Poe's Unpublished Notes, many identical passages are discovered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poe's Unpublished Notes</th>
<th>Hans Phaall - A Tale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

"I had been strengthened in opinions (of lunar atmosphere) by certain observations of Mr. Schroeter of Lilienthal. He observed the moon when

7. Harrison makes the point that in the opening sentence of Poe's notes - "He observed the moon when 2 1/2 days old" . . . it is not clear to whom reference is made. In Hans Phaall, however, Poe shows that he has reference to Mr. Schroeter of Lilienthal. Works, vol. 16, p.

2 1/2 days old in the evening soon after sunset, before the dark part was visible, and continued to observe it till it became visible. The two cusps appeared tapering in a very sharp, faint prolongation, each exhibiting its farthest extremity faintly illuminated by the solar rays before any part of the dark hemisphere was visible. Soon after the dark limb appeared illuminated. This prolongation of the cusps beyond the semicircle, he thinks, must arise from the refraction of the sun's rays by the moon's atmosphere. He computes also the height of the atmosphere, which refracts light enough into its dark hemisphere, to produce a twilight more luminous than the light reflected from the earth when the moon is about 30° from the new to 1356 Paris feet: and that the great-
est, capable of refracting the solar ray is 5376 feet."

Another a long passage in Poe's notes, beginning "Hevelius writes that he has several times found in the skies perfectly clear" . . . also appears in Hans Phaall. 8


Indications pointing to the fact that these notes were drawn from the pages of the Philosophical Transactions, are, first, the credit, in one instance, that Poe, in the person of Hans Phaall, gives the 82nd volume of these Transactions for a certain point which regulated the preparation for the passage to the moon. 9 Poe, in his notes, makes another reference to the Philosoph-


Transactions, giving in this instance the "82nd vol. pr. 2, art. 16" as his source. 10 And further, an investigation extending beyond the 82nd volume, re-


veals that Poe was even more indebted to the Transactions of the Royal Society than one might have thought from his references just quoted. The following parallel columns indicate the nature of Poe's dependence on the scientific papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophical Transactions</th>
<th>Poe's Unpublished Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-450.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of an Appearance of Light, like a star seen in the Dark Part of the Moon, on Fri. the 7th of Mar., 1794, by Wm. Wilkins, Esq., at Norwich. On Mar. 7th 1794 a few minutes before 8 in the evening, Mr. Wilkins of Norwich, an eminent
"When I saw the light speck a few minutes before 8 in the evening, I was very much surprised; for at the instant of discovery I believed a star was passing over the moon, which, on the next moments consideration I knew to be impossible. I remembered having seen, at some periods of the moon, detached lights from the serrated edge of light, through a telescope but this spot was too considerably far distant from the enlightened part of the moon; besides this was seen, with the naked eye. I was . . . rivetted to the spot where I stood, during the time it continued, and took every method I could image to convince myself it was not an error of sight; and two persons, strangers, passed me at the same time whom I requested to look and they said it was a star. I am confident I saw it 5 minutes at least; but as the time is only conjectural, it might not possibly be so long. The spot appeared rather brighter than any other enlightened part of the moon. It was there when I first looked. The whole time I saw it, it was a fixed steady light, except the moment before it disappeared, when its brightness increased. . . ."

Another part of Poe's notes is found to come from the article following the one just given. A point about Mr. Wilkins, referred to in column 2. on the preceding page, occurs in this article.

**Philosophical Transactions**
**Vol. 17, p. 451**

"An Account of an Appearance of Light, like a star seen lately in the Dark Part of the Moon by Thomas Stretton, in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, London, with Remarks on this Observation of Mr. Wilkins. Drawn up and Communicated by the Rev. Nevil Maskelyne, D.D., F.R.S., and Astronomer Royal.

**Poe's Unpublished Notes**
**Works, vol 16, p. 353.**

The same phenomena was observed by Mr. T. Stretton in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, London, on April 13, 1793.
"Of 3 Volcanoes in the Moon by
Wm. Herschel.

Apr. 19, 1787, 10 hr. 36 m sideral time, I perceive three volcanoes in different places of the dark part of the moon. Two of them are already extinct, or otherwise in a state of going to go out. . . . The 3rd shows an actual eruption of fire or luminous matter. . . . The appearance of what I have called the actual fire or eruption of a volcano, exactly resembled a small piece of burning charcoal, when it is covered by a very thin coat of white ashes, which frequently adhere to it when it has been some time ignited, and it had a degree of brightness about as strong as that with which such a coal would be seen to glow in faint daylight. The adjacent parts of the mt. seemed faintly illuminated by the eruption."

From Dr. Dick's Christian Philosopher, Poe also appears, as in the case of the Philosophical Transactions, to be gathering data concerning the solar system. The following parallel columns reveal a close study of Dr. Dick's
work, especially the chapter on "The Celestial Scenery."\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
Dr. Dick & Poe's Unpublished Notes.  \\
p. 52 & p. 348  \\
\hline
"This planet Juno is of a reddish color, and is free from any nebulosity; yet the observations of Schröter render it probable that it has an atmosphere more dense than that of any of the old planets of the system - variable atmosphere." & "Juno is free from Nebulosity in appearance, yet according to Schröter it has an atmosphere more dense than that of any of the old planets of the system - variable atmosphere."  \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

p. 53

"The following are some of the observations of Schröter and Herschel. The atmosphere of Pallas, according to Schröter is to that of Ceres as 2 to 3; it undergoes great changes. The atmosphere of Pallas, according to Schröter is to that of Ceres as one-hundred and one to one hundred and forty-six, or nearly 2 to 3. It undergoes similar changes but the light of
the planet exhibits greater variations.

Dr. Dick's Christian Philosopher was a source for Eureka as well as for Hans Phaall, though, as has been noted, the dependence appears to be principally in the latter.

Christian Philosopher.

Eureka

Chapter  , Omnipotence of the Deity.


"Were we to take our station on the top of a mountain of a moderate size and survey the surrounding landscape, we should perceive an extent of view stretching 40 miles in every direction, forming a circle 80 miles in diameter and 250 in circumference, and comprehending an area of 5000 square miles. In such a situation the terrestrial scene around and beneath us - consisting of hills and plains, towns and valleys, rivers and lakes - would form one of the largest objects which the eye, or even the imagination can steadily grasp at one time. But such an object, grand and extensive as it is, forms no more than the forty thousandth part of the terra-

"If we ascend an ordinary mountain and look around us from its summit, we behold a landscape stretching, say 40 miles in every direction; forming a circle 250 miles in circumference; and including an area of 5000 square miles. The extent of such a prospect, on account of the successiveness with which its portions necessarily present themselves to view, can be only very feebly and very partially appreciated: - yet the entire panorama would comprehend no more than on 40,000th part of the mere surface of our globe. Were this panorama then, to be succeeded, after the laps of an hour, by another of equal extent; this again by a third, after the lapse of another
queous globe... were a scene, of the magnitude now stated, to pass before us every hour, until all the diversified scenery of the earth were brought under our view, and were twelve hours a day allotted for observation, it would require nine years and forty-eight days before the whole surface of the globe could be contemplated even in this general and rapid manner."

p. 20

"The earth contains a mass of matter equal in weight to at least 2,200,000,000,000,000,000,000 or more than 2 thousand trillions of tons, supposing its mean density to be only about 2\textsuperscript{1/3} times greater than water. To move this ponderous mass, a single inch beyond its position, were it fixed in a quiescent state, would require a mechanical force almost beyond the power of numbers to express. The physical force of all the myriads of intelligences within the bounds of the planetary system, though their powers were far superior to those of man, adequate to hour; this again by a fourth, after the lapse of another hour - and so on, and so on until the scenery of the whole Earth were exhausted and were we to be engaged in examining these various panoramas for twelve hours of every day; we should nevertheless, be 9 years and 48 days in completing the general survey."

p. 282

"But if the mere surface of the Earth eludes the grasp of the imagination, what are we to think of its cubical contents. It embraces a mass of matter equal in weight to at least 2 sextillions, 200 quintillions of tons. Let us suppose it in a state of quiescence; and now let us endeavor to conceive a mechanical force sufficient to set it in motion! Not all the strength of all the myriads of beings whom we may conclude to inhabit the planetary worlds of our system - not the combined physical strength of all these beings - even admitting all to
the production of such a motion."

Christian Philosopher
Chapter entitled, The Solar System.
p. 80.

"Of this system the Sun is the cen-
ter and the animating principle . . .
This vast globe is found to be about
880,000 miles in diameter.
... Were its central parts placed
adjacent to the surface of the earth,
its circumferences would reach two
hundred thousand miles beyond the
moon's orbit, on every side . . .
Even at the rate of 90 miles a day, it
would require more than 80 years to go
round its circumference."

An interesting bit of evidence also testifying to Poe's scientific in-
terest, a scientific experiment the basis of his story, The Conversation of
Eiros and Charmion. Dr. Dick, in the Christian Philosopher, describes an
experiment whereby combustion is seen to follow the total extraction of nitro-
gen from the air, saying that in all probability that was the method prophe-
sied by the Scriptures for the fiery destruction of our world. Dr. Dick sug-
gests that by the aid of chemical apparatus, we can perform experiments "on
a small scale similar in kind, though infinitely inferior in degree, to the
awful event under consideration."
The following parallel columns will show that Poe in declaring as he does that it was the "extension of the idea which engendered awe," was following Dr. Dick's scientific experiment as prophetic of the means for accomplishing the terrible catastrophe.

**Christian Philosopher.**

p. 32

"The atmosphere is now ascertained to be a compound substance formed of two very different ingredients, termed **oxygen gas** and **nitrogen gas**. Of 100 measures of atmospheric air, 21 are oxygen and 79 nitrogen. The one, namely, oxygen is the principle of combustion and the vehicle of heat, and is absolutely for the support of animal life, and is the most powerful and energetic agent in nature; the other is incapable of supporting either flame or animal life. Were we to breathe oxygen air, without any mixture or alloy, our animal spirits would be raised."

**Biros and Charmion.**

p. 351

"It had long been known that the proportion of twenty-one measures of oxygen and nitrogen gases in the atmosphere, seventy-nine of nitrogen, in every one hundred of the atmosphere. Oxygen, which was the principle of combustion, and the vehicle of heat, was absolutely necessary to the support of animal life and was the most powerful and energetic agent in nature. Nitrogen, on the contrary was incapable of supporting either life or flame."

"An unnatural excess of oxygen would result ... in just such an
"If the nitrogen were extracted from the air, and the whole atmosphere contained nothing but oxygen or vital air, combustion would not proceed in that gradual manner which it now does, but with the most dreadful and irresistible rapidity. . . ."

p. 135

"Should the Creator issue forth his Almighty fiat - "Let the nitrogen of the atmosphere be completely separated from the oxygen, and let the oxygen exert its native energies without control, wherever it extends;" - from what we know of its nature, we are warranted to conclude, that instantly a universal conflagration would commence throughout all the kingdoms of nature. . . ."

To sources other than the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society and Dr. Dick's Christian Philosopher, Poe was likewise indebted during the early period of his work for scientific knowledge. He speaks in his notes for Hans Phaall, of his need of reading Brewster's Edition of Ferguson's Astronomy:14 and in the passage following this reference, that dealing with the phosporcense of the moon, he appears to be quoting from that source. At the end of the Notes, he again refers to Brewster, mentioning Brewster's
Selenography as one of a list of materials upon which he has apparently depended.

It has thus been shown that Poe, during the early part of his literary work, that is, during the period from 1833 to 1835, was in possession of certain scientific data, especially data concerning astronomy. He appears to be interesting himself with the solar system, - the motions of planets and the laws of attraction. Indications point to the fact that he endeavored to see in this working of the solar system the operation of the law of unity and variety.

Before attempting, however, to follow his train of reasoning whereby the solar system is seen to exemplify the working of this law of unity, it may first be well to examine the probabilities of Poe being the author of a group of articles printed in The Southern Literary Messenger, of the year 1838, entitled, New Views of the Solar System, New Views of the Tides, and two replies to a critic who had attacked the validity of these views. 15


The points that suggest Poe as the author of these articles are the following: They have many ideas in common with his early work, the period from 1833 to 1835. Besides what may be said to be the most striking similarity, the coincidence between them and the main thesis of Poe's early philosophical research and consequent literary criticism, e.g. the principle of unity and variety, 16 a similarity which will later be explained, 17 there appear to exist

16. Cf. Chapter on Philosophy, p. 23

17. Cf. post, p. 22
other definite parallels. In the first place, they make use of many of the
same sources. The writings of Sir David Brewster were a source for both auth­
ors. Poe's use in *Hans Phaall* of Brewster's Edition of Ferguson's *Astronomy*
has already been noted.\(^\text{18}\) The author of *New Views of the Solar System* also

\(^{18}\) Cf. ante, p. 10.

quotes from Brewster in regard to the "absolute motion of the solar system."\(^\text{19}\)


A further similarity in sources is the fact that neither Poe in his Notes nor
the author of *New Views of the Solar System* appears to depend to any extent on
Newton, LaPlace or Kepler for astronomical data. Poe refers only once to Ke­
pler and then with but a slight notice of a certain lunar observation.\(^\text{20}\) By


his silence in regard to Newton and LaPlace, he obviously shows that they have
not been at that time the objects of his study. Herschel, however, as we have
seen, he quotes from largely.\(^\text{21}\) The author of *New Views* likewise considers

\(^{21}\) Cf. ante, p. 6.

Herschel his most reliable source. He speaks contemptuously in answer to his
reviewer of what is, in his opinion, the false knowledge of the mathematicians
in regard to the exact distance of the earth from the sun.\(^\text{22}\) He knows, he says


in apparent triumph, what Sir John Herschel says of the mathematician's "ill-
conditioned triangles". In another instance he regards Herschel's opinion as settling contradictory information concerning Venus' revolution on her axis.


The author of "New Views" as well as Poe places little dependence on Newton and Laplace. The principles of Sir Isaac Newton, he says in one place, can not apply to the orbits of planets as he feels the actual orbits to be. Else-


where, in the same series of articles, he affirms that Newton's views were, "physically," but, "a tissue of errors from beginning to end." 26


In addition to the similarity in sources between Poe's notes for *Hans Phaall - A Tale* and the articles on the solar system and the Tides, an obvious identity of purpose also exists. Poe makes at least seven-eighths of his notes relate to the moon; they show as we have seen, investigation of its motions, conditions and gravity. The author of *New Views of the Tides* is of the opinion that a satisfactory understanding of the solar system is obtained by a new comprehension of the moon in her relation to our earth.


There are also indications that *New Views of the Solar System*, and *New Views of the Tides* are connected with Poe's later work, and consequently
may be regarded as one step in a progressive study of astronomy, beginning with
Hans Phaall - A tale and ending with Eureka. In the first place, with both
authors the work is, throughout, strikingly like that of a novice. Poe fre­
quently corrects former theories and as frequently admits errors of statement.
In his Addenda to "Eureka", he says that, since penning an opinion as to the


origin of the satellites, he has been led, by "closer analysis" to modify some­what that view. He likewise shows a startling reversal of statement in regard
to the motion of the moon. In his notes for Hans Phaall he has collected data
giving the moon the same space of time in rotating on her axis that she has in
revolving round us in her orbit. But in his Addenda to "Eureka", he adopts a

29. Ibid., p. 361.

contrary view. He holds now he says to the idea that the moon must rotate of­
tener upon her axis than she revolves around her primary. And he adds that the
same must be the case of the moons which accompany Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus.

30. Ibid., p. 339.

The author of the articles on the Solar System also proclaims himself a novice.
He acknowledges that he is but a volunteer, and that, too, without any authority
from those who might, in the opinion of some, be considered as constituting a
legitimate authoritative source. And, again, he corrects a statement, saying


that he had spoken "unreflectingly."32

Reviewed.
Not only is the work in both instances that of a novice, but both authors acknowledge that, in support of their theory, they are depending, somewhat, at least, on intuitive processes of the mind. Poe's whole theory of the universe as he develops it in *Eureka*, is an exaltation of man's intuition.33


The author of *New Views* likewise depends on his intuition. The intuitive recognition of the mind has led him, he says, to the opinion that, since Jupiter's moons describe orbits round their primary concave to the sun, so must the paths of all planets be equally concave to their distance center.34

34. *S.L.M.*, vol. 4, p. 750. *New Views of the Tides*.

The articles on the solar system also appear to have a logical place in a chain of what is known to be Poe's predictions of new astronomical views. Taking these predictions chronologically, we find first, in 1835, in *Hans Phaal*, Poe writing of the intelligence to be imparted by the returned voyager from the moon, to the "private ear of the States' College of Astronomers."35


"Much - very much," Hans Phaall has to communicate, of the climate of the planet, and "above all, of those dark and hideous mysteries which lie in the outer regions of the moon - regions, which, owing to the almost miraculous accordance of the satellite's rotation on its own axis with its sidereal revolution about the earth, have never yet been turned, and, by God's mercy, never shall be turned, to the scrutiny of the telescopes of man." In 1838, the author of *New Views* also promises future astronomical information. His theory regarding the solar system which he promises soon to present to the world "will clear all difficulties respecting these bodies." He speaks, too, of "another

"place and another time" being suitable for showing "the entire insufficiency of our astronomers' gravitations and attractions to produce such effects." 37

37. S.L.M., vol. 4, p. 750. **New Views of the Tides.**

By the theory which he now presents to the world, he hopes "to wake up American philosophers from the bewildering opiates administered to the scientific world by the mathematicians of the last century." Several years before 1848, Poe again predicts new astronomical views. He attempts in these views, which he calls *A Prediction*, to amend Laplace's theory of the nebular hypothesis. As soon as the beginning of the next century, he says, "it will be entered in the books" that the Sun was originally condensed at once (not gradually according to the supposition of Laplace) to his smallest size. 38 In 1848, appeared *Eureka*.


may doubtless be supposed the culmination of preceding prophecies. In the second place, the articles in question appear part of Poe's progressive study of astronomy, in that they contain certain points common to his literary and scientific views, other than those of a basis for unity and variety, which laws, it must be again remembered, are reserved for a later discussion. Both authors stress the idea of equality in nature. They both appear to conceive of equality of the balancing force in nature, as common to all steps of what we are supposing to be a consistently increasing effort to comprehend the solar system. It will later be shown that Poe expounded his scientific views in
Eureka with equality as his general law. It will likewise be seen that he made use of the idea of equality in literary criticism, especially as that principle was the basis of the metrical art. The author of New Views also contends for equality. It is to establish this point that he hazards his new theory of the solar system.

Philosophy appears to have influenced both writers in maintaining their principle of equality. Poe is of the opinion that the philosophic conception of a balancing force in nature is no other than the scientific fact of the law of repulsion and gravitation. The philosopher as well as the scientist speaks in 1836 when he confounds Empedocles profession of the system of four elements, to which two more were added, called by the Greek, "principium amicitiae" and "principium contentionis", with the laws of attraction and repulsion. As a philosopher, too, it has been noted, he discussed equality as the "root of all Beauty", and consistently throughout Eureka he endeavors to see as one, the philosophic with the scientific explanation of the universe. Kepler, he says, in the last named work, drew inspiration for sci-
entific conclusions, from "the nebulous kingdom of Metaphysics." As a phil-
osopher, the author of New Views of the Solar System also discusses equality
in nature. To the bitter attack of his theory, he replies that the reckoning
of his reviewer may be mathematically correct, but that they are not so phil-
osophically. His reviewer, he thinks, in another instance in refusing to
investigate the new theory advanced, has shown himself to be most unphilosoph-
ical. A further point in common between the two writers is that magnetism is
the cause back of gravitation. Poe, in Eureka, advances the theory that mag-
etism, or electricity, though he admits an unsatisfactory explanation of
the force, since it counterbalances a tendency towards the center, is yet as
suitable a term as can be found for the principle of whose "awful character"
he speaks with reverence. He says further, in the same piece, that he has
received much help in trying to solve this question, from dynamics. That par-
ticular science renders unquestionable aid, he says, in recognizing matter to
have not only tended towards a center, but in admitting it to have one time
existed in a state of diffusion, and this state he consistently explains to be
the result of magnetic or electric force. The author of New Views of the
Other considerations of dynamics to be found in Eureka are: pp. 237; 245.
Solar System appears to be working along the same line for an understanding of the cause back of gravity. He, too, admits it to be an "undefined force." He is aware, he says, that Newton has hinted at its real nature; but he feels confident that The Principia offers no suggestions of "the means" by which planetary bodies hold their course. Brewster, he likewise reports, as propounding the question of the means by which the Almighty has bound together the solar system. He ends his account of his investigation of the cause back of gravitation, saying that it is upon the science of dynamics that he bases all his views, and that by showing how the planets and satellites are wielded by electro-magnetic machinery, new discoveries, exceeding even those following the discovery of steam, may come to light.

From the foregoing evidence, it may now be reasonable to identify Poe with the author of the articles on the Solar System and the Tides, the evidence consisting as we have seen of their similar sources, purpose, common points, and the logical step the articles appear to maintain in what is known to be Poe's progressive study of science. Granting the truth of this identification, I shall now attempt to show how Poe worked out an understanding of unity and variety as a scientific principle in the physical world. Unvarying

52. Cf. Chapter on Philosophy, p. 39
law, which, as has been shown, Poe felt to be a philosophic truth, he now attempts to see operating scientifically as unity and variety in the physical world. In his early period of scientific investigation, he apparently endeavors to find this principle in the solar system; in his later period, he extends the theory to cover his conception of the whole universe.

Poe first attempts to show that unity and variety govern the movements of the planets about the sun. He advances the general theory that the velocity of the planets is equal, while the number of their revolutions about their primary varies. Disregarding the elaborate mathematical calculations by which he tried to prove this idea, I shall state only the main points with which he attempted to substantiate his claim. He takes the revolution of the moon around the earth as an example of equality in motion among the heavenly bodies. The mechanism of this system, he says, shows that the revolutionary progress of our earth is equal to the progressive velocity of its attending body. The progress of the earth must limit the progress of the moon.53 As another example of equal motion in the heavenly bodies, he cites the motion of Jupiter's satellites around their center. The velocity of Jupiter's "retinue of little worlds," he notes, is equal, limited in their progress as they are, by the course of their primary. But in this equality of motion, Poe expresses himself as conscious of a variety of motion also. From a suppositional case, he first attempts to prove this point. Suppose, he says, in his article on the tides, that we had an additional moon; the inner moon because of the greater contraction of its orbit, would make more revolutions around the earth than

the outer one, and would therefore appear to move faster. Then, from an actual case, that of the action of Jupiter and his satellites, he tries to verify his supposition. Jupiter's attending bodies describe varying revolutions around their center. This he thinks a just illustration of the law he is considering. He expresses himself as satisfied that in both of the cases cited exists the operation of the laws of equality and variability. Viewing the evidence of the small systems, and reasoning from analogy, Poe next attempts to see equality and variability governing the whole solar system. The mechanism of Jupiter's little worlds, he says, in the same article, gives a conclusive idea of the mechanism of the greater system of our sun.54 And again, he

54. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 750.

speaks of Jupiter and his moons, representing, "in miniature" all the systems in the universe. He announces it to be his belief that the sun carries his planets as Jupiter does his moons.55 In evident justification for thus trans-


ferring this law of action from the smaller system to the greater, Poe elaborately discusses the theory of the progressive sun.56 It is now generally ad-

56. Poe mentions Dr. Wilson of Glasgow as the first one who advanced this theory.

mitted, he says, by astronomers in England, France, and Germany that the sun is not a stationary body, but moves on in his grand orbit. Maintaining the sun to be progressive, he then attempts to attach equal velocity to the whole revolving planetary system. No one planet, he says, can advance ahead; none can remain behind. They are all limited in their progress by their luminous leader.57 He promises to show, mathematically, that the differing velocities
as heretofore given cannot be correct — that Jupiter moves with the same velocity that Mercury, Venus, the Earth and Mars do. A necessary condition of this theory of equal velocity and as a logical consequence of a progressive sun, Poe believes to be the theory of concave planetary orbits. In this supposition, he takes the cases of our earth and her moon, and Jupiter and his satellites as indicative of the kind of orbit described by all the planets and their attending bodies. It is evident, he says, that Jupiter’s moons describe orbits round their primary invariably concave to the sun, and it is equally evident that the planets describe the same kind of orbits and equally concave to some more distant center around which the sun himself is describing a similar orbit.

But even without a progressive sun and concave planetary orbits, Poe further professes the ability to demonstrate that the velocity of the planets is equal. Whether the sun is a stationary or traveling body makes no difference at all, he says in the article on the tides, when the question is that of equal motion of the planets. Even with "orbits returning into themselves," he still maintains equal planetary motion. This proof he contends rests on a consideration of the times of the planets, and as he attempts thus to demonstrate equality by the periods of the planets in their revolutions, he reaches the second aspect of the law which he feels controls the solar system, namely.
that of variability. He is of the opinion that equality and variability are intimately connected as they act in the physical world.\textsuperscript{60} "I shall . . . proceed at once to show", he says in his second article on the solar system, "that the planets must have the same velocity, even to a second of time, or their periods would be very different from what they are." In other words, he is apparently convinced that an error in the number of revolutions will arise if different velocities are assigned to the planets. In his calculations which follow this statement, he considers the case of Mercury and Venus; first supposing the condition of equal motion. He divides the time of Venus, which "for greater convenience" he has reduced to hours, by the time of Mercury, similarly reduced, and announces the result to show two periods and nearly one-half of another for Mercury, and one period for Venus. This result, he says, corresponds to the actual facts as demonstrated. He then supposes the condition of unequal velocities, the velocities that are "stated in our books . . . and taught in our schools," and attempts to show that, by this calculation, an error in the number of revolutions will result. By giving the velocities to these two planets according to our mathematical teachings, he says, Mercury would make only one revolution and part of another, while Venus makes one. He then takes the earth and Jupiter and, as he did with Mercury and Venus, computes the number of their revolutions, first on the basis of equal and then of unequal velocities. In the latter case, he says, the number of revolutions given the earth is incorrect; the earth is made to revolve a little more than five times while Jupiter revolves once. In the former case, he asserts, the computation, resting on equal velocity, the "number of revolutions of the earth corresponds to a second of time to the real facts as they
Variability in rotatory motion, Poe likewise discusses. He advances the theory that the planets give rotation to the sun, and the moons to the planets. The force producing motion is, he says, electro-magnetic pressure, and, being unequal as the densities of the bodies differ, the rotatory motion is unequal also. Such a theory Poe acknowledges to be "original," but it is, he thinks, on that score, none the less true. In attempting to substantiate his contention, Poe first claims the existence of electro-magnetic force. It is equally easy, he says, in the article on the tides, to conceive of the Deity creating elastic materials and specifically applying them, as to conceive of the creation of our globe in any terms at all. He notes the fact that Newton acknowledged the pressure of magnetic fluid, although in a state of diffusion and without specific offices to perform. He differs, therefore, he says, from Newton, solely in giving this electric material certain definite functions.

Can it be possible, he asks, that such materials can be without agency? Poe is of the opinion that one of these offices is to produce rotatory motion. He tries to prove his point by describing what he feels to be the true nature of the influence of the moon on the earth. From the small case, he then forms,
as before, in considering equality of motion, a general notion of existing conditions in the solar system at large. He first assumes the existence of elastic, magnetic spheres, explaining that the sun, the planets and their satellites are surrounded by magnetic material. These spheres, he says, act and react upon each other, and in no way is this interaction to be attributed to the planets themselves. He then considers the pressure of these spheres. Knowing that the theory of tides admits the pressure of the moon on the earth, he expresses his conviction that this pressure will result in something more than the depression of water on the earth's surface. It will result, he thinks, in rotary or auxiliary motion of the earth also. The west to east motion of the earth he further explains from his theory that the moon, moving faster than its primary, throws greater pressure on the eastern portion of our globe and hence causes it to rotate always in that direction. He then announces the general notion that he has deduced from the individual case - that of the moon's causing the planets to rotate and the planets, the sun. In this rotation caused by pressure, he then notes variability of motion. He hopes that the great difference between the rotation of the earth and the moon may excite the attention of his learned readers. A series of articles entitled Curiosities of Science, written by John Lofland, called the Milford Bard, have certain points in common with New Views of the Solar System. They speak of the sun as a galvanic battery; of the planets being moved by electricity; and of electricity being the "grand cause of all the phenomena or operations of nature." It does not seem unreasonable, however, to think that Lofland could have written New Views, for his ideas are scattered and disconnected, and he does not seem to be working with any prin-
ciple in mind; rather to be detailing certain knowledge chiefly from his own experimentation, which he considers curious and interesting. He does not exploit moreover, the main contention of New Views, namely, equal velocity of the planets. Lofland, John Dr., Curiosities of Science, (Baltimore, 1853).

He gives, in the Addenda to "Eureka", a further discussion of the difference in rotatory motion among the planets as he did in the case of "New Views of the Solar System. He now starts with the notion of equality and then sees in that equality the existence of variability also. Equality, in the Addenda referred to, appears to be the effort to view under the same head the two motions of rotation and revolution. He seems also to give it the meaning of unity. An evident emphasis and perhaps a possible indication that he had derived the idea from some source, may be seen in the fact that, in one instance, in referring to the rotation and revolution of a planet, he places in quotation marks the expression both under one.68

68. Works, vol. 16, p. 338. Poe's Addenda to "Eureka!"

As an example of this idea of equality, or perhaps of unity, he takes first the motion of the sun. The sun, he says, after its condensation rotated on its axis, but this axis not being the center of the figure, it not only rotated but revolved also. Poe appears to feel that he has given sufficient reason for concluding that the two motions of the sun are a unit, for he adds "Rotation and revolution are one, but I separate them for conven-
cience of illustration."70 With the same evident meaning, he speaks also

70. Ibid., vol. 16, p. 338.
of Neptune making his rotation a revolution; and of Neptune's moon rotating and revolving "Both under one". As he did in New Views of the Solar System, he now endeavors, from analogy, to make the smaller case prove the greater. He says that he has doubtless given enough, without referring to the other planets, to make his point plain. In this unity he sees variability also.

71. Ibid., vol. 16, p. 339.

He recognizes diversity in the rotatory motions of the planets and then tries to account for it. He had affirmed, it will be remembered, that the rotation was due to pressure of the electro-magnetic spheres - those of the moons on the planets and those of the planets on the sun. He had remarked, too, on the striking difference between the rotations of the moon and the earth. He now appears, in his Addenda to "Eureka" to offer a suggested explanation of this diversity. Disregarding again Poe's elaborate mathematical calculations, his frequent assumptions of his use and interpretation of Newton's and Kepler's laws, I shall try to give merely what seem to be the main steps in his reasoning.

72. Cf. ante, p.


74. Ibid., vol. 16, p. 343.

may have the same meaning as his former term "pressure", though in the Addenda he does not definitely so state it. If we grant this to be the case, the progressive steps in this article of his explanation of variability of rotation
appear to be consistent with the first steps in his New Views. He seems to be desirous in the addenda, of making the difference in rotation of the planets depend on the difference in their density. He understands density to be governed by distance from the sun, since, as he says, a planet falls nearer in proportion as it condenses. The degree at which the planet approaches the sun would, therefore, indicate the degree of its pressure. Consequently, when he maintains, as has just been shown, that the velocity of rotation depends on density, he is doubtless meaning, as in his former article, that rotation depends on pressure. He further explains that the planets, being at different distances from the sun and therefore being of different densities, will not act with different velocities.

An added reason for variability of rotation appears in the addenda to Eureka. Poe notes the difference in diameters and asserts that this diversity also has its bearing on rotation.

Poe, in his effort to find equality and variability governing the physical world, appears to carry his attempted proof into still other fields. Though he does not deny that the sun is a moving body, he does not continue to make that theory the basis of his assumption of equality of forces. It has been noted that he advanced the theory of equal velocity of the planets even from the standpoint of a stationary sun. He was only endeavoring, he said,
to invite scientific investigation of his views, and his theory meeting with no response, beyond the attacks already referred to, it is highly probable that he decided to contend for equality and variability on yet another score. In *Eureka* he tries to demonstrate that these two principles are the laws controlling the creation, present condition, and destiny of the material and spiritual universe. He is of the opinion now that LaPlace's Nebular Hypothesis gives the most satisfactory explanation of the creation of the solar system. It is no doubt a fact that he speaks as the philosopher as well as the scientist, when he terms it "beautifully true," and as being "far too beautiful... not to possess Truth as its essentiality." He proceeds, then,

78. Poe's dependence in *Eureka* on La Place's theory when in *New Views of the Solar System* he had appeared to have only a slight acquaintance with that astronomer, is quite consistent with the progressive nature of his study, his acknowledgement of being only a novice in astronomical learning and his frequent corrections of his own mistakes. Cf. ante, p.


to outline LaPlace's theory, saying that he gives it as its author himself conceived it. During the course of this outline, it will be noted that Poe stresses the operation of unity and variety, evidently convinced that the theory covers the working of these two principles. In the first place, the theory recognizes, he says, variety and uniformity in the nebulous mass from which creation sprang. It then assumes matter as diffused in a state of heterogenous nebulosity. The planets, says the theory, were whirled from


the sun and as that body continued to condense, and being composed of heterogenous material as well as their parent body, their form as rings became brok-
en into an infinity of separate pieces.\textsuperscript{81} Poe at this point in his outline expresses himself strongly of the opinion that LaPlace felt the necessity of assuming heterogenous material in the secondary masses for the reason that in no other way could the French astronomer account for the breaking up of the rings, since they could not have broken had they been homogenous. He maintains that he reaches the same result as LaPlace - that of heterogenous material, although he reaches it, he says, by another assumption, that of predicating heterogeneity to the atoms that compose the mass.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., \textit{p} 16-247.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., \textit{pp.} 16-248.

The theory likewise provides for uniformity, according to Poe's rendering.\textsuperscript{83} The rings whirled from the nebulous mass, possessed, in their heterogenous nature, at the same time, a constitution merely uniform. In addition to this general character, the rings when broken into separate pieces show a tendency to become absorbed by that portion which is superior in mass, a tendency therefore toward oneness. Thus the creation of Neptune, Jupiter, Uranus and the other planets, are hypothetically accounted for, under the laws of variety and uniformity. Poe then extends his outline of the Nebular Hypothesis to explain the origin of the moons. Neptune threw off a ring of un-uniform material which developed the same tendency to break up and the pieces the same desire to cluster about the center of the heaviest of their number. In this manner, Neptune threw off another ring, with the same result. Neptune thus came to have his two moons, and, as the planets continued to condense,
Uranus was finally attended by three lunar bodies, Saturn by seven, Jupiter by four, and our Earth by its one.

As he continues to detail the points of LaPlace's Hypothesis, it can be noted that Poe stresses equality in the rotatory motion of the planets. The theory assumes that the velocity of a planet's revolution around the sun is equal to the rotary velocity of the sun. With Neptune as an example, this equality is explained, first, when that planet existed as the ring thrown from the nebulous mass. "The ring . . . revolved," Poe relates, in quoting from LaPlace, "as a separate ring, with just that velocity with which, while the surface of the mass, it rotated." Later, when the ring settles into a planet, the same equality is preserved. The theory likewise assumes equality between the tangential and gravitating forces.

Though expressing himself as satisfied in the main, with LaPlace's theory, Poe is still of the opinion that it needs certain emendations and certain modifications. In the Addenda to Eureka, he had declared his wish to guard against the interpretation of adhering in detail to LaPlace's entire view. He also says, later, that his assumptions imply important differ-
ences from the Nebular Theory as given by LaPlace. The Nebular Hypothesis, he felt convinced, made no provision for the Newtonian law of gravitation. It is true, he says, that LaPlace assumed such a law, but, according to the explanation that atoms extend in unlimited succession throughout space, he had no logical right for the assumption. It is not surprising, then, considering his conviction of the need of revision and his custom, as has been noted, of offering new views, that he should now advance a theory of his own that should be an attempted explanation of the plan and method in the creation of the universe. He appears to be desirous of justifying his right to suggest a theory, first, on the grounds that the greatest truths have been brought to light by judicious guesses. Plato, he says, gives proof of the safety of occasionally guessing. Kepler grasped "with his soul" the secret of the principle of the machinery of the universe. LaPlace, whose hypothesis he has just related, deduced an absolute truth from no better start than mere speculation. In fact, the original idea to which LaPlace owed his theory was derived, Poe thinks, from a compound of the "true Epicurean atoms with the false nebulae"
of Laplace's own time. He also tries to justify his right to theorize on so

stupendous a subject as the universe by bringing forth a mass of scientific
facts to substantiate his claim. Before entering, however, into Poe's attempted
proof of his own hypothesis, I shall first give the main points of his theory,
showing its essential differences from that of Laplace.

Poe appears to construct his theory, first, in imitation, perhaps of
LaPlace's example, on the atomical theory he had learned from ancient phil-
osophy and to this pagan belief, he joined the conception of the Deity as the

Creator, a conception which, as we have seen, he had found so elaborately
explained in the pages of Christian Philosophy. His purpose seems to be to
discover and demonstrate the true meaning of gravity, the point which he has
asserted to be not provided for in LaPlace's theory. No one, he says, "up
to this date," has any understanding of what lies behind this principle. He
states his proposition thus: "Unity is the source of the phenomenon." It

will be remembered that in the Addenda Poe had asserted that the differing
forces of rotation and revolution should be viewed under one head, and that
before that date, in New Views of the Solar System, he had tried to maintain
equal velocity of the planets. In the theory about to be explained it will
be seen that he is now claiming equality for two other forces, and furthermore,
that he is assuming an identity of source for the two. In other words, he is claiming, first, that the diffusive force originates in unity; second, that the diffusive force equals the attracting force, or gravity; and, third, that gravity also has unity for its source.

In advancing this theory, Poe starts with God, whom he choses to consider under the light of Divine Volition. "As our starting point," he says, "let us adopt the God-head" who, by dint of his volition, created, out of nothing, matter "in its utmost conceivable state of simplicity." This starting point Poe affirms to be his sole assumption in the theory which he advances. Oneness he predicates of this originally created matter. It is a particle, he says, of one kind, of one character, of one size, of one form. He is of the opinion that the universe was made from this particle. The atoms were irradiated spherically from this center with equal diffusion. One was thus forced into Many, and the atoms presented an appearance from their difference in size and in equi-distance between centers of quantity, a particular un-uniformity, though, in general, there was uniformity in design. But the force was determinant and ceased. Reaction, therefore, set in, and the atoms returned to their original center - the One from which they sprang. The above, briefly stated, was Poe's hypothesis.

Poe then attempts to bring forward scientific proof for his theory. He must find, he says, some scientific phenomenon, some phenomenon whose law is known and whose validity is unquestioned which will be a precise parallel to the condition this theory assumes, namely, absolute unity as a source, and equalable diffusion from that center. He must find some third idea, an idea science stamps as true, which will be a link between unity and diffusion as
his theory gives them.

Poe is of the opinion that irradiation of light will illustrate both the points he needs, and therefore will be the link he is seeking. He is aware, he says, that light particles radiate equally from a luminous center. He affirms then, that unity is the source of their diffusion. He is also aware that the scientific law governing this phenomenon is that irradiation varies as the squares of the distances from the centre, or, that irradiation proceeds in direct proportion to the squares of the distances. He then converses the idea and says he is further aware of the scientific law governing concentration or gathering together of light particles towards their centre. This law he states to be: concentration varies inversely as the squares of the distances.

From the scientific illustration of light showing equal diffusion from a centre, Poe then forms a hypothetical method of diffusion, which will, he thinks, correspond exactly with it. He imagines a hollow sphere of glass, the interior surface of which will receive a stratum of atoms equally diffused by a force resident in the centre. A second and inferior exercise of the same force he then imagines to diffuse, a second layer on the first. A third and still inferior force deposits a third layer on the second, and so on until the glass sphere is filled. Poe is of the opinion that his imaginative illustration parallels exactly the process in light radiation. He has preserved, he says, the same conditions, namely, equable diffusion from a center, and, therefore, he expresses himself as justified in assigning to his method of diffusion the law governing light and says: the forces of irradiation of atoms are directly proportional to the square of the distances.

Poe's next step is an attempt to find an analogy between his imaginary irradiation of atoms and the diffusion of rings from the sun according to
LaPlace's theory. In seeking this analogy, he again resorts to a supposition-al case. Confining himself to results, he says, and not to the process in both instances, he considers what the results of the processes of being whirled from the center would be if one were able to view them all at once. He imagines what conditions would exist if all the rings whirled from the sun—the rings which in time became Neptune, Saturn, Uranus, etc.—remained entire until the final discharge of that ring which gave birth to Mercury. He can picture to himself, he says, a series of co-existent, concentric circles. Between this condition for which, though imaginary, he still claims a scientific starting point, and his wholly imaginary distribution of atoms in the glass sphere, he claims a correspondence. He is of the opinion that they agree in results, that is, in arrangement of atoms in the one case and of rings in the other. He is also of the opinion that, from this similarity, he is justified in affirming that the forces which threw off each concentric circle varied as the squares of the distances. Poe puts in the step, that, in his imaginary experiment with the glass sphere, the number of atoms diffused on the interior surface and the succeeding circles, are in direct proportion with the forces which diffused them. This was probably his reason for insisting, in the present case of the concentric circles resulting from LaPlace's method, on looking at the results and not at the processes.

Poe has shown following light radiation that the diffusive force originates in unity. The planets and his atoms, therefore, he thinks, are radiated from a centre, and are both governed by the same law. He now wishes to point out, first, that the force of gravity equals the diffusive force; and, second, that it originates in unity as well as does the diffusive force. He inspects Newton's law of gravity and states it to be thus: "All bodies
attract each other with forces proportional to their quantities of matter and inversely proportional to the squares of their distances." He restated Newton's law, giving it as he says a more philosophical phraseology, though by no means modifying its meaning. 96 "Every atom, of every body, attracts every other atom, both of its own and every other body, with a force which varies inversely as the squares of the distances attracting and attracted atoms." He then notes certain correspondences. First, the law governing the irradiation of light; of the diffusion of his atoms in the glass sphere; of the concentric circles and therefore of the planets as whirled from the sun—the law is identical, he says, in all cases. The force of irradiation in all this phenomena varies as the squares of the distances. Secondly, the law governing the return of light particles corresponds with the return of atoms to their centre, or, in other words, to gravity. In both cases the forces vary inversely as the squares of the distances. He is, therefore, of the opinion that the gravity is the reaction, or action conversed, of the diffusive force and is, as a consequence, equal to it.

For the final part of his proposition, namely, that gravity has its source in unity, Poe now tries to advance scientific proof. He tries to fortify his position by quoting from Herschel and Humboldt to the effect that a movement toward a center among the heavenly bodies is, at least, not an untenable idea. Herschel admits, though reluctantly, Poe says, that the systems of the universe are in a state of progressive collapse. 97 Humboldt ex-


97. Ibid., p. 297

presses the belief that we have no data at hand to dispute the possibility
of such a movement toward a centre. Dr. Nichol, from whom Poe maintains a wide difference of opinion as to cosmical conditions, makes on this point, he says, remarks pertinent to the question. According to Dr. Nichol, the observations taken through Lord Rosse's high-power telescope reveal not circular masses of nebulae, but a condition quite the reverse. Volumes of stars, Dr. Nichol says, "stretch out apparently as if they were rushing towards a great central mass in consequence of the action of some great power." Poe is of the opinion that the circular masses alluded to are the variations in the absolutely rectilinear path of the planets to their centre. The general path would be a straight line, he says, and the infinity of curves the local deviations from the general uniform motion. From such evidence as he has just brought to bear, Poe appears to feel that he has sufficiently developed the thesis of his discourse to entitle him to assert that gravity is the "tendency to collapse," and that it is the law under which atoms, planets, stars, and clusters of stars seek their original unity.

Of what use to Poe was his scientific study? In the first place, he found his account in it as a literary critic. In one instance he terms criticism a science; in another instance, he expresses surprise that crit-
ics can so complacently pronounce judgment without the slightest knowledge of determinate principles on which to base their sentence.

Natural science also strengthened Poe's understanding of plot structure. It has already been noted that A.W. von Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature and Aristotle's Poetics had each its influence in forming the character of his plot. It has also been seen that philosophy had its bearing in determining its nature. Indeed, it is very interesting to note the sureness with which a change in source re-acts upon this particular interest. The method of telling a story as a logical sequence of events, bound together by no outstanding idea beyond the oneness of effect produced by an overwhelming mass of sensations, certainly by no emphasis on arrangement of parts - the plot of the Blackwood days, gave way, as we have seen, under Schlegel's influence, to the comprehension of the plot in the light of totality of interest. The latter idea grew under the influence of Aristotle's unity of action, an idea which to Poe came to mean the plot as an organism of mutually dependent parts. But it is in all probability, not too much to say that the greatest strength of Poe's conception of plot structure lay in his study and appreciation of Newton's law of gravitation.

Poe suggests an analogy between plot structure and the universe. He states this idea, in one instance, in the following words: "The Universe is a plot of God." In attempting to carry out this parallelism, he

103. Cf. Chapter III. Unity in the Drama and Fine Arts

104. Cf. Chapter III. Unity in Philosophy.

stresses first of all the idea of the atomic nature of the plot. For example, he thinks that a plot may be appreciated by all in its atoms, but taken as a whole, it is of far too idea/a nature to be a popular interest.106

106. Works, vol. 3, p. 120. Review of Bulwer's "Night and Morning."

In another instance he views plot structure as being atomic, saying that Bulwer's workmanship shows an ability to adopt the very numerous atoms of his story,107 and he seems to carry the analogy further in referring to the plot as a mass.108

107. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 117.

108

108. Works, vol. 6, p. 45. The American Drama.

A parallel between the universe and the plot in literature appears to be likewise stressed in the attempt to identify the mutual dependence of part on part, or of atom on atom, especially as Newton's law of gravity gives the idea, with the mutual dependence in the structural formation of the plot. Newton's law of gravity, it will be remembered, Poe had interpreted to mean: "Every atom of every body, attracts every other atom, both of its own and every other body, with a force which varies inversely as the squares of the distances between the attracting and the attracted atom."109 So greatly does Poe appear to be impressed with this scientific truth of mutual dependence, that he declares his mind is overwhelmed with the idea. An atom displaced he says, would affect the whole universe.110 "If I venture to
displace, by even the billionth part of an inch," he adds, "the microscopical speck of dust which lies now upon the point of my finger, what is the character of that act which I have adventured? I have done a deed which shakes the Moon in her path, which causes the Sun to be no longer the Sun, and which alters forever the destiny of the multitudinous myriads of stars that roll and glow in the majestic presence of their Creator."\footnote{111} It is not surprising, then, that with so profound a conviction of the scientific truth of mutual dependence of atom on atom, that he should express the same idea in literary practice. He makes a distinction between the plot as he understood it from his study of Aristotle's definition of the plot as an organism and the plot as an outgrowth of science. He is of the opinion that Aristotle's plot calls for only slight dependence in comparison with one springing from scientific knowledge. The difference he places in the degree of injury resulting from the removal of any one of the incidents making up the structure. In the former case, he says, the removal or displacing of any one of the leading incidents would prove a detriment to the whole; in the latter, not one part, not the most minute incident, can be displaced without ruin to the mass. He further illustrates the dependence by affirming that the withdrawal of any part from its rightful place in plot structure would "overthrow the fabric" as completely as would the changing of the position of a single brick in a building. The idea of the most delicate mutual dependence continues throughout Poe's literary criticism. On its basis, he
declares, a stanza of poetry to be a unit, one line of which removed would ruin the whole.

Further intensifying his idea of mutual relationship, Poe even insists on plot structure showing reciprocal action between cause and effect.

It is very probable that he had met this idea as a philosophic truth in the Bridgewater Treatises. He may also have met it in Kant's Critique of the Judgment. But he also discusses the point of mutuality of adaptation on the basis of his own hypothesis. He first inspects, scientifically and mathematically, the question of mere adaptation. Newton's law shows, he says, that forces are directly proportional to the amount of matter projected:

his own hypothesis supposes the diffusive force directly adapted to the number of atoms diffused. But his own hypothesis appears to add a further step.

The mutual relationship between cause and effect, it is highly probable, originated in his idea of gravity and diffusion counterbalancing each other and both having their source in the same centre, a condition which Divine Volition, according to his theory, made possible. He maintains that it is from standpoints such as these that the plot in fictitious literature should
be viewed. The pleasure, he says in *Eureka*, which one derives from plot structure, is in the ratio of its approach to his species of divine reciprocity. And he adds, that, in constructing the plot, one should aim at so arranging the incidents that we shall not be able to determine of any one of them, whether it depends from any one other, or upholds it.\footnote{Ibid., p. 292.}

The necessity of the denouement also rests on a scientific basis. Poe had attempted to demonstrate, it was noted, that gravity has its origin in unity, and, at the same time, from its progressive return to its source, carries within itself the necessity of an end. On this latter point, Poe had, it was also noted, laid great stress on Herschel's admission of the universe presenting a state of progressive collapse;\footnote{Ibid., p. 300. *Eureka*.} a state which he identifies with gravity and hence with return to unity.\footnote{Ibid., p. 301.} He is of the opinion that an obvious analogy exists between the law of gravitation and a denouement brought about by incidents springing from the main subject of a piece. The end of a piece, he says, must be brought about by events originating in the ruling idea, springing from the bosom of the thesis.\footnote{Ibid., p. 306.} Should one not conceive of the universe as having an end, Poe further says, in continuing the analogy, creation would impress one with the same sense of dissatisfaction as we experience from the denouement in an imperfect plot, brought about by in-
posed incidents foreign to the subject.

Poe admits, however, that the plot as he sees it in its scientific sense is a standard in criticism, rather than a possibility to be attained by human skill. The universe as the "plot of God," is an ideal or perfect plot, conceived by science in its strictest sense. The artist should, however, he maintains, hold this plot in mind when he is fashioning his tale, and approach its perfection as nearly as he can.

Poe also endeavors to treat metrical art with scientific hand. He claims the discovery of what he calls the true method of scanning and of what he conceives to be the real nature of the caesura. The latter has been used, he says, "time out of time" by all poets, but with no knowledge of the character he gives it. The whole subject of versification he has treated more thoroughly, he maintains, than any other living grammarian, critic, or essayist.

A chronological survey of Poe's interest in metrical art will reveal somewhat of his sources and the development of his theory. An early evidence presents itself in a letter from Judge Tucker to Poe in December, 1835, the content of which indicates that he and the jurist exchanged critical opinions on the question of versification. Judge Tucker commends Poe's frequent success in the art and, at the same time, asks for criticism in return. "I will try to write out from memory a few rude lines," he says; "I send them on one condition. You are to judge them candidly."
The letter further indicates that the correspondents had different standards for judgment. Judge Tucker writes to the lines to which reference has just been made: "Reject them if they do not come up to either my standard or yours. Let me know which." Ruggedness is apparently the standard which Poe, at this time, has in mind. A mere flow of mellifluous lines, he had evidently said, according to Judge Tucker's letter, by no means fulfills the demands for metrical art. He seems also to have complained that a certain poem of the jurist's was faulty, because too "faultless." Tucker replies to this criticism of his lines: "Not that I could not have made them rugged, but because I did not think myself master of that sort of 'grace beyond the reach of art', which so few can match. I have seen something analogous to it, in the features and in the carriage of persons who were the handsomer for not being perfectly handsome, and the more graceful for a little awkwardness." Judge Tucker's standard however, in opposition to Poe's ruggedness, appears to be equality in time, an equality in which he is also aware of irregularities. The time of the bar, he says, must be the same, no matter how many notes are in it. He requires, he adds, that the line must be uttered in due time and that the presence of nine, of eleven, or even of twelve syllables should not affect the time but should rather render a relief from "the mawkish sweetness which by continuance becomes nauseous." He considers that Moore, Pope
and Byron can throw out or throw in syllables into their verse and yet preserve the rhythm without interruption. This art, he thinks, is the secret of Moore's charm. And he points out to Poe that one of his own (Poe's) pieces does not measure up to this standard. He refers to what Poe had evidently called a fragment, and insists that there are in it lines which cannot in any way be forced into time. Take, he says, Baldazzar's speech, at the bottom of the first column of p. 15. 125

125. This fragment to which Judge Tucker refers is evidently Poe's Politician, called an unfinished drama, which appears on p. 15 of the vol. I, S.I.M.

In 1835, Poe was in fair way as has just been seen, of learning from Judge Tucker certain notions (on versification) of the charm of equality with irregularity of beat in versification. There are indications during the years 1836 and 1837 that Poe tried to account for the charm of equalized cadence in verse; and to analyze the pleasure that comes from the rhythmic flow of lines varied though not retarded by irregular beat. Judge Tucker had offered him no explanation of this charm. "I do not know," writes the jurist in the letter of 1835, "to what to liken those occasional departures from regular metre which are so fascinating." Though he suggests that they may be likened to grace notes in music he only vouches, he says, for the accuracy of his ear. But it was into the field of philosophy and science that Poe took his investigation for laws lying back of this spell. Poe had found in philosophy, it will be remembered, the principle of unity and variety - which he translated into a practical principle in literary art. 126 The Platonic sense of

proportion and the conception of Many in One, had, on Socrates' recommendation, been, for him, a rich store for rhetorical needs.\textsuperscript{127} He had, moreover, found in science, as the present chapter details, what seemed to him ample illustration of uniformity and variety in the physical world.\textsuperscript{128} He now seems to be of the opinion that the same principles of philosophy and science may be applied to metrical art, - that in them may lie the secret of the charm which he and Judge Tucker were discussing. In furtherance of this supposition may be cited, first, his statements that the true method of scansion is based in processes of natural law.\textsuperscript{129} Equality, he says, is the underlying principle in versification.\textsuperscript{130} He considers, therefore, that all English Prosodists have been laboring under a misconception in their implicit faith that the secret of scansion lay somewhere in the study of feet, metres, rhythms, and rules in Greek verse.\textsuperscript{131} It is a mistake, he insists, to take the Iliad as a starting point, instead of Nature and common sense. Indeed, the mere fact that he attempts to rationalize the subject shows, it would seem, an effort to see the art in its scientific relations. In the second place, his very

\textsuperscript{127} Cf. Chapter on Philosophy, p.

\textsuperscript{128} Cf. This Chapter, p.

\textsuperscript{129} Works, vol. p. Rationale of Verse, p. 175.
obvious effort to establish an analogy between what he calls the development of verse and a scientific hypothesis of creation place little doubt in the assumption that, to him, versification was a matter of science. The effort to seek this analogy is apparent in that his proposition for the growth of verse forms is in tone reminiscent of his outline of LaPlace's theory. For example, he says in summing up the details of metrical development, that he believes the processes he gives to be nearly if not accurately those which did occur in the gradual creation of what we now call verse.\footnote{132} And he seems to be desirous of further carrying out the analogy by stating that both are atomic. Poe gave LaPlace's explanation, it will be remembered, of the very start of creation being the meeting of two atoms in space.\footnote{133} The beginning of verse, or, as he calls it, the rudiment, results, he thinks, from the very germ of a thought seeking satisfaction in equality of sounds from words of two syllables.\footnote{134} He places the spondee, therefore, at the beginning of the process of verse development, and says that his idea is corroborated by the fact that spondees are most frequent in ancient tongues.\footnote{135} A certain parallelism between science and verse appears to continue in the character of the gradual growth in both cases. The two atoms, according to the scientific
theory, were joined by others, until an aggregation was formed. The second step, Poe says, in verse creation, was the collocation of two spondees; the third, the juxtaposition of three of such words. Both hypotheses like­wise agree that mass, the aggregation of atoms in the one instance, and the collection of spondees in the other, reaches a point where it seeks relief from "excess self." In Eureka he describes the mass of the sun needing relief when its equilibrium was disturbed, and its consequent throwing off of material from its equatorial region. In the hypothetical development of verse, he speaks of the spondees seeking relief from too great predominance of their own material. Poe also seems to have in mind the same means for relief in both cases. The introduction of variety appears to be the remedy. While the parallel in this regard cannot be too closely insisted on in its details, yet both theories deal so consistently with the relief in consequence of variety, that one is led to think the metrical was suggested.
by the scientific. The planets whirled from the sun, and, at a later period, from planets themselves, Poe had chosen, in furtherance of his theory, to consider as so many gigantic atoms. These atoms displayed a particular difference in size and form, each from each, though there was always, he thought, a general equality preserved.¹⁴² Though he does not definitely state the


connection between variety and the attempt of the planet to obtain relief from its too great predominance of material, he yet makes the inference plain. In the metrical theory, the perception arises, he says, that relief is needed from excess spondees; there is too great monotony felt. A variety of forms is therefore resorted to. Words of two syllables, though differently accented, appear, that is to say, iambuses and trochees are introduced.¹⁴³

¹⁴³. Works. Rationale of Verse, p. 179.

And in like manner and from a like cause, anapaests and dactylics came in to relieve monotony.¹⁴⁴ Line, stanza, and rhyme, he also asserts, appeared in


the same way.

¹⁴⁵. Ibid.

From the foregoing evidence, it seems a very reasonable conclusion to think that Poe grounded his theory of metrical art on his scientific study, and even to believe that he formed for verse a hypothetical process of development with a scientific hypothesis in mind.
In the third place, Poe attempts to analyze the pleasure derived from equality in verse from a scientific standpoint. He advances the idea that this delight, if it could be measured, would be measured in mathematical proportions. To show what he intends by this assumption, he first discusses equality in the abstract without reference either to verse or to music. Equality he defines, in terms sufficiently comprehensive to include similarity, proportion, identity, repetition, and adaptation.\(^{146}\) A crystal, he thinks, will illustrate his meaning. It is undoubtedly true, he explains, that on examining one of the faces of a crystal we are interested by the equality between the sides and between the angles. The equality of the sides pleases us; that of the angles doubles the pleasure. The pleasure is squared, he says, when a second face is brought to view; it is cubed when a third is examined. Up to a certain point, the delight increases mathematically and then decreases in similar proportions. He then considers equality in music. Unpracticed ears, he says, can recognize only simple equalities. They can compare one simple sound with another simple sound. Practised ears, however, can distinguish double equalities. Two simple sounds taken together can be compared, apparently at the same instant though really by the aid of memory, with two other similar sounds taken together. Highly cultivated taste can even appreciate the recurrence of similar equalities at very great intervals. He is of the opinion that this latter ability is entering into what may be called scientific music and may lead into too great stress being laid on its physique rather than on its morale.\(^{147}\)

\(^{146}\) Ibid., p. 177.  
\(^{147}\) Ibid., p. 178.
This abstract idea of equality which he has applied to music he also applies to verse. Mental experiment will prove, he says, that all the equalizations in versifications will be recognized, each in its own value, and each in comparison with all the others. In short, he claims for verse, a mathematical basis. He gives the following lines as an example of his meaning:

Virginal Lilian, rigidly, humbly dutiful;
Saintlily, lowlily,
Thrillingly, holily
Beautiful!

Then, he analyzes the lines into absolute, proximate, and proportional equalizations, each one of which will be recognized by the cultivated ear.

Absolute equalities:

(1) Between the long syllable of each dactyl and the two short conjointly
(2) Between each dactyl and any other dactyl
(3) Between the two middle lines
(4) Between the first line and the three others taken conjointly
(5) Between the last two syllables of the respective words dutiful and beautiful
(6) Between the last two syllables of the respective words lowlily and holily

Proximate equalities:

(1) Between first syllable of dutiful and first syllable of beautiful
(2) Between first syllable of lowlily and that of holily

Proportional equalities:

(1) Of five to one, between the first line and each of its members, the dactyls.
(2) Of two to one, between each of the middle lines and its members the dactyls.
(3) Of five to two, between the first line and each of the two middle
(4) Of five to one, between first line and the last
(5) Of two to one, between each of the middle lines and the last
(6) Of four to one, as concerns number between all the lines, taken collectively and any individual line.
Having shown that equalizations are recognizable, Poe evidently wishes to demonstrate further his understanding of scientific law, as the operating principle in metrical art - the law that in equality exists at one and the same time infinite varieties. He advances the theory that scanning by time is but the appreciation of this scientific law. He even endeavors, as will be seen, to work out his system mathematically, giving numerical values to long and short syllables as he conceives of varied beats being forced to equal time. In attempting to explain this system as it is most fully detailed in The Rationale of Verse, it seems most understandable, if one keeps in mind the philosophic and scientific laws which have just been referred to. The meaning, then, of what Poe calls his general proposition, will be quite plain. He says: "In all rhythms, the prevalent or distinctive feet may be varied at will, and nearly at random, by the occasional introduction of equivalent feet - that is to say, feet the sum of whose syllabic times is equal to the sum of the syllabic times of the distinctive feet." Various admonitions follow this proposition, such as that care should be taken not to introduce so many variations that distinctive feet no longer exist; and, similarly, the necessity of waiting before introducing any variation, until the ear has become accustomed to what is intended for the distinctive foot. That the variation should correspond with the sense of the piece, he likewise suggests. Pope, he thinks, has fine instances of this care. Having made these sug-
gestions, he then starts to explain and illustrate what he means by his general proposition. He begins by determining on a standard of measurement, choosing the long syllable as the unit, and seeing the short syllable as having a certain proportion to that length. He then takes up the question of the substitution of equivalent feet. A trochee is equal to an iambus, both being equal to three short syllables. Another instance of the substitution of different equivalent feet, he maintains, is the caesura. He considers this foot the most important of all feet, and, as was said at the outset of this discussion, he claimed the merit of discovering the character about to be detailed. According to his explanation, it is the best illustration of variety in uniformity. In fact, he makes it a variable foot, always equal in the sum of its syllabic time of the prevailing foot. He differs, he says, from all prosodists in the nature of its use, though he agrees with them that it is a "pause." Opposed to the Prosodists introducing it between two members of the same verse, by which one is contrasted with the other, he maintains that it should be used as a pause to give force. Its use is also, he thinks, to allow a stepping over into another species of foot without producing the slightest discord. He marks the caesura with a waved line in order to express variability of value. In the following line he says it equals three short syllables: - I have a little stepson of only three years
old. It equals four short syllables in: - Pale as a lily was Emily Gray.

A further example of variation he gives as the bastard foot. This foot is illustrated, he says, in the recognition that a precise number of syllables does not have to be adhered to, provided the time required for the whole foot is kept intact.\textsuperscript{154} He gives as an example of a bastard iambus:

\textsuperscript{154}. Ibid., p. 191.

or laugh and shake in Rab e lais ea sy chair. He wishes to make the three syllables e lais ea equal the two syllables composing any one of the other feet, and he thinks it can be done by pronouncing the syllables e lais in double quick time. Elais is, therefore, a bastard iambus. On this basis, he condemns blending, or the effort to force several syllables into a fewer number of beats. In the line: -

See the delicate footed reindeer
delicate should not be pronounced delbate. Every syllable should be pronounced in full. But the syllables licate should be made to occupy the time of a short syllable and so must be said twice as quickly as any other of the short syllables in the line. Delicate has, in time, therefore, the value of a long and a short syllable, and he calls it a bastard trochee. Poe now brings forward what he considers a bolder variation, or bolder substitution of equivalent feet. In the line: -

Many are the thoughts that come to me
he considers the syllables ny are the as equal only to a short syllable, and if pronounced in the time of the other short syllables in the line, will make the foot, not a bastard trochee, he thinks, but what he calls a quick trochee.

He then proceeds to give numerical values to syllables. He takes
again the line: -

Many are the thoughts that come to me.

The long syllable is the unit. The prevailing foot is the trochee. Therefore that and to will be pronounced in one-half the time of thoughts and come. My are the taken together will be said in one-half the time of Ma, each of the triplet being equal to one-sixth. He is a caesura and will have the time of three short syllables. Writing the line again and giving it Poe's figures, it stands: - Many are the thoughts that come to me.

6 6 6 2 2 3/2

Poe now considers that the value of his system of scanning by the time could be no better tested than by taking a case where usual scansion has failed to agree on the proper mode. He advances the theory that a stanza should be scanned as though it were one continuous verse. As an example he cites the instance of a poem that, to the ear is perfectly harmonious, but to the eye is a puzzle to scan. The last word in the first line of Byron's Bride of Abydos, has, he says, always been a matter of mystery to the prosodists. The line was meant for dactylic and the foot at the end was ir-

155. Ibid., p. 203.

regular and therefore confusing. In a similar way, the first word of the second line also proved a stumbling-block. It prevented the line from being scanned according to the foot that was obviously the poet's intention. This word, said some prosodists, according to Poe, was evidently the poet's blunder. Some even demanded that it be cut from the line. Poe now offers to show that scanning by time in one continuous verse without reference to line will clear up the difficulty. In his scansion the ensuing points may be noted. First, that variety in uniformity will be seen to be the law fol-
lowed; that the dactyl is the prevailing foot, or four short syllables; the caesura has the value of four short syllables. Two spondees in a measure, being equal to two long, are also equal to four short syllables.

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime There the rage of the vulture the love of the turtle Now melt into softness now madden to crime

Another influence of Poe's scientific interest in his literary work was its obvious effect on his understanding of the power of realism to produce an impression. His changed attitude in this regard is interesting to follow. In the Letter to B—, in 1831, he had apparently wholly discredited the place of real life in the poet's art. He spoke at that time with contempt of Peter Bell and quoted with enthusiasm from Ossian the passages which, in his opinion, Wordsworth had unjustly criticized. In Genius he again doubts that realism can satisfy the poet's fancy. He says, it was noted in the chapter on philosophy:—"The dull scenes of real life can never be suffered to chill the ardor of the romantic imagination." But scientific study apparently changed Poe's conception of that power/the real world in effective writing. In his early period he apparently depended for effect in his treatment of the life-in-death theme, on attendant horrors of the atmosphere of gloom overhanging the house of Usher, and on the hideous teeth in Berenice. But in 1844, life-in-death becomes a plain statement of gruesome facts. In The Premature Burial he says the conviction that premature burial actually exists is the secret of its appalling character. It is the topic itself which gives it its "sacred awe".
Life-in-death, in The Oval Portrait, is a change of events natural and true to human nature. Poe asserts that in The Raven he has not transcended the realm of the real. Although a suggestion of an undercurrent comes in as the poem approaches the end, still the narrative details only natural events. In his tale The Thousand and Second Night, he depends for effect on the truth of the stories told the kind. They were so wonderful that the kind did not credit with belief the wonders of the real world. In another instance he thinks it 

would have been better had Miss Barrett in her Drama of Exile, involved her Eve in a series of adventures merely natural. He compliments Mrs. Grant for having given in her Memoirs of an American Lady a faithful record of most interesting realities—of manners, persons and events as they existed and occurred long ago in the Province of New York.

Verisimilitude Poe apparently considers an aspect of the advantages of the real experience for producing a telling effect. That he laid great stress on the importance of fact in his astronomical studies has already been noted. It is true, he considers with contempt the exaltation of a fact solely as it is a fact; as it rests in isolation without regard to its place in the development of law. Of fact, in this sense, he can not speak too slightingly.
Baconianism is tainted, he says in *Eureka*, with just this erroneous conception of fact. Yet he expresses himself as recognizing the value of adhering to minute detail in any branch of natural science. He is of the opinion that Bacon's system, in spite of containing the taint or the falsity he has just mentioned, a system which he thinks places too great emphasis on the means rather than the end of knowledge, has still a force and a revealing power unknown to any other method. "Witness", he says, "the light which Bacon has thrown upon philosophy".

It is not surprising, therefore, that the idea of a scientific adherence to minute detail should find its way into Poe's critical opinions and into his literary practice. Plausibility of a story rests, he says, upon the faithfulness of minute detail. Especially is this true, he adds, in fiction whose ground-work is science. In this case he considers that the detail must be 162 eminently scientific as far as observation and analogy can carry it. The

Moon-Hoax, according to Poe, made the attempt to give plausibility by scientific detail, but owing to the astronomical blunders of its author, had failed in being credited with belief. Among other errors, Lock, the author of the Moon-Hoax, it seems quoted Herschel erroneously to the effect that with high magnifying lens one could see flowers on the surface of the moon and even detect the color and shape of the eyes of small birds. No astronomer, Poe continues would have stated that our earth was only thirteen times larger than the moon; neither would he have entered in his story such imaginary data as that of large bodies of water existing in the lunar satellites.
Poe goes on to examine other stories of nature similar to the *Moon-Hoax*. The lack of Plausibility in *L'Homme dans la Lune, ou le Voyage Chimérique fait au monde de la Lune*, he attributes to scientific errors as in the former case. In spite of its author claiming a knowledge of *La Philosophie Naturelle*, he exhibits only, Poe says, fanciful theories of his time. For example the seventeenth century writer maintains that "gravitating power" extends but a short distance from the earth's surface; and that the motion of our globe is "from the east to the west". But plausibility by a strict adherence to fact, Poe maintains, is exemplified by his own *Hans Pfaal*. He has aimed at verisimilitude, he says, by making every minute detail in the passage from the earth to the moon, accord with the views of the most eminent astronomers. But even in instances dealing not at all with scientific material, one can see the influence of scientific training in verisimilitude. Scriptural prophecies, Poe thinks, well carry out a scientific method. The Christian and the philosopher, he says, will understand him when he attributes to the Deity a conscious intention of providing for the evidence of the fulfilment of word, an intention manifest in the smallest detail. He expresses his conviction of what he conceives to be the wisdom of this plan, saying:—"No general meaning attached to a prediction, no general fulfilment of such prediction, could carry to the reason of mankind inferences so unquestionable as its particular and minutely incidental accomplishment. General statements, except in rare instances, are susceptible of misinterpretation or misapplication; details admit no shadow of ambiguity."

163. *Misc.,* vol. 5, p. 9, Review of Stephens' *Arabia Petraea*

The drama, he thinks, furnishes striking proof of the need of verisimilitude. In his article on The New Comedy he is attempting to account for what is usually spoken of as the decline of the drama. He is of the opinion that the drama has not declined; it has simply not advanced. "Our fault-finding", he says, "is on the score of deficiency in verisimilitude--in natural art, that is to say in art based in the natural laws of man's heart and understanding." He cites as an example, the answer one character makes to every remark addressed to him; that "he is indifferent to flowers". Such a reply is not only absurd, Poe thinks; it has not even the redeeming feature of a farcical element. He gives other instances of a more general nature. "Also in the same category, we must include the rectangular crossings and recrossings of the dramatic personae on the stage; the coming forward to the foot-lights when anything is of interest to be told; the reading of private letters in a loud, rhetorical tone; the preposterous soliloquizing; and the even more preposterous "asides". "We need principles of our own."


Poe evidently feels that the principles he learned in philosophy, namely, variety in uniformity, has a basis in the physical world. The use that he made of this scientific principle, in his work as critic, I shall endeavor to show in the following chapter.
CHAPTER VI

AN ATTACK ON THE LITERARY CHARLATAN

The preceding chapter dealt with Poe's conviction that scientific method is the ground-work of literary form. It is my purpose in the present chapter to outline Poe's work as he pressed that conviction to what he apparently felt was the betterment of American letters. I shall attempt to show that in this work he consistently attacked charlatanism in literature, dogmatism in criticism, conservatism and sectional jealousies, and what he considered to be kindred evils of the conservative spirit; namely, imitation and plagiarism. We shall see that at times in this war on poor writing, he assumes the role of Plato in an inexorable command to banish the imitating poet; of Swift in keenness of thrusts at the crudities of scribblers.

Satire was one weapon that Poe chose in defense of his principles. In Loss of Breath, we have already noted, he intended a satire on British periodical criticism. In How to Write a Blackwood Article, it will now be pointed out, he plans a more elaborate protest against poor writing. But there is reason to believe that in a longer and still more detailed satire and one which, to my knowledge, has never been ascribed to his pen, he aimed to give constructive criticism as well as to confound the ignorant literary pedant. It is highly probable that The Atlantis, a series of articles in The American Museum of 1838, was the background of How to Write a Blackwood Article, and that, in the chapters that make up the series Poe was following Plato in that he described an ideal state in literature based on scientific principles—a state from which the literary charlatan was to be excluded; and Swift in that the American scribbler bears a remarkable similarity to Martin Scribblers, the dull, though pretentious writer. The title of The Atlantis, as it appears in The American Museum, reads as follows:—
The Atlantis

A Southern World,—or a Wonderful continent discovered in the Great Southern Ocean, and supposed to be the Atlantis of Plato, or the Terra Australia Incognita of Dr. Swift, during a voyage conducted by Alonso Pinzon, commander of the American Metal Ship, Astrea.

By Peter Prospero, LL.D., M.A.; P.S.

The story tells of Peter Prospero, a literateur from America, meeting in Saturnia, the chief city of the ideal republic, with the most famous scientists, philosophers and poets that the world has known. He talks familiarly with Newton and Kepler; with Locke and Dr. Johnson; and draws many a lesson from Dr. Samuel Clarke. In attempting to establish Poe as the author of The Atlantis it will be observed that the points which make up that argument are identical with the phases of the literary principles that he had learned from his study of philosophy and science.

In the first place, is the testimony of external evidence. Poe's leisure, at the time of the publication of the series, indicates the possibility of his having sufficient time for protracted literary effort. He had, it seems, severed his connection in 1837 with the Southern Literary Messenger, and there is no record that in 1838 he was connected editorially with any magazine. His letter to N.C. Brooks, the editor of the Museum, corroborates the possibility.

1. Works, Letters, p. 44.

From the wording of this letter it would seem as though Poe might have written a greater number of articles than those that bear his name throughout the magazine. Only Ligeia appeared in the first issue of the Museum; yet his letter, written before the date of the first number, asks for proofs of his
articles. Further evidence may be the fact that the studies he has just completed—for example, those preparing him for his *New Views of the Solar System*, those leading into his philosophic interests, both ancient and Christian, and those concerning Locke's psychology—coincide with the interests of the ideal Republic. Of some importance, too, may be the point that he apparently attaches great weight to the appearance of the first number of the magazine; the number in which *The Atlantis* appears. His words, in fact, lead one to think that, in his estimation, some change in literary theory and practice was at hand. "I look anxiously," he said in his letter to the Editor, "for the first number, from which I date the dawn of a fine literary day in Baltimore." Still further evidence may perhaps be found in the fact that in no instance does Poe mention *The Atlantis*. Wilmer's *Quacks of Helicon*, a satire in verse, directed against poor writers, and based, as Poe said, very obviously on the satire of Pope and Dryden, he welcomed enthusiastically. He said it was "the truth" that Wilmer had spoken.


His silence on *The Atlantis* might lead one to think that it came from his pen.

3. The possibility of Wilmer's authorship of *The Atlantis* presented itself, but on examining *The Quacks of Helicon* and *Our Press Gang*, also by Wilmer—both directed against poor writing in America, in *Our Press Gang* the abuses being chiefly the practice of extravagant statement in American newspapers—it seemed unreasonable to consider that he could have written it, for Wilmer works out no principles of literary technique as do Poe and the author of *The Atlantis*. His *Quacks of Helicon* is, as Poe says, in his review of the satire, a very obvious imitation of that of Dryden and Pope. (*Wilmer, L.A., Philadelphia, 1859, Our Press Gang; or a Complete Exposition of the Corruptions and Crime of the American Newspapers.*)
Internal evidence also points to the possibility of Poe's authorship of The Atlantis. In the first place, may be cited Poe's knowledge, that we have already noted, of Pope and Swift as satirists. In the second place, both Poe and the author of The Atlantis consider that American letters are in need of elevation. Poe, up to this point, had repeatedly combated poor writing and had pledged himself, as he said, to demolish scribblers. The author of The Atlantis likewise comments on the crude state of American literature. "Our Republic, though a great nation, is yet but a gigantic infant.----It is not to be denied that the taste which prevails is too generally satisfied with the lighter productions of genius such as novels, tales and periodical journals—the crudest off-spring of the press." Both authors, notwithstanding their opinion of the crude state of literature in America, assert they are convinced a better day is dawning. Poe had said, it will be remembered, in his letter to N.C. Brooks, that from the issuing of the first number of The American Museum he looked forward to a fine literary day in Baltimore. The author of The Atlantis, in the person of Peter Prospero, expresses the same hopeful thought. "I am in hope", he says,"that, imperfect as is this beginning, it is the dawn of a better day."

Before proceeding further with the attempt to identify Poe with the author of The Atlantis, it may be well to present Poe's analysis of the errors that he felt existed in American literature. We shall examine first what he
calls a servile dependence of the American writer on British criticism. In 1836, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, he complains of the excess of our subserviency to English opinion in critical matters. He grants at the same time, however, that a respectful deference from us, the younger nation, is no more than the homage we should be expected to pay. He is also willing to acknowledge, he says in *The New York Mirror*, that our proneness to ape the mother country arose in the first place, from the natural attitude of a colony toward the people from which it sprang. But in 1842, he considers that our dependence is slavish and pertinacious. Our criticism, following English models, is tainted, he says, with the same cant of generality. And in the *Weekly Mirror*, in 1844, he further assails our dependence on foreign criticism. A review of the poems of Elizabeth Barrett, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, he considers so full of errors that it should awaken "us uncultivated Americans" from our customary reverence for the absolute tone of English critics.

Continuing to analyze the question, Poe considers that the matters of a national literature and of the copyright law must be taken into account. His understanding of the copyright, which was so engrossing to the critics of the
30's and 40's, is perhaps no better stated than in his editorial article in the second volume of *The Broadway Journal*. He is of the opinion that the copyright law in itself make an American criticism more pointed, nor, in reality protect the interests of American writing. On the contrary, he states it to be his conviction that the American author's chief safeguard lies in a knowledge of principles. Even with the International Copyright in full operation, Poe sees that American critics may still be ridden to death by the "ignorant and egotistical Wilson"; that the opinion of Washington Irving and of Prescott, and of Bryant, may still be a mere "nullity in comparison with that of any anonymous sub-sub-editor of *The Spectator, The Athenaeum,* or *The London Punch*. Yet Poe does not disregard the value of the copyright law. He considers that without it men of genius will never be able to obtain remuneration for their labors. "How can magazine editors, he asks, pay with any liberality when period-

12. *New York Mirror*, vol. 1, p. 306, February 22, 1844, *Imitation-Plagiarism*. Poe answers with several articles in the Mirror, the summons of Willis to do battle for the cause of authors' pay in America. (Weekly Mirror, vol. 1, p. 15. Article by "Willis, entitled *Authors' Pay in America*.) Willis, the editor of the Mirror, feeling as it seems, the vital importance of bringing the question of authors' pay before the public, had called on Poe to head the campaign. "We wish to light beacons for an authors' crusade", he says, "and we have no leisure to be more than its Peter the Hermit. We solemnly summon Edgar Poe to do the devoir de coeur de Lion—no man's weapon half so trenchant!"

Poe feels that the establishment of a national literature will not,
more than the establishment of the copyright, give to the American man of letters the strength and independence he needs. The proper meaning of nationality in letters, or what is to be gained from it, he thinks has never been distinctly understood. He proceeds, therefore, as in the case of the copyright law, to give what he understands to be its real import to the art of letters in America. He is of the opinion that we should get rid of our unhealthy hankering after a national literature. Subserviency to British opinion was bad; but worse far is "our too quickly assumed freedom". He ridicules the idea of our great hurry to establish a literature of our own. "We had built up an army and navy; we must build up a literature. It was further unanimously resolved that we had a national literature". He is also of the opinion that an undue stressing of nationality converts what should be a universal idea of literature into a political question. He makes the sweeping statement that true literature has no nationality; that it has nothing to do with the country in which a writer is born or with the language he speaks; that the poet is inspired by the same sentiment in whatever village or garret he may dwell. It is a mistake, he


insists, to distinguish the American writer from the British when it comes to the vital principles that inspire the truly poetic. The self-same Saxon current animates us both, he says, and only for the moment can social, or moral, or physical or political conditions speak to a point of difference. And as an apparent summary to the idea of the universal nature of our literature as opposed to the political, he frequently turns his phrase with a tone of sweeping finality:

"The poet in Arcady is, in Kamchatka, the poet still".

"The world at large is the only legitimate stage for the autorial histrio." 20

Applying, therefore, this universal idea of literature, he can see no reason why an American author should confine himself to American themes. And he speaks in satirical terms of such oft-occurring passages in American magazines as "that truly native novelist, Mr. Cooper", and "that staunch American genius, Mr. Paulding". We have become, he continues, the "maddest partisans in letters" and we are thus forced to like "a stupid book the better, because, sure enough, its stupidity is American". Moreover, Poe is convinced that nationality in literature, at least the unhealthy type which he is now discussing, is a sure indication that rules of art are not at the basis of judgment. He says, in
his review of Halleck's *Alnwick Castle*: "The system of criticism which obtains among us, and which tries the productions of one American mind by those of another instead of comparing them with some immutable standard or with the best examples in the same kind with which other countries have supplied us, has done great injury to the cause of true Art in our Republic". And again in the same article, he maintains that America will never have a literature until its writers have studied and prepared themselves for their task.


He grants, however, the possibility, even the desirability, of nationality in letters. If by nationality is meant, he says, a nationality of self-respect; if it means an excellence in writing that shall defend us at home and abroad, then, he says, he is strongly in favor of the idea. He welcomes the advent of Wiley and Putnam's *Library of American Books*. He publishes in *The Broadway Journal*, William Gilmore Simms' account of this new undertaking, with the remark that Simms has made "just observations".


25. Simms, in the article printed in the *Broadway Journal*, makes a strong plea to the American public to support Wiley & Putnam's venture—that of publishing American books. The Library was originally designed, Simms explains, for the reprinting of European books only, and it is with great financial risk that it attempts to print works to whose popularity British criticism has not attested. Further factors contributing to this risk Simms gives as the necessity of paying for the American manuscript, while the European material was at hand for nothing; the difficulty of printing from a manuscript often imperfectly written as opposed to the ease of printing from clear type of a European copy. Considering these difficulties, Simms considers that Wiley and Putnam are doing a disinterested and generous work in behalf of American literature, and should therefore be supported by American citizens. (*Broadway Journal*, vol. 2, p. 94.)

Poe expresses himself as radically opposed to the conservative spirit.
It will be remembered how bitter was his opposition to antique prejudices among American scientists; how sanguine were his hopes of awakening American philosophers to investigate new views; but it was literary conservatism that he especially deplored. Literary cliques, cabals—in fact, literary dictatorship in general—he detested. Bulwer's dictatorship in English literary circles and its consequent reflection on American opinions, Poe calls in question. He feels under no obligation to admire Mr. Bulwer's novels, he says, though Mr. Bulwer is a member of Parliament. "Literary Lions" Poe is likewise hostile.


He writes to J.P. Kennedy that in his story Lionizing he intended to satirize the ease with which one could become a dictator, or, as he says, a lion. He

27. Letters, p. 30, February 11, 1836. At about this date in the S.L.M. is an article from Willis giving an account of his conversation with Lady Blessington, the leader of a fashionable literary coterie. Willis may have been one of the lions to which Poe had reference.

He does not admire literary "blue-stockings". "We do not put the names of our fine women in the newspapers. In his opinion it is not the business of female education to qualify a woman to be the head of a literary coterie. Neither


does he think that education shall qualify a woman to "figure in the journal of a traveling coxcomb."

29. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 520, Review of I. Promessi Sposi. Undoubtedly Poe has reference here to Fanny Kemble Butler. He had reviewed her journal at length in the S.L.M. of the same month as that of the former review.
Sectional prejudices prevailing through different parts of America, he also abhorred. Several articles in The Broadway Journal, coming under his observation, if not a few of them from his pen, indicate how well defined these jealousies were. New England, according to one of the articles, assumes a dictatorship in all manner of matters over neighboring sections. An unsigned piece entitled The North and the South describes what it believes to be the sectarian pretensions of New England. Another article The Dutch and the Puritans, or...
enjoy all the advantages of a posthumous fame, and whose portraits smile with
an embarrassed air opposite all the title-pages of selections from American
poets." From dictatorship Poe appears to make an easy transition to the evils
of indiscriminate puffing and laudation. He summarizes his opinion of what he ca-
our "editorial course of corruption and puffery" in an article signed E.A.P.,
in The Broadway Journal of March 6, 1845. In this he gives the account of his
lecture on the Poets and Poetry of America, at which time he took occasion, he
says, to tell his audience, which consisted it seems chiefly of editors and
their connections, "to their teeth" that, with very few exceptions, they had
been engaged for many years in a system of indiscriminate laudation of American
books.

32. The Broadway Journal, vol. 1, p. 159. Willis' account of this lecture
on this subject (Poets and Poetry of America) by Mr. Poe is but a foot of
Hercules, and though one could see what would be the proportions of the
whole, if treated with the same scope and artistic minuteness, it is a
pity to see only the fragment. What we heard last night convinced us,
however, that one of the most readable and saleable of books would be a
dozen of such lectures by Mr. Poe." (The conservative spirit Poe asserts also manifests itself in imitation;
the question resolving itself into a discussion of the relative merits of the
ancients and moderns. He had learned from Plato, it will be remembered, that an
artist could not "prove his title" by faithfully copying what lay before him in
nature. In the drama, and he says he is thinking particularly of the American
drama, he sees the evil of which Plato had spoken. He contends that just as that
art is imitative, in that degree it is stationary. He would, therefore, burn the
old models of Greek tragedy. Miss Barrett, he says in his review of her Drama
of Exile, would do well to depend on her own extraordinary resources. He would
also bar from our stage any reproduction of an old Greek tragedy. A modern
the to audience, he says, can have no real interest in such a production. He states it as his opinion they speak enthusiastically of the revival of the old drama solely from a desire to be thought learned or to be able to discourse with what they call scholastic taste on classical themes if there were occasion. In fact, he makes a sweeping statement that "the idea of reproducing a Greek play before a modern audience is the idea of a pedant and nothing beyond".

33. *The American Drama*. Cf. *Broadway Journal*, vol. 1, p. 236, *The Antigony at Palma's*. Cf. with the above remarks, the following article in *The New York Mirror*, vol. 1, p. 351 February 15, 1845. The latter article is entirely complimentary to the production of Greek drama in modern times and could, therefore, not have been by Poe. "An experiment has recently been made—to introduce into the English theatre the classical drama of ancient Greece, depending for its effect, not on the material and the common-place resources of the stage, scenery, incident and bustling action; but on the ideal of poetry and the grand and truthful in art. We allude to the production in an English dress at Covent-Garden Theatre of the Antigony of Sophocles, which was received by a highly distinct audience and a crowded house with the most enthusiastic applause and decided approbation."

Having given Poe's analysis of what he felt to be the state of American literature, I shall now resume the attempt to establish him as the author of *The Atlantis*. He agrees with the author of *The Atlantis* that new views ought always to be listened to; that they should provoke investigation rather than to be instantly condemned. The author of that series, in the person of Peter Prospero, expresses great satisfaction that in the city of Saturnia new views in science and literature have a fair chance of a hearing. He relates a visit to the Philosophical Society in company with Franklin. "After De Carter had finished the reading of his communication, I thought I could perceive a rather ominous signal of incredulity and dissatisfaction with the principle propounded in it and the experiment by which their truth was tested. In a few minutes, however, a member dressed with unusual elegance arose and proposed to refer the subject to the consideration of a committee consisting of three members—
Newton nominated Galileo, La Place and Franklin.

"The next contribution was a dissertation by Galileo, in which he balanced the arguments in regard to the theories concerning light, the one maintaining that light emanates from the sun as its source, the other that light as a medium is diffused through universal nature and that the sun is the exciting cause which, setting its particles in action, renders objects visible. To the latter of these opinions Galileo seemed disposed to adhere. To report upon this topic, a committee of three were appointed, as chairman of which, at the suggestion of Dr. Halley, Newton was placed, while his two colleagues were Aristotle and Leibnitz."


A similarity in new views between Poe and the author of *The Atlantis* may be seen in the fact that they both contend for a literature based in science. Poe had, as we have already observed, maintained that unity and variety in the physical world properly explains a technical method in literature. The principle lay back, he said, of our comprehension of the dramatic plot, the definition of poetry, and of a real understanding of the metrical art. The author of *The Atlantis* apparently feels that the same scientific law is the standard for judging literary matters. "Correct principles", he maintains, "in oratory, poetry, or fine writing, are founded in the deepest science."


Another point in common between Poe and the author of *The Atlantis* is the fact that they both discuss verisimilitude as it is an outgrowth of scientific study; and, furthermore, as, in their estimation, it aids the effectiveness of the Christian belief. Poe had, it will be remembered in his review of Stephen's *Arabia Petrae*, October, 1837, spoken of the Christian philosopher...
understanding his assertion that the verisimilitude of Scriptural prophecy was part of the plan of the Deity. Peter Prospero likewise attaches an importance to verisimilitude in the Scriptures. He even suggests that the progress of science, rendering accuracy of detail possible, should regulate the setting of Easter. In conversation with Dr. Samuel Clarke he learns that verisimilitude in religion depends on adherence to scientific detail. Noticing that the prayer book in Saturnia announces no movable feasts, he asks Dr. Clarke for an explanation. "Because", the Christian philosopher replies, "since there were precise days in the year in which Christ was crucified and arose from the dead, and those days could be exactly ascertained by mathematical calculations, we concluded it to be much wiser to have those computations completed, and those events celebrated at the very periods in which they transpired. This adjustment has the double advantage of communicating a greater air of verisimilitude to those great epochs themselves and of relieving the services of the church from their intricacy and obscurity. To the reflecting and intelligent it gives an air of fiction instead of reality to the resurrection of Christ to commemorate it days, weeks, and a month later in one year than in another."


They likewise agree that philosophy can throw much light on the proper length for an effective literary composition. Poe, as we have seen, referred the matter to an explanation of the human mind; to the power which the mind has of attending only a limited period of time, deducing therefrom the duration of a half an hour for a poem, and one or two hours for a prose article. On this basis he likewise considers that the length of a hymn must be guided by the prin-
The Atlantis makes the point that the Episcopal Church service in Saturnia has been curtailed to the production of strong effect. Peter Prospero observes that Dr. Clarke stopped at the end of the Litany and omitted both the antecommunion service and the collect, gospels, and epistles. Although he notes that the congregation appeared to be highly appreciative and listened with rapt attention, yet he expresses some apprehension while conversing with Dr. Clarke that the abridgement may have been too pronounced. Dr. Clarke, however, assures him that, quite on the contrary, signal advantages have come from shortening the service. In fact, he maintains that brevity has increased genuine piety, as well as the spirited and animating performance of public service. And he bases this fact on an understanding of human nature. "A slight and hurried worship is as much to be avoided as a tedious and a protracted one. They both defeat the great end of this religious institution; but the evils of an inordinately prolonged service, are peculiarly apparent, and doubly pernicious when the same form of words is incessantly repeated. The sentiments of piety in the bosom of a good man, although strong and glowing in their nature, are unavoidable evanescent; and if the language in which these effusions of the heart are conveyed be spun out into unnatural length and still continued when the devotional feelings have evaporated, the habits of grimace and hypocrisy may be contracted, but genuine piety declines. Forms of devotion, therefore, should be lively, glowing and frequently renewed, but never long protracted. Hence our church in Saturnia, by abridging her services without subjecting them to excessive mutilation, has decidedly improved them. Rejecting all that rendered her liturgy cumbersome, tedious and irksome, she has provided an apt and spirited
form, suited to all public occasions”.

A further point in common between Poe and Peter Prospero is the idea that popularity is no test of merit. Poe, as we have seen, in obvious reliance on Wordsworth, protested against decisions of the vulgar taste. The author of The Atlantis likewise discredits the voice of popular judgment. The multitude, he said, do not presume to judge in reference to science, to law, medicine or any of the profound inquiries of human reason; why, then, are they to be treated as umpires in oratory, poetry, or fine writing?

"Sterne:—You would not, then, consider the rapid circulation of a work through numerous hands as any decisive proof of its merits?

Steele:—The very opposite. It would be a presumption of its deficiency in the highest properties of composition when it is eagerly caught at by the vulgar; this shows that it is a bait caught up by the small fry, and will always be found destitute of solid sense and profound observation. Who has heard of the rapid sales of Homer's Epics, or those of Milton?"

Similar views are also held on the subject of the historical novel. Poe had, in 1835, in apparent opposition to the popularity of the Waverly Novels, contended for the delineation of real life of the present time. "We like to read", he says in his review of I, Promessi Sposi, "of things that may a little remind us of what we have seen in real life. Sir Charles Grandison, in the Scottish kilt, is a startling apparition". In fact, he asserts that an author

err in attempting to weave together fact and fiction. Simms, in The Partisan, did not succeed, he thinks, in confining either truth or fable in its"legitimate
individual domain". Cooper in *Mercedes of Castile*, he maintains, has failed to

preserve interest in the romantic part of his story, since he adhered so closely to historical fact. "How could any hero, no matter who," Poe asks, "awaken our sympathies strongly so long as Columbus figured in the narrative?" He concludes that Cooper's book as a history is invaluable; as a novel, it is a worthless production. Peter Prospero discusses the historical novel with Richardson and Mrs. Johnson much after Poe's fashion.

Prospero:—"Mr. Richardson—what is your opinion concerning the great purpose which should be aimed at by the author? (of a modern novel.)

Richardson:—Besides that purpose which an author of this kind has in common with all others, instruction, or instruction recommended by amusement, he should portray the living manners as they appear in his own time and endeavor to improve his readers, as well as to convey to posterity a faithful delineation of its virtues and vices, of its excellencies and defects, its customs and habits, of all its most refined sentiments as well as its follies and absurdities.

Mrs. Johnson:—You do not, then, approve of what is now denominated the historical novel?

Richardson:—Undoubtedly not. That is a monstrosity, a crudity, or illegitimate fiction, which had its origin in the prurient propensity of the public for mere amusement, for exciting tales. It has little more to recommend it than the marvellous tales of the middle ages. To go back to an age in which the manners, customs, and reigning sentiments were entirely foreign to our own, is not much more tolerable than to deal with giants, dwarfs, enchanted castles, and all the wonderful machinery employed in the *Amadis de Gaul* and *Palmerin of England*.

Other points in common between Poe and the author of *The Atlantis* are: an attack on fanciful theories; the need of enlightened critics; and the necessity for a wise selection in reading. But perhaps identity of views is no better shown than in the conception entertained by both writers of the universal nature of literature. This point was in all probability an outgrowth of Poe's scientific studies, and doubtless prompted such remarks as we have already
noted; as, for example, "The poet in Arcady is, in Kamchatka, the poet still". In *The Atlantis*, Madame Dacier's reply to Voltaire embodies Poe's point of universality. She is evidently intending to settle the disputed question over the relative merits of the ancients and moderns. "Ah, Mr. Voltaire, I must acknowledge that in the lower world I had a great preference of the ancient writers over the modern, and contended manfully in their behalf; but since I arrived in these regions and perused them all without prejudice, I am of opinion that there are no distinctions to be drawn between fine writers in all ages."

From the evidence presented, evidence dealing both with internal and external proof, it seems a reasonable conclusion to think that Poe was the author of *The Atlantis*. Granting the truth of this supposition, we may be able to follow him as, in the person of Peter Prospero, he satirizes in a new and wholly imaginary, yet unmistakable way, what he considers to be the weaknesses of American literature. It will be seen, first, that he makes use of the idea of Pope's, Swift's and Arbuthnot's *Martin Scriblerus*, and even in many places has adhered closely to the text. Second, that though he aims to satirize poor writing in general, he appears to have certain individuals in mind. Poe it seems, contrary to Pope's version, has Martin leave England and settle in the United States. He likewise ascribes to him four sons: Horatius B., Josephus R.J, Nicholas B., and Nathaniel D.

43. It would be interesting to ascertain whom Poe means by these names.

Poe keeps up the spirit of Swift's attack on poor writers by detailing an account of his visit to the Scribleri family, a set of charlatans who, it seems, "infest" a quarter of the ideal state of Atlantis. He there becomes acquainted with their crudities and is amazed at their love of the antique.
"Upon knocking at the door, we were admitted by a servant dressed in a style of genuine antique, and whose countenance and deportment denoted that he was well skilled in that art by which men contrive, as Rochefoucault remarks, to assume gravity, as a mysterious carriage of the body, to conceal defects of the mind. A few steps led us into the study of his master Martin, whom we discovered seated in a chair of antediluvian appearance, with his back turned towards the door, apparently engaged in deep study; but who as soon as the approach of strangers was announced, rose with great dignity and gave us a polite reception. It is impossible to convey to my readers an adequate idea of the slowness of motion and pomp of manner with which, in accosting us, all his actions were performed and words pronounced. It was not the action of such small bodies as are circumscribed within the limits of six feet, the extent of human frames, but more like the motion of a heavenly orb, as it appears to the eye of an observer watching its progress through the firmament, and when his mouth was opened, ponderous terms and gaudy figures of speech came forth as plentifully as water from a fountain which had been forcibly closed. A single glance at his countenance and person enabled me to recognize all those remarkable features so finely delineated by his inimitable historiographers." Here were to be traced in a

44. Poe is doubtless referring to Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot.

new and improved model, 'that tall stature, long visage, olive complexion, those black brows, eyes piercing and hollow, aquiline nose, and beard mixed with grey, that contributed to spread a melancholy over his whole appearance.'

Poe satirizes the literary charlatan's dependence on ancient models.

"Martin next conducted us into an adjoining room in which was a collection of his rarest curiosities. These were the monuments of his father, Cornelius, and his own ingenuity, to which he directed our attention with evident satisfaction. To the intelligence and invention of his ancestors, he alleged, which he could not too highly extol, he ascribed any attainments he had made and superiority he had displayed over others. Here, said he, is preserved in a china jar a portion of that goat's milk and honey which, according to the prescription of Galen, was first taken by my great-grandmother and afterwards by her successors in the female line, to which kind of food I ascribe the peculiar dispositions of our family'. There is the ink horn which my mother, like that of Alexander, saw in a dream, and which her husband Cornelius thought so symbolical of the future great writer in her son Martin that he could not but consider this remarkable dream as a divine intimation'.

45. Po. a, p. 77.
of the 'crab-tree which previous to my birth had been entirely barren, but upon that event, suddenly appeared laden with a vast quantity of crabs, denoting the fertility of genius of him who was born.' There in that glass vessel, and in a state of preservation, are the "wasps that played around my cradle without doing me any injury, and also the mushrooms which, in the space of one night, covered all our farmyard, as a prophetic sign of rapid growth to maturity in the powers of my mind." He then drew out from some drawers the shield upon which he had been christened, which had again contracted the rust of antiquity, for the loss of which Cornelius at the baptism had wept bitterly, together with some ancient coins, fossil shells, and mummies."

Poe is astonished at the pretensions of these charlatans. He makes Sterne say:

"Most extraordinary. That man (Martinus Scriblerus) is as confident of the truth of all his whimsies and follies as Newton or Locke can be of their systems. And as to his taste in literature, while the man of real genius is distrustful of himself and trembling at every whisper of censure that reaches his ear, this stupid wretch apprehends no difficulty in the most arduous task and beholds with perfect complacency and supreme delight his crude and desppicable performances. Verily, nature has been kind to us after all; what she denies in talents, as is remarked by Locke, she makes up in self-complacency."

Poe learns certain methods of dealing with the Scriblerus family. Sterne tells him of Dean Swift's scathing criticisms of the pretentious writer in *The Portico*, the daily journal of Saturnia. In fact, he said, "the finest wit is exerted against this fraternity, and as soon as their performances are criticized by able writers, they sink in value and their reputations vanish." Poe wishes, however, for a further attack; one that would completely demolish the
poor writers. He is evidently of the opinion that further effort might be made, and in the person of Prospero he says:—

Prospero:—"But is there no way of completely discomfiting and demolishing this whole horde of literary Goths and Vandals, or of expelling them from a civilized and refined community like that of Saturni?

Sterne:—"We have done our best and you know, for this purpose, Swift, Pope, Tarburton and Boileau are hosts in themselves, but it seems as though they would always find their share of supporters and admirers." 49


At this point it is suggested that Poe attempted to carry out the methods of these satirists referred to by his How to Write a Blackwood Article, and to add to the work that they had already done.

Indications point at least to the probability that Poe made The Atlantis the background for How to Write a Blackwood Article, and that he patterned his satire after Swift's Art of Sinking in Poetry. In considering at present the latter part of this supposition, I shall cite, first, the similar purpose that both satirists possess. Swift and Poe exalt as an excellence in writing, a trait which they in reality consider a defect; or, in other words, Martin Scriblerus and Mr. Blackwood praise the bathetic and "intensities" as marks of fine writing. Each one gives a recipe for constructing his piece. Martin promises to explain how to write an epic poem. "Take out of any old Poem, history book, or romance or legend, those parts of a book which afford most scope for long descriptions; put these pieces together and throw all the adventures you fancy into one tale. Then take a Hero, whom you may choose for the sound of his name, and put him into the midst of these adventures; then let him work for twelve books, at the end of which you may take him out, ready prepared to conquer or to marry; it being necessary that the conclusion of an Epic Poem
be fortunate." Mr. Blackwood also gives the proper method for writing a story. He says, "But I must put you au fait to the details necessary in composing what may be denominated a genuine Blackwood article of the sensation stamp—that kind which you will understand me to say I consider the best for all purposes. The first thing requisite is to get yourself into such a scrape as no one ever got into before." Both Martin and Mr. Blackwood agree that the art of writing a sensation story and the art of the bathos, are governed by certain technical rules. Martin says: "We come now to prove that there is an art of sinking in poetry." And from the Blackwood article one reads: "It's not so very difficult to compose an article of the genuine Blackwood stamp, if one only goes properly about it.---This is a species of writing which I have long known how to appreciate."

Both authors, Swift as Martin Scriblerus, and Poe in the person of Mr. Blackwood, consider the question of rules of technique in detail. Martin stresses the need of diminishing figures. In the anti-climax, he says, the second line drops short of the first and creates a wonderful surprise. Mr. Blackwood likewise advises the use of the diminishing figure. "As for the tone heterogeneous, it is merely a judicious mixture, in equal proportions, of all the other tones in the world, and is consequently made up of everything deep, great, odd, piquant, pertinent and pretty." They both advise the putting together of their articles in the most illogical method possible. Martin Scriblerus says: "And I will venture to lay it down as the first Maxim and Corner Stone of this our Art, that whoever would excel therein must studiously avoid, detest and
turn his head from all the ideas, ways, and workings of that pestilent Foe to Wit, and destroyer of fine Figures, who is known by the name of Common Sense. His business must be to contract the true most de travers, and to acquire a most happy, uncommon, unaccountable Way of Thinking." Mr. Blackwood suggests


the same illogical method. "Mr. Blackwood, it seems, in putting an article together, has a pair of tailor's shears and three apprentices who stand by him for orders. One hands him the Times, another The Examiner, and a third a Gulley's New Compendium of Slang-Whang. Mr. Blackwood merely cuts up and intersperses. It is soon done—nothing but Examiner, Slang-Whang and Times—then Times, Slang-Whang and Examiner—and then Times, Examiner and Slang-Whang."

53. Works,

Martin Scriblerus and Mr. Blackwood agree that a writer, to make the proper effect, must carefully select the proper style and tone. Martin mentions, he says, only the principal styles: the Florid style, the Pert style; the Alamode style which is first by being new; the Finical style; the Cumbrous and the Stately. "Will not every true lover of the Profound", he says, "be delighted to behold the most vulgar and low actions of life exalted in the following manner?

Who knocks at the Door?
For who thus rudely pleads my loud-tongued gate,
That they may enter?"

Mr. Blackwood thinks that the tone of the narrative must be considered. "There is the tone didactic, the tone enthusiastic, the tone natural, and all common place enough. But then there is the tone laconic, or curt, which has lately come much into use.—Then there is the tone elevated, diffusive and interjec-
tional. Some of our best novelists patronize this tone.—The tone metaphysical also is a good one. If you know any big words, now is your chance for them."

The correspondence in views is also seen in the fact that in both cases the aspiring writer is warned against clearness. Martin advises him not to express himself too clearly, "for fear it become vulgar; for obscurity bestows a cast of the wonderful and throws an oracular dignity upon a piece which hath no meaning." Mr. Blackwood also is of the opinion that clearness is to be avoided. "Above all", he says to Miss Psyche Zenobia, "study inuendo. Hint everything and assert nothing. If you feel inclined to say 'bread and butter', do not by any means say it outright. You may say anything and everything approaching to bread and butter. You may hint at buckwheat cake, or you may ever go so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge, but if bread and butter be your real meaning, be cautious, my dear Miss Psyche, not on any account to say 'bread and butter'." And apparently with great earnestness he recommends a careful study of Channing's poems and The Dial.

A scheme for the advancement of modern writing is the idea of both Martin and Blackwood. Each one proposes an association. "As our Number", says Martin, "is confessedly far superior to that of the enemy, there seems nothing wanting but unanimity among ourselves. It is, therefore, humbly offered that all and every individual of the Bathos do enter into a firm association, and incorporate into One regular Body, whereof every member, even the meanest, will some way contribute to the support of the whole. To which end our Art ought to be put upon the same footing with the other Arts of this age."
The Blackwood article likewise advises an association for the improvement of modern writing. Miss Psyche Zenobia explains that she is the corresponding secretary to the "Philadelphia, Regular, Exchange, Tea, Total, Young, Belles, Lettres, Universal, Experimental, Bibliographical, Association, To, Civilize Humanity. Dr. Moneypenny made the title for us and says he chose it because it sounded big like an empty rum-puncheon. (A vulgar man, that, but he's deep). We all sign the initials of the society after our names, in the fashion of the R.S.A., Royal Society of Arts—the S.D.V.K., Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, etc., etc. We always add to our names the initials P.R.E.T.T.Y. B.L.U.E. B.A.T.C.H.

From the evidence that has just been presented, we shall probably be safe in attributing to Poe the authorship of The Atlantis, and in thinking he made a satirical attack on what he believed to be the weaknesses in his countrymen's writing.

CONCLUSION

I have endeavored to indicate the lines of study by which Poe learned his art. The principle of effect he doubtless found in Blackwood; the unity of effect in the drama; a conception of unvarying law, operating as variety in uniformity, in philosophy; and a confirmation of this principle in a study of natural law. In the last chapter, I have attempted to show that as critic and editor he had a serious intent to elevate American literature.