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## **Dynamics of Ratiocination in Edgar Allan Poe's Three Dupin Stories: the Murders in the Rue Morgue, the Mystery of Marie Roget and the Purloined Letter**

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**Abstract:**

*Edgar Allan Poe is an American poet, writer and a critic of eminence. Research pertaining to Poe targets the areas of poetry, criticism and short-stories which he wrote at a later stage. He calls his three short-stories as 'tales of ratiocination', namely 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Mystery of Marie Roget', 'The Purloined Letter'. These are his first three and the only stories featuring detective Dupin. The main content of this paper deals with bringing out the various elements of ratiocination, the elements characterized by rationality, reason and logic from the three stories.*

**Keywords:** *Ratiocination, logic, whatley, poe, dupin, rationality, reason, ratiocination process*

Edgar Allan Poe is a renowned personality who brightened the nineteenth century America with excellent works of English Literature. He has displayed his eminence in the field of poetry, criticism and short-stories. Such was the magic of his writings that he became a writer of world fame and is known even today. One area of Poe's fame lies in him being the creator and originator of detective and crime fiction. The three short stories: The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841), The Mystery of Marie Roget (1842) and The Purloined Letter (1844-45) are considered as the base-model for the future detective story writers. He has also created 'Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin' as the first detective figure. Detectives like Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Miss Maple and the like emanate from Poe's creation named detective Dupin. Matthew Pearl, an American novelist and educator, while writing an introduction to the book *The Murders in the Rue Morgue The Dupin Tales* refers that Poe called these tales as his "tales of ratiocination," (Pearl, ix) as "being something in a new key." (Pearl, ix)

These tales find their place in 'detective fiction', a term which one needs to be acquainted with. A Chinese doctorate scholar Eva Zhao defines detective fiction in the article *Gothicism in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Stories: A Critical Analysis*:

Detective fiction is a branch of crime fiction that centers upon the investigation of crime, usually murder, by a detective either professional or amateur. Detective fiction is the most popular form of fiction. A common feature of detective fiction is an investigator, who is unmarried with some source of income other than a regular job and who generally has some pleasing eccentricities. The traditional formula for the detective story starts with a seemingly irresolvable mystery. (Zhao, 120)

The above-stated lines account for the brief background to this genre. The term 'ratiocination' blends well with this type of fiction. The article *From Dupin to Oedipa: Thomas Pynchon's Parodic take on Detective Fiction* by Suradech Chotiudompant, an instructor in the department of Comparative Literature in the Chulalongkorn University of Bangkok, depict this blend:

It can be said that detective fiction centers round a mystery from which a detective, be he or she amateur or professional, functions as a seeker of truth, of the disentanglement of the mystery. The denouement generally involves rational explanations, either with the revelation or exposure of the criminal. (Chotiudompant, 68)

In very simple words, "A ratiocinative or detective tale can be defined as a story characterized by the process of reasoning." (Zhao, 121) 'Ratiocination' is a process that involves the essential elements of logic, reasoning and rationality. This is, nevertheless, a very basic idea of the concept, but its limits extend to far greater meanings well illustrated in the research that follows. Logical element rules the process of ratiocination and the three stories are explored to their utmost extent in this context.

Richard Whatley (1787-1863) was an English rhetorician, logician, economist and theologian who also rendered his services as an Archbishop of Dublin in the Church of Ireland. His famous book *Elements of Logic* (1826) is a phenomenal work where he propounded theories relating to logic. The theories by Whatley serve as a strong proof of the prevalence of logic in the three aforementioned short stories by Poe. Whatley defines logic as:

...the Science, and also as the Art, of Reasoning. It investigates the principles on which argumentation is conducted, and furnishes such rules as maybe derived from those principles, for guarding against erroneous deductions. Its most appropriate office, however, is

that of instituting an analysis of the process of the mind in Reasoning; and in this point of view it is, as I have said, strictly a Science: while, considered in reference to the practical rules above mentioned, it may be called the Art of Reasoning. For it is to be remembered, that as a science it is conversant about speculative knowledge only, and art is the application of knowledge to practice, hence. Logic (as well as any other system of knowledge) becomes when applied to practice, an art; while confined to the theory of reasoning, it is strictly a science : and it is as such that it occupies the higher place in point of dignity, since it professes to develop some of the most interesting and curious intellectual phenomena. (29)

Logic is an instrument with which the dynamics of ratiocination in the stories can be brought forth. The very first aspect in which ratiocination is inherent is the narration, which in this case is a 'whodunit'. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the term 'Whodunit' as "a story, play, etc. about a murder in which you do not know who did the murder until the end." (1760). It is a compressed form of the question 'Who Done it?' Tzvetan Todorov, a Bulgarian-French historian, philosopher, literary critic, sociologist and essayist, has also contributed his knowledge about the term in his work *Detective novels- Whodunits and Thrillers*. A whodunit contains two story lines- crime story and investigation story. Generally, crime is already committed before the commencement of narration which opens with the declaration of the crime and proceeds with the second story, that of investigation. The declaration in the first two stories is made through the newspapers while in *The Purloined Letter* it is done by the Prefect of police. Thus, "the first story, that of crime... is equated with the 'story', the crude account waiting to be narrated." (Chotiudompant, 69) The succeeding part is then largely occupied by detective Dupin in solving the mystery through ratiocination. Thus, all three stories are a whodunit "filtered through such literary devices as point of view, characterization and other narrative techniques." (Chotiudompant, 69)

A whodunit enhances chances of success in case solving which is then carried on logically. There is excellent display of talent in narration in all the three stories. This way the reader does not miss even a single mark amidst the whole scene described by Poe. Through the testimony of a member of the rescue team "Isidore Muset, gendarme," (*Rue Morgue*, 22) example of an effective narration can be provided. He reported he was:

...called to the house about three o'clock in the morning, and found some twenty or thirty persons at the gateway, endeavoring to gain admittance. Forced it open, at length, with a bayonet- not with a crowbar. Had but little difficulty in getting it open, on account of its being a double or folding gate, and bolted neither at bottom nor top. (*Rue Morgue*, 22)

The logical and minute descriptions in crisp and short sentences are a necessary prerequisite for every author and Poe followed it with dedication. A logical narration always facilitates a reader's absorption in the story and makes him/her participate equally with the detective. Poe informs the reader in *The Mystery of Marie Roget* that Marie Roget's father had died "during the child's infancy, and from the period of his death, until within eighteen months before assassination... becomes the subject of our narrative." (Roget, 51-52) It is evident here that the reader will be curious to learn what happened in that time lapse. Charity Lea Givens, a research scholar of Liberty University, in his thesis *Poe's Poisoned Pen: A Study in Fiction as Vendetta* says that, "Poe's method of reasoning is also key to understanding the reasonability of the story." (Givens, 31)

Not just that, a legitimate construction in a whodunit also paves way for the reader towards a solution. The following instance will suffice:

'The pieces of the frock torn out by bushes were about three inches wide and six inches long... The pieces, as described, do indeed, 'look like strips torn off;' but purposely and by hand. It is one of the rarest of accidents that a piece is 'torn off' from any garment... by the agency of a thorn. From the very nature of such fabrics, a thorn or nail becomes entangled in them, tears them rectangularly... To tear a piece off from such a fabric, two distinct forces, in different directions, will be, required... To tear off a piece from the interior, where no edge is presented, could only be effected by a miracle through the agency of thorns... But even where an edge is presented, two thorns will be necessary... And this in the supposition that the edge is unhemmed. If hemmed, the matter is nearly out of question... (Roget, 91)

In such a way, the succeeding statement becomes an answer to the problem in the preceding statement. Poe creates excellent ratiocinative narration in the speech of the Prefect G- while he explains the theft of the letter to Dupin. It feels as if the picture is being created simultaneously in the mind as the narration gains pace.

...the document in question- a letter, to be frank-had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal boudoir. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried endeavor to thrust it in the drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon the table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters Minister D-. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. (*Letter*, 105)

Poe adds another device to the narration in order to make it more gripping. It is to blend fact with fiction in such combination as to make its readers relish that they are reading. The quantities of each have to be appropriately mixed so that neither fact nor fiction is overdone. Plain facts can sometime make the story insipid. Hence, "in these hoaxes combining realism and fantasy" Poe creates "a fascinating world of make believe. The effect wrought by these tales on the reader is ultimately one of wonder." (Zhao, 195) *The Mystery of Marie Roget* is based on an actual murder of Mary Cicilia Rogers. Hence, Poe creates in parallel, along with the "real ones," also the "ideal series of events." (Roget, 49) The only reason to do this is to create a flawless world of logic. It ensures fun-in-reading and mental stimulation at its best. Also, the journals and newspapers "having prescribed thus a limit to suit its preconceived notions" (Roget, 68) cannot do without blending facts with fiction in the stories.

The factor of 'coherence' acts as an adhesive between the two elements: fact and fiction. Research scholar B.C. Maria Bursikova writes in her article *Elements of Metaphysical Detective Story Genre in the works of Melville, Hawthorne and Poe*:

In a good mystery, nothing is wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so- which amounts to the same thing. Since everything seen or said, even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be overlooked. (Bursikova, 4)

Hence, "Poe is definitely able to construct a rational story; his knowledge of how stories work together." (Givens, 11) With a correct usage of this factor, it is established that all the stories "hang together" (Givens, 32) because if it would not have been so then "the argument cannot convince the audience, and Poe's meaning might be lost." (Givens, 32)

After the narration, "The first inference a reader must make is one concerning the narrator's reliability, careful attention to the narrator should be established to determine the fidelity of the story." (Givens, 19) The narrator/sidekick is created by Poe as the friend of the detective who acts as a strong link between the detective and the reader:

If Dupin were to laud his own works, they could be dismissed as egoistic, given his incredible capacity for detection. However, because the narrator reveals details, the audience can accept Dupin's discoveries as legitimate. (Givens, 28)

The narration in all the three short stories under consideration is taken up by the same narrator, a very close friend and house mate of Dupin. The first person narration is ideal for the detective story because it helps to "exclude some information that may be included with an omniscient narrator." (Givens, 19) Thus, a narrator's reliability is a must because:

...if the narrator is not a reliable one, then the story raises doubts about as to its fidelity and probability... The narrator remains the same narrator throughout the body of mystery stories involving Dupin... His style of narration allows the reader to enter the story and identify with the characters... reader can experience the mystery as the narrator experiences it, not knowing all that happens until Dupin chooses to reveal his methodology. (Givens, 27-28)

Reliability is ascertained in many ways in the stories. Narrator and Dupin became acquaintances "at an obscure library... both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume" bringing them into "closer communion." (Rue Morgue, 13) They shared a "rather fantastic gloom of common temper." (Rue Morgue, 14) This is nothing but a firm assurance given to the reader about the likeness that they share. Even Dupin detailed his "little family history with all candor which a Frenchman indulges whenever mere self is his theme" (Rue Morgue, 13) only to the narrator. The narrator knew that "the whims of my friend were manifold," and declares that "Je les menagais (French: I put up with them)." (Rue Morgue, 29) The narrator freely announces that he does not feel "at liberty to disclose" (Rue Morgue, 54) certain details, revealing to the reader only what is required. He asks questions from Dupin as and when required and the latter answers directly and accurately. This ensures a trust the reader acquires for the narrator:

The narrator's commentary on Dupin allows readers to understand him from a rational point of view. Because the narrator is only a rational observer of the action, rather than a character who takes part in the detective work, the audience will be more likely to believe what he relates about Dupin. (Givens, 28)

The narrator acts as a clue-gatherer for Dupin and at places also assists in case solving. But this activity is not overdone and the actual burthen is upon Dupin's shoulders only. Thus, the narrator acts more than the reader and less than the detective. The narrator's role can thus be summed up as:

...the audience, viewing the scene from the outside, cannot know precisely what Dupin is thinking, and thus may react in wonder... Again, the narrator serves as a vehicle for the reasonability of the story. (Bursikova, 29)

Hence, from the words of Poe is born the narrator and from the words of the narrator is born worthy Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin. Ashleigh Prosser, a research scholar from the University of Western Australia, in the article Poe and Doyle gives the term "genius detective" who has rightly "emerged in Poe's Dupin... that he has incarnated a scientific ideal." (Prosser, 1) It is rightly demanded that a detective must "establish as an authority on solving mystery using ratiocinative powers." (Givens, 18) There is a "peculiar analytic ability in Dupin" (Rue Morgue, 15) who proceeds with "proper caution and perseverance" (Roget, 98) in each case he takes up. It will be seen in the course of this paper that "for Dupin, everything must and does have a logical explanation" (Bursikova, 46) reflecting dynamics of ratiocination.

A genius detective exercises his ratiocination skills in various fields. Foremost is to match his genius with his opponent, the criminal, and outdo him. An overall application of genius is also seen in the detection process. A genius detective knows the bounds of his investigation. Dupin has the ability to sideline the areas of "minor importance" (Roget, 91) and thus, prevent deviation: "We are not engaged in an attempt to discover the scene, but to produce the perpetrators of the murder" (Roget, 91) says Dupin. He has the ability to think beyond a common man's level.

Dupin always states that he trusts what is logical and "in my own heart there dwells no faith in the preternatural." (Roget, 100) The detective is always confident about his ways and points out the flaws prevalent in other people's illogical ways. The Police were at fault in handling the case in *The Purloined Letter* because according to Dupin, "the measures were good in their kind executed, their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case, and to the man." (Letter, 117) Overcoming this flaw in himself, he solves the case because he knew that "his measures were adapted to his (The Minister's) capacity, with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded." (Letter, 117)

Hence, a genius is one who gives a perfect ending to the case and leaves it undoubtedly neat edged. Dupin's success lay not just in recovering the purloined letter but also in "replacing the letter by a fac-simile." He also provides the reason behind this deed:

D- is a desperate man, and a man of nerve.... Had I made the wild attempts...I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive... But I had an object apart from these considerations... For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers... Thus, will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction... His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward... It is far more easy to get up than to come down." (Letter, 122)

Thus, everything is lined with perfect logic. The term "Bi-Part Soul (Creative versus Rational)" (Rue Morgue, 15) is rightly applicable to Dupin.

The detective exercises his ratiocinative skills in a number of fields, 'game play' of the detective being one. Solving the mystery is like a game played with the opponents of varying abilities. The work of the detective here is to outshine them and attain victory. The opponents in the stories under consideration are- the prefect of police and the criminal. As it is:

With his energy, obvious emotion, and lack of insight the prefect stands in direct opposition to Dupin's calmer, more analytical approach to solving cases... the key to solving the case is to think in the way that successfully approximates the mindset of the criminal. (Zhao, 131)

A good game-play initiates within the mind and then is extended in practicality. The instances where he defeats the Prefect are many. Respecting and addressing the Prefect as "my friend" (Roget, 51), Dupin brings out the flaws inherent in the police to the reader. "The Prefect... had a fashion for calling every thing "odd" that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of "oddities." (Letter, 104) Hence, "not trusting to their eyes" Dupin wins and boasts that his ratiocinative skills are better than the Prefect. After solving the case of twin murders, Dupin remarks: "Let him talk. Let him discourse; it will ease his conscience, I am satisfied with having defeated him in his own castle." (Rue Morgue, 48)

Not just the Prefect, the newspaper and its reports are also targeted by Dupin as full of flaws. His purpose, as he puts it, is "to show the folly of the positive and headlong assertions of *Le Soleil*," (Roget, 91-92) a newspaper. Minister D is another opponent against whom Dupin devises a game play. Dupin also strives to win over Minister D who lies "between the unimaginative and the analytical," and "who might be Dupin's equal." (Zhao, 132) But Dupin tells the narrator that Minister D "is that monstrum horrendum, an unprincipled man of genius, and he takes pleasure in trumping the minister in a battle of wits." (Zhao, 132) The Minister could surpass the efforts of the Police but not Dupin. Here also, Dupin's game play is effective enough to gift him with victory.

The impetus behind Dupin's game play is the feature of dilettantism. As Poe puts it:

He is fond of enigmas (puzzle), of conundrums (riddle), of hieroglyphics (indecipherable writing); exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen (insight) which appears to the ordinary apprehension (understanding) preternatural (beyond the usual boundaries). (Rue Morgue, 9)

The worthy analyst Dupin always "glories in that moral activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play." (Rue Morgue, 9) Dupin seemed to "take an eager delight" in exercising analysis and according to the narrator, "did not hesitate to confess the pleasure thus derived." (Rue Morgue, 15)

This sort of pleasure can be derived from a work which focuses on the search for truth and truth cannot be sought without logic. This is another spark that ignites the ratiocination process. Dupin declares: "My ultimate object is only the truth." (Rue Morgue, 37) It is rightly said that "Dupin must use not only his powers but also his motivation to find the truth to solve the crime." (Givens, 42)

"Thus, all argument founded upon the fiction is applicable to the truth: and the investigation of the truth was the object" (Roget, 49) of Dupin. Progressing further with such a goal in mind Dupin asks: "'And what means are ours, of attaining the truth? We shall find these means multiplying and gathering distinctness as we proceed.'" (Roget, 98) This states his line of action as well as the line of thought developing from this point in the present research. Discussed below are the various instruments and means which lead the detective to the ultimate truth.

One way of reaching to the truth is the application of science. The web article Logical Positivism supports the idea:

There is no distinct "philosophical knowledge" over and above the analytical knowledge provided by the formal disciplines of logic and mathematics and empirical knowledge provided by the sciences. (1)

Considering this, Dupin is able to solve the case in the three stories successfully. Researcher Clarke Olney in the article Edgar Allan Poe- Science Fiction Pioneer proves that "Poe was the first writer of science-centered fiction to base his stories firmly on a rational kind of extrapolation, avoiding the supernatural." (Olney, 417) Dupin readily believed the "medical testimony" of Marie Roget which "spoke confidently of the virtuous character of the deceased." (Roget, 57) Science helped solve many steps in the completion of the three cases pointed out in this research because it establishes a "correlation between real objects (or real processes) and the abstract concepts of theory." (Logical Positivism, 1) Safe conclusions like, "It is evident, however, that the gravities of the bodies, and of the bulk of water displaced, are very nicely balanced, and that a trifle will cause either to preponderate," (Roget, 69) are its result.

Science definitely helps in analysis, whether inductive and deductive. Induction is "sometimes employed to designate the process of investigation and collection of facts; sometimes the deduction of an inference from those facts." (Whatley, 249) By examining the "rationale of the rule" (Roget, 69) stating that "the specific gravity of the human body, in its natural condition, is about equal to the bulk of fresh water which it disperses," (Roget, 69) and also that the bodies of "women" are lean and cannot sink into fresh water "of their own accord," (Roget, 69) Dupin has successfully applied induction. Also, in the "struggles of one unused to swimming" the body assumes a perpendicular position, head upward and the inside of the body if filled with water entering through the "mouth and nostrils," (Roget, 69) is a flawless example. He continues that "this is sufficient to cause the body to sink, as a general rule." (Roget, 70) But, after the application of logics provided by the various branches of Science, Dupin easily concludes that "if drowned, being a woman, she might never have sunk; or having sunk, might have reappeared in twenty four hours or less." (Roget, 72) Hence, his work at induction is remarkable.

Deductive reasoning can be seen in the instance where Dupin analyses the fact which is known to be true that "where a canon is fired over a corpse" (Roget, 59) it rises to the surface. But it is based on a widespread "British superstition" and is not so because "it is possible that a body snagged on underwater bush could theoretically be jarred loose by the vibrations of a nearby canon," (Roget, 59) but this is true only in case of "'drowned bodies' only." (Roget, 59) Hence, there is sometimes an arising need:

consisting of an Induction followed by a Deduction; because, although the process need not necessarily be carried on in this form, it is always susceptible of the form, and must be thrown into it when assurance of scientific accuracy is needed and desired." (Whatley, 253)

Many things need to be collaborated along with the analysis of the kind mentioned above. It is rightly said that “a solution of a mystery can be brought about by the identification of the reasoner’s intellect with that of his opponent.” (Zhao, 123) As it is:

Poe’s three classical detective stories, the identification with one’s opponent is established as means of arriving at a solution. This so-called method of ratiocination provides the detective with the ability to be one step ahead of the criminal and solve the case. (Bursikova, 26)

Through the game of draughts Poe explains the reason for entering into the minds of the opponents. Poe says that if the game is reduced to a simpler level and:

...deprived of ordinary resources, the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometime indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation. (Rue Morgue, 11)

Poe also gives example of the game “Whist” (Rue Morgue, 11) in which “mind struggles with the mind.” (Rue Morgue, 11) These analogies are only given to support that idea that mind reading is an effective technique in detection. The police did not practice this and as a result failed. In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* “the murders can only be solved, logically, when a person is able to place his human mind into conformity with a non-human mind and with the irrational acts of a beast.” (Zhao, 127) Whatley’s theory states:

When we conclude that some person will, on some given occasion, feel or act so and so, we sometimes judge from an enlarged consideration of the manner in which human beings in general, or persons of some particular character, are accustomed to act and feel; but much oftener from merely recollecting the feelings and conduct of the same person in some previous instance, or from considering how we should feel or act ourselves. (Whatley, 234)

Dupin tries to think the way Marie must have thought when she was going to fulfill her hidden plans. Her mind is accurately read by Dupin:

I will tell St. Eustache not to call me until dark- in this way, my absence from home for the longest period... will be accounted for. If I bid St. Eustache call for me at dark, he will be sure not to call before; but if I wholly neglect to bid him call, my time to escape will be diminished, since it will be expected that I return the earlier, and my absence will the sooner excite anxiety. (Roget, 85)

By way of mind reading, Dupin is able to solve many stages of the three crimes. Dupin asserts that not a gang but “an individual has committed the murder” (Roget, 93) on Marie. A gang and its number of people “would have inspired them with confidence” (Roget, 93) as is needed to dispose the body as well as the evidences from the crime scene. The reason why an individual was the doer of wrong is:

He is alone with the ghost of the departed...appalled by what lies motionless before him. The fury of his passion is over, and there is abundant room in his heart for the natural awe of the deed. He is none of that confidence which the presence of numbers inevitably inspires: He trembles and is bewildered. Yet there is a necessity of disposing the corpse. He bears it to the river, but leaves behind him other evidences of guilt. (Roget, 93)

That single individual is the naval officer, the real culprit behind Marie’s assassination. Marie and the naval officer were lovers but it is strange that he never came forward and tried to vanish from the scene instead. Dupin’s suspicion grows stronger because he knows that “the first impulse of an innocent man would have been to announce the outrage, and to aid in identifying the ruffians” (Roget, 97) and the naval officer acted the contrary. He even left the boat unattended after removing Marie’s corpse because “in fastening it to the wharf, he would have felt as if securing the evidences against himself.” (Roget, 99) It is sure that “his natural thought” then “would have been to cast from him, as far as possible, all that had held connection with his crime.” (Roget, 99) This is what the naval officer has actually done and got caught.

The *Purloined Letter* also reflects shades of Dupin’s mind-reading technique to acquire from the Minister the purloined letter. Dupin believes that the Prefect failed at his attempts because he does not realize that “identification of the reasoner’s intellect with that of his opponent” (Letter, 113) is a must. In the case of Minister, it becomes even more important because “when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own, the felon foils them, of course” (Letter, 114) and Dupin must prevent this from happening. Poe provides through the example of a schoolboy, the tact of reading the opponent’s mind, reproducing the latter’s words:

When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression. (Letter, 113)

Acting contrary to the Police and the expectations of the Minister, Dupin recovers the letter by “the dirt, the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the true methodical habits of D-, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of worthlessness of the document.” (Letter, 120) Thus, the assistant professor of English Literature at the University of California named Nataalka Freeland’s words from her article *One of an Infinite Series of Mistakes: Mystery, Influence and Edgar Allan Poe* add to the above: “Therefore, the dangerous recipe for successful detection is to lose oneself in identification with the perpetrator of the crime.” (Freeland, 1)

The most important aspect incorporated in mind-reading is the skillful use of imagination. Otherwise how can the method bear fruitful results? The reason for restricted use of imagination lies here:

Intellectuality, for Poe, is closely linked with Coleridge’s imagination, since imagination, for both Romantic writers, constitutes a creative faculty, endowed by God, and its aim is to impose order and form upon raw materials perceived by the five senses.... Imagination is indispensable in art as it helps the author work on crude experience, enabling him or her to give it a proper order and form. (Chotiudompant, 73)

Dupin is Poe’s creation who believes that “the ingenious are always fanciful, and the truly imaginative... analytic.” (Rue Morgue, 13) “Let us transport ourselves” says Dupin “in fancy, to this chamber” (Rue Morgue, 32) because sitting at home, he has to scrutinize the

rooms where L' Espanaye ladies were murdered. The narrator praises this aspect of Dupin by confessing that his "soul enkindled...by the wild fervor, and the vivid freshness of his imagination." (Rue Morgue, 13) Dupin, through imagination, figures out the means of egress and ingress into the house of the Espanaye's and solves the mystery unsolved by the police:

Letting go, then, his hold upon the rod, placing his feet securely against the wall, and springing boldly from it, he might have swung the shutter so as to close it, and, if we imagine the window open at the time, might even have swung himself into the room. (Rue Morgue, 36)

Dupin believes in sometimes pursuing his "fancies" (Roget, 99) up to a limit but this alone is enough. Intuition is also important. John Stuart Mill was a British philosopher, political economist and a social servant. An extract from his book *A System of Logic* (1843) puts forth the theory that:

Truths are known to us in two ways: some are known directly, and of themselves; some through the medium of other truths. The former are the subject of Intuition, or Consciousness; the latter, of Inference. The truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred. Our assent to the conclusion being grounded on the truth of the premises, we never could arrive at any knowledge by reasoning, unless something could be known antecedently to all reasoning. (Mill, 4)

"The simple character of the inductions by which he had disentangled the mystery...the affair regarded as little less than miraculous, or that the Chevalier's analytical abilities acquired for him the credit of intuition." (Roget, 51) Dupin, no doubt possesses "a pure poetic intuition." (Zhao, 127) The best quality is that Dupin "virtually 'dreams' his solutions. His logical method is to identify his own intellect with that of another and thereby divine what another person must think." (Zhao, 127)

Rapid intuition is a result of strong and accurate observation and retention of memory. Aaron Masters, in the article *Specimens of Diseased Intelligence- The Ratiocinators of the Sherlock Holmes Canon* writes:

Fundamental to the concept of ratiocination is this tension between observation and imagination, allowing the one to modify the other and, crucially, vice versa. Dupin is not, as he first appears, a mind-reader, for he shows that his inferences are based on observations; but observations alone would not have availed him. His genius lies in his ability to fill in the gaps; to link them, by means of imaginative inference, from first cause to end result. (Masters, 1)

Poe asserts in the introduction to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* that: "To observe attentively is to remember distinctly." (Rue Morgue, 11) The necessary quality of a successful analyst according to Poe is that:

He makes, in silence, a host of observations and inferences... the extent of information obtained, lies not so much in the validity of the inference as in the quality of observation. The necessary knowledge is that of what to observe. (Rue Morgue, 11)

This may require from the analyst (made understood by Poe by means of the example of the card game Hoyle) to consider "deductions from things external to the game," "countenance of his partner," also "glances" of the opponents, "every variation of face." (Rue Morgue, 12) Also matters "the manner of gathering up" the cards, "what is played though feint," "the air with which it is thrown upon the table" (Rue Morgue, 12) and so on. This provides the analyst with logic sufficient enough to be "in full possession of the contents of each hand" (Rue Morgue, 12) and thus play a better game and win it too. This calls for a link, "an inherent attention on the observer and the thing observed, and specifically, between Dupin and the object of his investigation." (Mackereth, 2) In observing the arrangement of the articles in the thicket, Dupin begs the notice of the reader to its "highly artificial arrangement." (Roget, 90) Dupin continues to elaborate in his observation that:

In the narrow limits of the bower (leafy enclosure), it would have been scarcely possible that the petticoat and scarf should have retained a position upon the stones, when subjected to the brushing to and fro of many struggling persons. (Roget, 90)

This way, he derives a premise and "when the premises are derived from observation, the function of Reasoning is to ascertain what we formerly thought might be inferred from the observed facts." (Whatley, 242) Hence, Dupin admits that "Observation has become with me, of late, a species of necessity." (Rue Morgue, 18)

An accurate observation demands mingling of objectivity, that is, a combination of closeness and remoteness. Steven Mackereth writes in his article *Truth from an Infinite Number of Fictions* that "to be objective is to be "outside" a group because this provides a view with a "great deal of difference."" (Mackereth, 3) This enables Dupin to deliver "original insights with that curious mingling of lucidity and detachment" (Mackereth, 3) which is aptly required. Dupin avoids "multiple realities" (Mackereth, 5) composed of testimonies of various sources and prefers to create his own trail of unbiased judgments. The multiple testimonies can corrupt the mind of detective and make him deviate from the path because "these multiple realities give rise to apparently conflicting stories." (Mackereth, 5) So, objectivity and remoteness help him. Dupin hears the case from the Prefect where "he slept not the less soundly" (55) in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. This is done for two purposes- firstly, to keep his judgments unbiased and secondly, to trust his own ratiocination faculties.

It was for this reason that "The "Mystery of Marie Roget" was composed at a distance from the scene of atrocity, and with no other means of investigation than the newspapers afforded." (Roget, 49) The method also involves objectivity because the narrator admits that they were:

Engaged in researches which absorbed our whole attention, it had been nearly a month since either of us had gone abroad, or received a visitor, or more than glanced at the leading political articles in one of the daily newspapers. (Roget, 54)

In *The Purloined Letter*, under pretence of listening to the Prefect, Dupin sleeps. Thus, he prefers to collect all the "material testimony" (Rue Morgue, 21) in the three cases trusting either him or his narrator friend only but the investigation is solely his. Thus, the whole process of investigation characterized by objectivity reflects inherent rationality. Dupin inherits this method of solving crimes from its creator:

For Poe, the act of analyzing a situation, discovering its particulars and how they work together, was more important than just using strategy to understand what happens in the world. (Givens, 30)

The mystery of murders in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is solved based upon the testimonies gathered from the newspapers and here “the function of Reasoning is to ascertain the testimony of a witness... by interpreting the signs in which the one has intimated his assertion.” (Whatley, 241) Here starts the ratiocination process for the other two stories as well. It involves breaking the whole process into its sub-parts and dealing with one smaller part at one time. Since:

The separation of a complicated phenomenon into its component parts is not like a connected and interdependent chain of proof. If one link of an argument breaks, the whole drops to the ground; but one step toward an analysis holds good and has an independent value, though we should never be able to make a second. (Mill, 7)

After breaking the links and scrutinizing each, “a constructive and combing power” (*Rue Morgue*, 12) of the investigated areas is necessary. His ratiocination process involve “conclusions narrowed in the field of his investigation” with such clarity and accuracy that he bears fruitful results. “Fortunately, there is but one mode of reasoning upon the point, and that mode must lead us to a definite decision,” (*Rue Morgue*, 32-33) is his line of action. Also, he concludes that the assassins could have been only in the two rooms and it is better than “only from these two apartments” (*Rue Morgue*, 33) that the issue be sought. Also, discarding the means of egress to have been the chimney or the doors, he knew that only windows could have been the one possible thing, and needed to be examined. This is because “any expression or statement which does not really prove anything, is not really, an argument at all, though it may be brought forward and passed off as such.” (Whatley, 84)

The ratiocinative process also involves prioritizing the work. “At present we must occupy ourselves with other investigations.” (Roget, 70) He only proceeds to the next stage of investigation when one issue is “settled to... perfection.” (Roget, 77) Even after investigating so many details, Dupin still feels that “we have only reconnoitered (made a preliminary investigation) the field of investigation.” (Roget, 81) One suitable instance is when he expresses ratiocination in his actions:

Let us shift to the bottom of this affair of the first elopement. Let us know the full history of ‘the officer,’ with present circumstances, and his whereabouts at the precise period of the murder. Let us carefully compare with each other the various communications, both as regards style and MS... And, all this done, let us compare these various communications with the known MSS. of the officer. (Roget, 98)

Doubtless to state is the fact that in spite of such precision, there are gaps that Dupin fills during his investigation process. He feels that the common things were not identified by police in the case of Marie:

Had the body been in any respect despoiled (robbed)? Had the deceased any articles of jewelry about her person on leaving home? If so, had she any when found? These are important questions utterly untouched by the evidence; and there are others of equal importance, which have met with no attention. (Roget, 79)

From here begins the path leading to completion of his investigation where he knows what gaps to fill and then “corroboration will rise upon corroboration and the murderer will be traced.” (Roget, 100)

Rationality sometimes resides in discarding the ordinary. “It is by these deviations from the plane of the ordinary, that reason feels its way, if at all, in its search for the true” (*Rue Morgue*, 30) says Dupin. The narrator and Dupin live a secluded life, away from the ordinary way of living. “One might say that their daily life prepares the way for ratiocination to happen, clearing away the superficial elements of normal life to reveal the essential.” (Mackereth, 7)

The newspapers, whose object is “to create a sensation- to make a point- than to further the cause of truth,” (Roget, 65) and Prefect of police who “broke forth at once the explanations of his own views, interspersing them with long comments,” (Roget, 55) also represent the ordinary. Dupin very well knows that it is a flaw to have a blind belief on both the sources. It was obvious and ordinary for the police to take up this action pointed out by Dupin:

And do you not see also, that such recherches nooks for concealment are adapted only for the ordinary occasions, and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article concealed- a disposal of it in this recherché manner, -is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed. (Letter, 115)

To proceed in such an ordinary way led the police to the path of follies and foibles. Even Minister D is smart to believe in discarding the ordinary and he “despises all the ordinary nooks of concealment” (Letter, 115) in regard to his mode of concealment of the letter and deceives the police.

There are, but of course, two sides of the coin which always run parallel. It is wise to discard the ordinary but it is always logical and rational to sometimes consider the ordinary as well. “Now, the popular opinion, under certain conditions, is not to be disregarded” (Roget, 85) believes Dupin. It is Dupin’s way of thinking that “Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault... Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain... And a little too self-evident.” (Letter, 104) The police regard the ordinary measures of investigation in the case of the purloined letter while Minister D discards the ordinary: “I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to simplicity, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice” (Letter, 118) says Dupin.

No matter how ordinary ‘coincidence’ may seem, it is to be kept in mind because detectives have another definition of the word as “they believe that everything that surrounds them is filled with potential meaning.” (Bursikova, 13) It is a coincidence that the news of a lost Orangutan is reported in the newspaper by “Cuvier” (*Rue Morgue*, 41) clashing with the time the murders in the Rue Morgue were committed. It is because of this fact that Dupin “understood the full horrors of the murder at once.” (*Rue Morgue*, 41)

For Poe, coincidences are not just random events strung together in life. He equates them with a certain precision.... Thus, a random collection of activities is not just a haphazard stammering of actions, but instead a chain of events, linked together by a silver cord, however fine that cord might be. (Givens, 46)

Dupin brings out the coincidences of various incidents by relating them to various newspapers: “Morning Paper- June 25” reported “an outrage of the most atrocious character near the city” where a girl was “seized by the gang... gagged, brutally treated.” (Roget, 82) “Le Diligence-Thursday, June 26” (Roget, 83) reported the statement of “a bargeman connected with the revenue service” (*Rue*

Morgue, 82) who saw an empty floating boat at the Seine with the sails at the bottom. The extraordinary thing about this was that “The next morning it was taken from thence, without the knowledge of any of the officers.” (Roget, 83) This made Dupin reach to new levels of conclusions “from and to new discoveries possibly only by observing and calculating the scientific and practical nature of odd happenings.” (Givens, 48) Thus, “Accident is admitted as a portion of the substructure” (Roget, 80) never to be wholly discarded. There is definitely a certain extent up to which coincidences can be taken into consideration. It often happens that it is mere chance and no more that one thing coincides with another but holds no meaning and makes the process nothing but unnecessarily bulky.

The ratiocination process is seen to go in the right direction when, even after thorough investigations, he can still figure out logical yet unanswered questions. “And here let me pause to insinuate a question,” (Roget, 98) says Dupin, bringing out various questions pertaining to the case.

The newspapers boldly stated that the murder of Marie was a work of a gang of desperadoes but “what struggle could have taken place- so violent and enduring- between a weak and defenseless girl and the gang of ruffians imagined?” (Roget, 92) This escapes the notice of an ordinary man, even the police, but not Dupin. He questions the absence of the man with dark and swarthy complexion asking “Was he murdered by the gang? If so, why are there only traces of the assassinated girl?” (Roget, 97) He also questions, “And where is the corpse?” (Roget, 97)

Dupin flawlessly demonstrates his efficiency at carrying out a ratiocinative process. All the aspects clubbed together give a full view of the dynamics of ratiocination working in the three stories- The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Mystery of Marie Roget and The Purloined Letter. All through the work, it has been kept in mind and also takes up as a line of action that “For Poe, a man so steeped in analytic thinking, the process of ratiocination as described in his writing: ordered, rational thought demonstrates purpose and intent beyond some kind of emotion.” (Givens, 13) Every section and sub section can be seen to reflect the meaning inherent in the statement. It is rightly established that “Poe believed that reason could overcome any mystery” (Givens, 13) and reflected that in Dupin and his case solving technique.

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