Romantic Science and the Detective

Bachelor thesis

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1 INTRODUCTION

Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle are two of the biggest names in the detective genre. Poe as the originator of the genre with his C. Auguste Dupin stories,[1] and Conan Doyle as the person who made the genre popular with his Sherlock Holmes stories. Not only are these two authors connected by the genre they have written in, but they are also connected more directly by the fact that Conan Doyle was heavily inspired by Poe's stories. He wrote about his admiration of Poe in the essay *Through the Magic Door*. "His main art", Conan Doyle writes, "must trace back to those admirable stories of Monsieur Dupin, so wonderful in their masterful force, their reticence, their quick dramatic point".[2] He calls Poe the "supreme original short story writer of all time".[3]

In a passage in the first books written about Sherlock Holmes, *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes actively distances himself from Dupin.

> "It is simple enough as you explain it," I said, smiling. "You remind me of Edgar Allen Poe's Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories."
>
> Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. "No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin," he observed. "Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine."[4]

Holmes implies that he is superior to Dupin, and that his own analytical genius far exceeds that of Dupin. Yet by mentioning Dupin, he also acknowledges him as a predecessor. Although he deems Dupin's method of showing his analytical skills "superficial", he himself has done something similar on meeting Watson for the first time, stating that Watson had clearly just come from Afghanistan. Conan Doyle here plays with a meta-fictionality that became a characteristic feature of detective fiction in the twentieth century. In this passage Holmes reacts to the method of Dupin, implying that his own method is superior. As we shall see, Conan Doyle's reaction to Dupin goes further than calling him "showy and superficial";

[1] Murch (1958)
[2] Doyle (1907)
[3] Doyle (1907)
[4] Doyle (2005), p. 31

his novel *A Study in Scarlet* is a reaction to and rejection of many components essential to Poe's detective stories.

Both C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes analyze information to come to a conclusion towards the solving of a mystery. These two characters have similar methods. Both of them seem to perceive details that the narrators, an unnamed one in Poe's stories, and the famous Dr. Watson in Conan Doyle's stories, do not notice. From these minute details they deduce not only what has happened, but also what is going to happen. As we shall see, they both explain and predict events that constitute the plot of the story.

It's this emphasis on analysis that sets stories such as those featuring Dupin and Holmes apart from detective fiction that is in essence an adventure novel. Irwin distinguishes the two by calling the former "analytic detective fiction".[5] As other writers have argued, the analytical detective is closely connected to being a scientist; detectives have been compared to historians[6] and quasi-forensic scientists[7]. This raises the question as towards what kind of scientists Dupin and Holmes are. How do they know what to research, and what constitutes proper method for them? Science is a complex concept, especially if considered in its nineteenth century context, the century in which Poe and Conan Doyle published their stories. When considered in its context, a second set of questions come to the surface, namely, how does the science in these detective stories relate to the theories on science posited in that particular era? And what position did these novels take in the public debate on science in that time?

In order to answer that second set of questions, we will use the interdisciplinary approach discussed by Flohr in the essay "The Relationship between Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century".[8] In order to examine the relationship between literature and science, we first need to assume that literature en science are connected, in the sense that they cannot be taken out of their cultural context. Both engage in a more general cultural discourse. They do this in two ways: "on one hand they influence it and thereby other parts of the general cultural discourse, while on the other hand they themselves are influenced by different aspects of culture and by the whole cultural discourse."[9] Though this might seem to go against the objective truth that is the goal of science, Robin Gilmour argues that the questions that are

[5] Irwin (1986), p. 1168
[6] O'Gorman (1999)
[7] Berg (1970)
[8] Flohr (1999)
[9] Flohr (1999), p. 2

asked in science "cannot be separated from the assumptions of the culture at large".[10] Literature and science are especially closely connected in the nineteenth century, mostly so in the first half of the century. As multiple authors have remarked, scientific writing in the Victorian period was highly accessible.[11] "nineteenth-century scientific writing rarely departed from a rhetoric and vocabulary shared by the educated layman"[12], and as a result, scientific books were widely read. Journals would publish scientific articles and fiction stories side by side: "readers could find a discussion of a poem by Tennyson on one page and an assessment of Mary Sommerville's *Connexion of the Physical Sciences* on the next".[13] The detective novels by Poe and Conan Doyle are written in this "complex interplay and interconnection between literature and science (…) via a common cultural background"[14]. By comparing the scientific foundation in their stories, we can formulate a statement on what kind of position these novels take, resulting in a new way to look at these oft-discussed authors.

Science in the nineteenth century was closely connected to two larger philosophical movements: that of Enlightenment, and its reactionary, Romanticism. Both schools brought forward a great number of scientific achievements, until in the 1860s under the influence of positivism, Romanticism was discredited. In an article on detective fiction, Sparling states that the detective genre presupposes rationality, a concept closely related to Enlightenment.[15] Sheposits that for a story to be included in the genre of detective fiction without question, it should make a clear distinction between rationalism and Romanticism. She explains these two terms as follows:

> "Rationalism can be defined as the use of reason as a source of knowledge and justification. It is a logical theory of mind in which events and statements appeal to the philosophy and science of making inferences. Romanticism, on the other hand, is the literary incorporation of imagination, intuition, speculation, and at times the idea of a supernatural."[16]

[10] Gilmour (1993), p. 142
[11] Kucich (2008) & Flohr (1999)
[12] Kucich (2008), p. 120
[13] Flohr (1999), p. 3
[14] Flohr (1993), p. 6
[15] Sparling (2011)
[16] Sparling (2011), p. 1

In her Oxford speech, Dorothy Sayers applies Aristotle's thoughts on fiction to the detective genre. Following Aristotle, an incident in detective fiction should at least be probable, or the reader will not accept it. The idea behind this principle, Sparling states, is that in detective fiction there is always an assumption that the universe is rational. "Without the employment of logic and rationalism, the readers would have no incentive for picking up on what the author desires them to assume."[17] The presence of Romanticism, for example in the form of the supernatural, would undermine the rational order of the universe.

She then continues to point to Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' as a story which combines rationalism and Romanticism; while, on the other hand, the Sherlock Holmes stories rest solidly on a rationalist basis. Although Sparlings gives some pointers as towards the effect on the story structure and the reader's experience of it as a result of Poe's mingling of Romanticism and rationalism, it doesn't give a satisfying answer to the question how these two are merged within the story, and why. Combining these questions with the insight that science was closely related in the nineteenth century, the answer might lie in Romantic science, as Romantic science combines a form of speculation with deduction.

First, we will construct a model of a Romantic scientist, before proceeding to analyzing the three Dupin stories in detail. Through this analysis, by contrasting elements from Poe's fiction with theories of science held in its time of publishing, and by holding his detective stories alongside Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes novel, we will be able to formulate how these stories fit within their cultural context and how they interact with it, shedding a new light on them.

[17] Sparling (2011), p. 2

2 SCIENCE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The detective story such as it is founded by Poe, revolves around observation and induction.[18] From the genre's origin it is closely tied to ideas on science and method. Although detectives after Dupin focus on method in different ways, all of them possess "a method of knowing how to know".[19] The emergence of detective fiction as a genre coincides with a time in history where science became increasingly self-aware of its methodology. In the nineteenth century, the word "science" became to mean something different than it had done before.[20] Previously the word science could be applied to any pursuit of knowledge. "Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, science as a specialized field, as well as the branches and subdisciplines that compromise it, literally came into being".[21] The word "scientist" itself was only coined in 1834.[22] William Whewell used this new term to refer to people who used Frances Bacon's experimental method.[23] In order to be able to see how the Dupin stories interact with ideas on science that were held in the nineteenth century, it is important to focus on two of the most important schools of thought: Baconianism and Romanticism. Out of the multitude of information that is available on these two schools, a small selection will be used in order to create a model of a typical Enlightened scientist and one of a Romantic scientist, and which assumptions they had while conducting science.

2.1 BACONIANISM AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The Baconian method that still enjoyed popularity in the nineteenth century was posited by English philosopher Frances Bacon at the beginning of the eighteenth century in his book *Novum Organum*. Up until then, science was dominated by the Aristotelian method of science, which is based on deductive reasoning.[24] Aristotelians reasoned from universal statements (the premise) towards particular cases. Because the universally true statement cannot be doubted, the particular case must also be true. Bacon criticized this approach, as the content of the premise cannot be proven to be true. "Bacon argued that universal statements can never be the starting point of scientific inquiry."[25] Instead, he posits a new method that he

[18] Murch (1958)
[19] Dover (1994)
[20] Kucich (2008)
[21] Kucich (2008), p. 119
[22] Cahan (2003)
[23] Kelley (2012)
[24] Dooremalen et al. (2010)
[25] Dooremalen et al. (2010), p. 49

calls the method of induction. He emphasizes the importance of the gathering of empirical data, and warns against deceptions of the mind when practicing science. Progress in science can only be made when nature is investigated through sensory experience. Together with other 17th century thinkers like John Locke and David Hume, Bacon stands at the beginning of the period that is often called the Enlightenment.[26]

Bacon's ideas were incredibly influential for scientific development after him. In a methodological sense, it was no longer acceptable to base theories on authority or argumentation, but had to be based on observational and experimental facts. The experimental method was incredibly successful. In the eighteenth century Bacon's theory was extended upon by British empiricist thinkers such as George Berkeley and Hume. One of the main methodological discussions of the mid-nineteenth century concerned how to apply Bacon's ideas on discovery. There were roughly two schools of thought: one argued that the collection of data should happen without any bias from the scientist, while the other argued that a hypothesis was necessary to guide the collection of data. In how far the scientist's prejudice guides and should guide the collection of data was a source of continuous discussion. William Whewell, who also coined the word scientist, is an important example of someone who took Baconianism into the nineteenth century. The Baconian method stayed the dominant mode of practicing science in the early nineteenth century, only shortly rivalled by Romantic science.

In their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer see the disenchantment of the world as the core of the Enlightenment.[27] Its goal was to render myth and imagination useless, as to control nature and the human existence. It centered around the rational, trying to explain and categorize the world in formulas and systems. They use the word enlightenment to signify the cultural revolution in Europe that started in the seventeenth century. They see Bacon as someone with an exemplary Enlightened attitude.

> "The concordance between the mind of man and the nature of things that he had in mind is patriarchal: the human mind, which overcomes superstition, is to hold sway over a disenchanted nature. Knowledge, which is power, knows no obstacles."[28]

In the Enlightenment there is only one valid sort of knowledge: scientific knowledge. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that in Enlightened science, everything, from humans to nature itself,

[26] Dooremalen et al. (2010)
[27] O'Connor (2000)
[28] O'Connor (2000), p. 157

is reduced to numbers. "It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities. To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion."[29] Enlightened science is essentially utilitarian.

Though Enlightened scientists came in all sorts and sizes, we can construct a profile of an Enlightened scientist. On the level of worldview, the Enlightened scientist presupposes a fully rational universe. Even if a phenomenon cannot be explained, it is merely because an explanation is lacking *right now*. He believes that ultimately, everything can be caught in theories. He is concerned with universal laws – the individual or exceptional doesn't have any meaning to him. This results in a way of thinking in which only the collective matters, and individual experience is discredited. His worldview is mechanistic, as even the human mind is viewed as a thoroughly complex machine, but a machine nevertheless. His scientific method is based on induction. From a large data set, which is collected empirically, general rules can be stated. The collection of data is systematic, and should not be influenced by the biases of the scientist.

2.2 ROMANTIC SCIENCE

As a reaction to the Enlightenment, in the end of the eighteenth century Romanticism came into being. The Romantic period had its peak in the first half of the nineteenth century, but as philosopher Maarten Doorman argues in *The Romantic Imperative*, Romantic thought still permeates contemporary culture.[30] In many ways, Enlightenment and Romanticism can be seen as a set of polar opposites to each other. Enlightenment is pragmatic, Romanticism idealistic. Enlightenment is concerned with general and universal principles, while Romanticism is concerned with the particular. The view of Enlightenment was pointed outwards, observing the outer world through a scientific lens. Romanticism is introspect, examining feelings, emotion, and focusing on imagination. Enlightenment was concerned with finding order, stability and harmony, while Romanticism favored change, and sought to find the sublime.

Everyone who writes about Romanticism encounters the problem that Romantic literature is incredibly diverse and fragmented. As David Knight points out, "consistency was not seen as a virtue", and "one cannot define members of the Romantic Movement as one might members

[29] O'Connor (2000), p. 160
[30] Doorman (2012)

of a political party".[31] Romanticism, both as a broader school of thought, as well as Romantics themselves, are elusive, evading comprehensive definition. For this paper highlighting the concepts of Romanticism such as they were known in well-read circles of society is enough to be able to see how Poe incorporated or rejected certain elements in his detective stories. In *Romanticism and the Sciences*, the editors Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine describe the core of how Romantics viewed the relationship between the self and nature.

> "Once, in a Golden Age, in the Garden before the Fall, man was at one with himself and nature. Now he is divided in himself, his once harmoniously united faculties at war with each other and at odds with nature."[32]

It is this underlying idea that inspired most of the Romantic arts and sciences. There are many ways in which the unity between man and nature can be restored. Most descriptions given of these are poetic or aesthetic, as many Romantics were searching to restore mankind through art. Research into nature – science – is also a possible path towards a unification.

Romantic science and the German *Naturphilosophie* developed side by side in early nineteenth century Germany, and they were thoroughly influenced by each other.[33] The *Naturphilosophie* was a philosophical tradition that tried to formulate a foundation for natural sciences, based on the idea that all of nature is united by one single force, which can be described as being the "soul" of nature. Many scientists were inspired by the *Naturphilosophie* at first, but later became disillusioned by the fact that it was too vague and speculative, as some influential thinkers of the school, Schelling and Hegel, "disdained experiment and tried to construct all natural sciences from *a priori* speculation".[34] Some ideas that the *Naturphilosophie* and Romantic science shared turned out to be fruitful.

It does Romanticism a disservice to say that Romanticism abhorred all science and only longed to become one with nature; many Romantic scientists promoted a form of science which did not abuse nature, but would still increase scientific knowledge. The opposition between Enlightenment and Romanticism can also be found in science, however. "The Romantics were certainly hostile to the mechanical natural philosophy and descriptive natural

[31] Knight, in Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 13
[32] Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 2
[33] Snelders (1970)
[34] Snelders (1970), p. 195

history that they inherited from the Enlightenment."[35] It's the Enlightened attitude that the Romantics saw as the cause of the fall from nature. This didn't mean that Romantics didn't sometimes use the same techniques for conducting science as their Enlightened counterparts. Goethe himself conducted methodical experiments. The experiments of the Romantics had a different goal than those conducted by Baconian scientists. They were proposed as "complements to and completions of – not as replacements for – descriptive natural histories."[36]

The idea that experiment complements science rather than constitute it, ties in with an important theme Romanticism proposed in science: the idea of anti-reductionism. From their more general idea of authenticity and the importance of the self, Romantics fought the reductionism practiced in the scientism of the Enlightened kind.[37] Reductionism is the process of translating theoretical terms from one science into the other, resulting in fewer theories. By fitting theories together, as it were, it becomes possible to describe more phenomena with less statements. Romantics thought that this didn't do justice to the essence of nature, and sought for ways to practice science without severing the connection between man and nature. Some Romantic thinkers didn't approve of the emphasis on deductive reasoning and the mathematization of natural philosophy by Enlightened thinkers.[38] "For the Romantics mechanistic natural philosophy is the culmination of the analytic and judgmental approach responsible for our fall from grace with nature."[39] This didn't mean, however, that all Romantics completely shunned methodological investigation or experiment. Their point was that the Enlightened way of scientific exploration is too shallow and superficial; science needed to be more reflexive, promoting a unity of man and nature.

Intuition and scientific speculation were paths to knowledge of nature. Speculation for Romantics did not have a negative connotation. Only through understanding of the self and by using our natural intuition could the unity between man and nature be restored.[40] Their method turned out to be fruitful even in disciplines like physics or chemistry. Based on Schelling's speculations, many Romantic scientists believed that organic and inorganic nature are essentially one. This was combined with the idea of polarity: nature expresses itself in

[35] Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 3
[36] Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 4
[37] Greif (s.d.)
[38] Cunningham & Jardine (1990)
[39] Cunningham & Jardine (1990) p. 3-4
[40] Cunningham & Jardine (1990)

oppositions. The idea of polarity could be applied to the organic world in pairs such as man and woman, animal and plant, but also in the inorganic world. Air for nineteenth century scientists seemed to consist of two gasses, oxygen and nitrogen, which had oppositional properties. The idea of polarity didn't stand clash with the "awareness of nature as one great organism in which individual bodies are only representatives of the whole", but rather needed that concept to flourish. Scientists like Ritter reasoned from the wholeness of nature that if there was such a thing as infra-red light, as discovered by Herschel in 1800, there should also be invisible light on the other side of the light spectrum. His experiments on galvanism earned him the reputation of a scientist, "with publications that time and again illustrate excellent experimental methods based upon fanciful speculations".[41]

There was a whole spectrum of Romantic scientists in between 1790 and 1840, who ranged from those who only speculated to experimental scientists. In order to create a model of one, we will use Ritter as an exemplary Romantic scientist. On the level of the worldview, the Romantic scientist supposes that nature should be viewed as one organism, as one intricate whole. Mankind cannot be seen separately from nature, and man should therefore not try to control or manipulate nature. His practicing of science is related to emotion and his ability to connect with nature. Though he uses experiments, these experiments are subordinate to speculation and reasoning based on analogy. By comparing opposite pairs, he tries to uncover the mysteries of nature. With these two models just outlined, one of the Enlightened scientist and one of the Romantic scientist, we have a frame which can highlight the assumptions underlying the methods of Dupin and Holmes, and how they relate to the two most important schools of thought in the nineteenth century.

[41] Snelders (1970), p. 200

3 THE FIRST DETECTIVE

Before applying the models of Romanticism and Enlightenment on the Dupin stories, we will first roughly sketch the contents and common themes of the stories, and the context in time in which they have been published. Edgar Allan Poe's lifetime roughly coincides with the height of Romanticism, living between 1809 and 1849 in the United States. In his life he published many volumes of poetry, short stories, and even a full-length novel. The stories featuring Auguste C. Dupin are 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', published in 1841, "The Mystery of Marie Roget" in 1842, and 'The Purloined Letter' in 1844. Poe's life has been the subject of many biographies, imbued with different degrees of sensationalism, romanticizing his constant struggle for money.[42] Poe attempted to support himself and later his wife and her mother solely by writing. This was difficult in early nineteenth century Baltimore because there were no international copyright laws to protect authors and their works. In this time, the American literary landscape was just starting to develop, and Poe mainly made name for being a literary critic. It wasn't until after his death that his short stories rose to the fame they hold now.

In his three Dupin stories, Poe created many of the archetypes that were used by subsequent writers, which together shaped the genre that we now know as the detective novel.[43] In Poe's lifetime, however, the term "detective" is not in use yet. Among things that have been reproduced by other writers is Dupins eccentric personality, the way he solves crimes by intellectual consideration rather than diligent and hard work, and his relation to his two foils, "a sympathetic but naïve narrator, nameless throughout the series, and an unsympathetic professional investigator, the Prefect of Police Monsieur G—".[44] The stories are concerned with mystery and puzzle-solving – something that isn't unique in novels in itself. Suspense has always been an important part of stories. Van Leer points to some plays by Shakespeare that use techniques that we now associate with detective fiction. In his book *The Reader and the Detective Story*, George Dove defines what sets detective fiction apart from other fiction. He argues that in order for a story to be included as detective fiction, it needs to conform to four characteristics: the story is transitory without long-range goals, it is a fundamentally intellectual undertaking, it is recreational, and it follows a disciplined, delimited literary

[42] Silverman (1992)
[43] Leer (1993)
[44] Leer (1993) p. 65

form.[45] Edgar Allan Poe's stories are the first to combine all four these qualities, and together with those written by Arthur Conan Doyle, start the tradition of what Dove calls the classical formal-problem detective story.

A central term in Dupin's stories is "ratiocination". Merriam Webster defines ratiocination as "the process of exact thinking", and as "a reasoned train of thought".[46] Etymologically the word is derived from the Latin "ratiocination", which means argumentation or reasoning. It contains the word "ratio", which is used in the English language in its original form or translated with "reason". With the word ratiocination Poe summarizes the logical train of thought through which an analyst solves a problem. The word "analyst" is the word Poe uses in his stories for the person who uses logical thought to "disentangle"[47]. Ratiocination may be applied to games such as draughts (called checkers in contemporary American English) or chess, or to mysteries such as a murder.

The word "analyst" is repeated often throughout the story, and it deserves some further attention. The word came in use in the middle of the seventeenth century.[48] It was closely related to newly developed mathematical techniques that allowed for new ways of understanding the world; "analysis came to be seen as a method of discovery".[49] Analyst was a common word for someone who engaged in philosophical or scientific activity, as "scientist" had only been recently coined in 1834.[50] Used in this sense, it becomes clear why Poe compares Dupin with an analyst. An analyst is someone who discovers, usually by breaking problems down into parts in order to resolve them. As we shall see, Dupin meticulously breaks down every aspect of the crimes he encounters.

In the stories, much of the text is used to describe how an analyst acts and thinks. Not only does this show how important ratiocination is for the story, looking at how the reader learns about ratiocination will also tell us more about the underlying themes and ideology of the text. A concept that will be useful while determining the ideology of the text is that of the implied author. The ideology a text expresses doesn't need to be an ideology the author himself ascribes to.[51] By using the construction of the implied author, a certain distance between the

[45] Dove (1997)
[46] As stated on http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ratiocination, accessed 10-08-2015
[47] "(…) so glories the analyst in that moral activity which *disentangles*." Poe (2012), p. 369
[48] As stated on http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/analyst, accessed 10-08-2015
[49] As stated on http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analysis/#5 accessed 10-08-2015
[50] Cahan (2003)
[51] Herman (2005)

real life author and the intention as it is fixed in the text can be held. Poe is often equated with his characters, and keeping Poe separate from his characters becomes problematic.[52] To avoid being caught up in Poe's auto-biography and to concentrate on what the stories themselves hold in terms of ideas on the nature of detection, the implied author that is determined by the text itself will be a useful tool.

The first story featuring Dupin as a detective is 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', published in the April 1841 issue of *Graham's Lady's and Genteman's Magazine*, a magazine where Poe was an editor at the time.[53] The structure of the story is dividable in three parts. It starts off with an essay on how an analyst works, then a short scene in which Dupin and his analytical powers are introduced, followed by the main mystery of the murders in the Rue Morgue. In the first paragraphs of the essayistic section, the narrator describes different situations in which different degrees of analytical capacity are graded. The narrator argues that the game of draughts asks more of the intellect than the "elaborate frivolity of chess". Though large-scale chess tournaments weren't common yet in the early nineteenth century, the status of chess as a highly intellectual game was already established. Amateur chess player Henry Bird writes: "The degree of intellectual skill which chess admits of, has been considered and pronounced so high, that Leibnitz declared it to be far less a game than a science."[54] Dupin here goes against public opinion, claiming that chess only asks concentration of the player, rather than "acuteness". Draughts only has a limited number of moves, and when all players are equal, asks that the analyst "throws himself into the spirit of his opponent".[55] Through this comparison, the narrator ranks being able to identify with an opponent as of a higher category of intellectual prowess as being able to go through all possible moves, as chess asks of a player. Because the possible moves are limited in draughts, it is only by anticipating the opponent's moves that the draughts player can win. The narrator extends his argument to whist, an eighteenth century card game.

In this section the analyst that is described here is someone to whom analytical prowess is a source of enjoyment. Later, the narrator says about Dupin: "he seemed, too, to take an eager delight in its exercise – if not exactly in its display – and did not hesitate to confess the pleasure thus derived."[56] He loves to practice his intellect by playing games. In addition the

[52] Leer (1993)
[53] Silverman (1992)
[54] Bird (1893)
[55] Poe (2012), p. 370
[56] Poe (2012), p. 372

narrator gives us a frame in which to place the skills of the analyst. He makes multiple distinctions, valuing certain skills over others. Ingenuity is seen as "simple", while analytical thinking has "power".

All of this introductory matter about "the analyst" gives the reader a guide as to what will follow. As Craighill points out, "This preface equips us with a psychological profile for the superior analyst, one which we can apply to Poe's detective."[57] At the end of this essayistic piece on analysis, the narrator concludes: "The narrative which follows will appear to the reader somewhat in the light of a commentary upon the propositions just advanced."[58] After this point, the story begins.

After the introduction into analysis, we are introduced to the setting of the story ("Paris during the spring and part of the summer of 18—") and the detective himself.[59] Dupin is of an "illustrious family", but because of "untoward events", he has lost his fortune. He and the narrator bond over a fondness of rare books, and they move in together. Murch points out that Dupin is a man of culture; he is "familiar with the classics and equally at home when discussing chemistry, anthropology or 'algebraic analysis' ".[60]

In the second section of the story, Dupin demonstates his analytical ability for the first time during one of their nightly walks. The narrator and he have been walking in silence, until Dupin comments on the thoughts of the narrator. When the narrator has regained his bearings after his initial surprise ("my astonishment was profound"), Dupin explains through which means he has retraced the thoughts of the narrator. He connects their last subject of conversation (horses) to events that happened during their silence, such as the appearance of a fruiterer, the change of pavement, and a muttered word. Through this chain he has constructed what has been happening in the mind of the narrator, and has concluded correctly that the narrator was thinking about an actor who was small of stature. "The larger links of the chain run thus – Chantilly, Orion, Dr. Nichols, Epicurus, Stereotomy, the street stones, the fruiterer."[61] Dupin's attention is limited to noting the narrator's mood, with observations such as him having a "petulant expression", later his "countenance brightened up". The chain of thought is deterministic, in that the narrator "has to" think of the theories of Epicurus when he hears the word "stereotomy", after which he "can't help" looking at the sky. Dupin observing

[57] Craighill (2010), p. 51
[58] Poe (2012), p. 371
[59] Poe (2012), p. 371
[60] Murch (1958), p. 70
[61] Poe (2012), p. 373

the narrator looking at the sky is more of a confirmation of his theory rather than it influences his reasoning. At that point the sequence of thoughts is already fixed for Dupin to unravel.

After this display of analytical power, we are immediately introduced to the main event of the story: the murder in the Rue Morgue. The murder is introduced in a lengthy newspaper article, taken from the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, a French newspaper that really existed in the nineteenth century[62], which describes the circumstances in detail. The article includes several witnesses' accounts. The mystery goes thus: in a locked room, a woman and her daughter are brutally murdered. Raised voices were heard by witnesses, but no witness could discern the language of the voices. Throughout the three detective stories, we will see that newspapers feature a prominent role, both as catalyst for the main mystery (such as in 'The Murders of the Rue Morgue' and 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'), as source of information, but also as a general entity which fuels a discourse Dupin engages in.

Dupin then takes it upon himself to solve the mystery. The examination by the police of Paris he deems insufficient. By using key words such as "acumen" and "cunning" to describe the police, the reader is reminded of the introduction, in which acumen is condemned as being inferior to true analysis. Dupin and the narrator proceed to the Rue Morgue, where the narrator describes the scene for the reader, corroborating the newspaper report. Following his own advice to consider the whole, Dupin doesn't just examine the murder in which the two bodies are found (which still includes the bodies themselves), but also "the whole neighborhood" and the yard of the house.

The following noon, Dupin strikes up conversation with the narrator – as we discover later, already having solved the mystery of the Rue Morgue. Through a long monologue, Dupin touches on all aspects of the crime, focusing on the witness reports, the clues left at the scene themselves, the short-sightedness of the police, and through examples and arguments builds his case. The crime has been deemed unsolvable by the police and the public because it is so horrendous. One body is found pushed halfway up a chimney, the other terribly mutilated. It is these unusual elements, however, that Dupin uses as a way of solving the crime.

The first practical application of his method is shown when Dupin discusses the testimony of the witnesses that have heard voices prior to the murders. "I remarked that, while all the witnesses agreed in supposing the gruff voice to be that of a Frenchman, there was much

[62] As stated on http://www.enap.justice.fr/ressources/index.php?rubrique=108 accessed 10-08-2015

disagreement in regard to the shrill, or, as one individual termed it, the harsh voice."[63] What makes this evidence peculiar, in Dupin's point of view, is the fact that although all of the witnesses had different nationalities (French, Italian, English, and Spanish), none of them were able to understand a word of what was said. "Now, how strangely unusual must that voice have really been, about which such testimony as this could have been elicited! – in whose tones, even, denizens of the five great divisions of Europe could recognise nothing familiar!"[64] This is the first point he makes towards the end, as is slowly unfolded, that the perpetrator is no human being.

Dupin's argument reaches a climax when the narrator's attention is drawn to hair taken from the crime scene, and he exclaims: "Dupin! (…) this hair is most unusual – this is no *human* hair."[65] Yet even then, our attention is drawn to prints left on the throat of a victim. Again, the narrator has to conclude that the prints cannot have been made by a human. Only then it is revealed to the reader and the narrator that Dupin is in possession of a text on orangutans, and the connection between this exotic beast and the murders is immediately made. At this point, Dupin's analysis is taken for truth, and both he and the narrator assume the killer is an orangutan without needing any further evidence. Dupin then makes further conclusions, stating that the orangutan's owner is a Frenchman and a sailor. At this point it is revealed that Dupin has taken matters in his own hands – he has posted an advert in a paper, looking for the owner of the orangutan. The final part of the story starts with the sentence "At this moment we heard a step upon the stairs." A French sailor enters, and after Dupin reveals what he knows, the sailor corroborates his story.

The first Dupin holds many discussions on ideas of knowledge and method. A key theme in this discourse is one of observation. It's Dupin's knowledge of knowing where to look, how to observe, that allows him to solve the murder in the Rue Morgue. Secondly, a common thread that will continue into the other two stories is introduced, namely that of the exceptional constituting knowledge. Dupin stresses that it's the "outré" nature of the case is what makes it easy to solve. This concept will be repeated and shown from a different angle in the second story featuring Dupin.

Often subtitled "A Sequel to 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'", 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' was published in three parts in *Snowden's Ladies' Companion*, in November and

[63] Poe (2012), p. 383
[64] Poe (2012), p. 383
[65] Poe (2012), p. 389

December 1842 and February 1843 respectively.[66] This story is the least popular one of the three featuring Dupin.[67] A reason for this is twofold; firstly, there is no action in this story. It consists completely of a recounting of the crime and Dupin's verbal analysis. As Murch writes, "it is a different type of story, an impersonal exercise in analytical deduction."[68] Secondly, it's less accessible, because it relies so heavily on the reader knowing about the real crime committed, as unlike the two other stories, the murder committed in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' has its basis in real-life events. In 1841 the body of a young woman, Mary Cecilia Rogers, was found in the Hudson River in New Jersey.[69] Poe adapts this real life crime into a fictional story in which the murder victim is called Marie Rogêt, and she is found dead in the Seine in Paris. The main interest of this story in the light of this thesis, in addition to Dupin's method of analysis, lies in how the story mediates between fact and fiction. By exploring this connection, we learn more about how Poe acted in a wider societal discourse with his detective stories.

The double layer of the real crime and the fictional one is immediately referred to in the second paragraph of the story:

> "The extraordinary details which I am now called upon to make public, will be found to form, as regards sequence of time, the primary branch of a series of scarcely intelligible coincidences, whose secondary or concluding branch will be recognized by all readers in the late murder of Mary Cecila Rogers, at New York."[70]

Thereafter, the real crime is often referred to in footnotes. The reader is constantly reminded that although the story we're reading is fictional, it closely follows the factual happenings. The French setting is continually undermined. Where Dupin discusses the theories of certain newspapers, the footnotes refer to the real New York papers that printed these theories. The real-world equivalents for street names and other key places are also given. These references destroy the illusion of the French background of the story.[71] It also suggests that the fictional analysis conducted by Dupin has real-life consequence, and that what happens in his fictionalized account has bearing on what happened in New York. What this connection might be, becomes clearer as we continue through the story.

[66] Silverman (1992)
[67] Leer (1993)
[68] Murch (1958), p. 73
[69] Silverman (1992)
[70] Poe (2012), p. 456
[71] Murch (1958)

To return to the beginning of the story, the narrator tells the reader that after writing 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', he thought he would have described the "remarkable features in the mental character of my friend, the Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin" sufficiently.[72] "Late events, however, in their surprising development, have startled me into some farther details, which will carry with them the air of extorted confession."[73] It doesn't immediately become clear what caused the narrator to "startle into farther details", instead, we return to moments after the solving of the "Rue Morgue" crimes, with the narrator and Dupin resting in their chambers.

Because of this reputation he gained by solving the murders in the Rue Morgue, Dupin's services are called upon for the murder of Marie Rogêt by the Prefect of Police, who makes Dupin a "liberal proposition, the precise nature of which I do not feel myself at liberty to disclose."[74] The impression is given of a large sum of money, and the unwillingness of the narrator to disclose the exact amount seems undue, especially since in 'The Purloined Letter' Dupin clearly receives a monetary reward of fifty thousand francs, which is also called "a liberal reward".[75] Dupin's preoccupation with money is given no specific context in the stories. In 'Murders in the Rue Morgue' he is characterized as someone who has no longer a grand fortune, but neither is he completely without funds. Most probable is that the emphasis on monetary reward has a connection to Poe's notoriously unstable financial situation,[76] rather than it having a larger significance in the stories.

A sketch of the girl herself and the events running up to the discovery of the body of Marie Rogêt, two years after the murders committed in the Rue Morgue, are recounted by the narrator, who has collected the information by reading the papers and receiving a report of the evidence at the Prefecture. Marie was a young woman who worked in a perfume shop, when she disappeared without a trace. After a week she returned, "in good health, but with a somewhat saddened air".[77] When after five months she disappears again, her body is found floating in the Seine. While the police force did everything it could, even offering rewards, no substantial evidence towards Marie's fate were found. These facts are accompanied by large passages of cited paragraphs from newspapers which are based on real newspaper reports.

[72] Poe (2012), p. 456
[73] Poe (2012), p. 456
[74] Poe (2012), p. 459
[75] Poe (2012), p. 604
[76] Silverman (1992)
[77] Poe (2012), p. 457

The number of newspapers referred to in the story is extensive. Following the information in the footnotes, these are respectively a weekly paper (which is revealed to be the New York "Mercury"), *L'Etoile* (The New York *Brother Jonathan*), *Le Commerciel* (New York *Journal of Commerce*), *Le Soleil* (Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*), *Le Moniteur* (The New York *Commercial Advertiser*), *Evening Paper* (New York *Express*), *Le Mercurie* (New York *Herald*), *Morning Paper* (New York *Courier and Inquirer*), another *Evening Paper* (New York *Evening Post*). Most of these are quoted at large, being "literal translations" (from the fictional Parisian originals). Interpretation is started by the narrator, commenting on sections of an article from *L'Etoile*, pointing out the sensationalist tendencies of the newspaper. "In this way the journal endeavored to create the impression of an apathy on the part of the relatives of Marie, inconsistent with the supposition that these relatives believed the corpse to be hers."[78] The narrator further disproves suspicions against Mr Beauvais, Marie's suitor. Just like the boundaries between fact and fiction are fluid in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', so are also the roles of Dupin and the narrator less clear. Where the narrator is generally a foil, asking Dupin questions and claiming his astonishment at the appropriate times, he here seems to take over some of the reasoning from Dupin.

Only at roughly a third through the story is Dupin given space to speak. Contrary to the case at the Rue Morgue, the case of Marie Rogêt seems to be a simple one. Where the murder of the L'Espanayes was impossible to explain for the police, and was "outré" according to Dupin, there is nothing outré about Marie Rogêt's murder; it's hardly uncommon for a body to turn up in the Seine, and it's not hard for the police to consider many different motives and modes of the murder. "The mystery [of Marie Rogêt] has been considered easy, when, for this reason, it should have been considered difficult, of solution."[79] Dupin argues that, as all of these modes and motives are plausible, this makes it difficult to determine which of the many possibilities is the correct one.

Dupin then retraces and questions the assumptions made by the press and the police. He starts by determining whether the body found is actually the body of Marie Rogêt. The evidence of the case is mulled over in a circular manner. The evidence such as it is known by the narrator is repeated rather than added to by the newspaper accounts, and the analysis of Dupin of the newspaper articles don't present new information. He discusses the evidence as it is presented

[78] Poe (2012), p. 462-463
[79] Poe (2012), p. 466

in the newspapers, and either refutes it or accepts it. He concludes that the killer must have been an unknown man "of dark complexion", who was seen by some witnesses.

The narrative itself doesn't hold the resolution to Marie Rogêt's murder. Dupin posits his theory in the last few paragraphs, concluding that if the police finds the murderer's boat, the apprehension of the murderer himself shouldn't be far behind. In an "editorial" note placed between brackets, the reader is assured that Dupin's theory was correct: "We feel it advisable only to state, in brief, that the result desired was brought to pass." This story has the greatest focus on deducting conclusions from information out of all three of the stories, yet doesn't hold much of methodological discussion such as highlighted in the essayistic introduction of 'Murders in the Rue Morgue'. It does, however, present some interesting notions on the source of truth, a subject that will be further discussed in the next chapter.

The third and final story featuring Dupin, 'The Purloined Letter' is the most complicated of the three. Unlike 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', where the plot is rather straightforward, or 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', where the tale merely constitutes of analysis by Dupin and no actual action, 'The Purloined Letter' entails a double narrative. In 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' we were introduced to Dupin's "Bi-Part Soul", which was also inspired by concepts of duality and doubles. In 'The Purloined Letter' doubles and doubling is thematized both in the structure of the narrative as in the relationships between the characters.

Set several years after 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', 'The Purloined Letter' starts with the entrance of the Prefect. The case the Prefect would like to have Dupin's opinion on is "so simple, and yet baffles us altogether".[80] Dupin then remarks, that it might be "the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault".[81] This sort of statement is a common thread in these stories, as we have encountered it in the first two stories as well. The mystery proposed by the Prefect isn't one of murder, nor is the central question "who did it?" or "how did he?". A Minister D—has stolen a letter containing sensitive information from a royal, and has used his possession of the letter as a way of blackmailing the unnamed royal person. The police is charged with retrieving the letter. It is already known who has purloined the letter, so the mystery doesn't lie in unveiling the criminal, but rather in getting the letter back and outsmarting the criminal. The Prefect never reveals who the writer of the letter is nor who the letter was stolen from, but it is implied that this is the Queen (though there has been no French

[80] Poe (2012), p. 599
[81] Poe (2012), p. 599

queen in the nineteenth century, the time in which these stories are clearly set). The police have searched the Minister and his rooms over and over, yet can't find the letter. The Prefect tells about this search in high detail, describing how the police have inspected every possible hiding place for such a document. Dupin advises the Prefect to search the premises again – and one month later, he returns, still not having found the letter.

The Prefect extensively outlines how and where he has searched for the letter. Because of the sensitive nature of the letter and the fact that the Minister's possession of it is only powerful when it can be presented at a moment's notice excludes it from being hidden somewhere far away. It's not on the Minister's person himself ("He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched under my own inspection"[82]), so it must be somewhere in his apartments.

After making sure how much the monetary reward is for returning the letter, Dupin compels the Prefect to write him a check for the promised amount of fifty thousand francs. Only then does he produce the stolen letter. As Van Leer points out, there is very little attention given to the return of the letter: "we scarcely notice the letter's return midway through the philosophizing".[83] The return is overshadowed by Dupin's explanation of how he came into possession of the letter.

Just like Dupin, the Minister has access to analytical thinking. He has predicted the way the Police does their research, and managed the hide the letter in such a way that they would never find it, no matter their diligence. The explanation of the Minister's thought process is interrupted by a metaphor of a game of map-reading. The intention of this passage is to illustrate how things can "escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious".[84] If an object (or, such as in Dupin's example, a word on a map) is too obvious, the mind slips past it, not noticing it. This analogy fits in the common theme in these stories of observation and knowing where to look. The Minister has used this principle to make sure that the police wouldn't find the letter. Dupin tells the narrator how he himself has visited the apartment of the Minister, pretending to have bad eyesight while he surveyed the room from behind tinted glasses. When he comes across a crumpled and dirty letter in a rack beneath the mantelpiece, he knows it is the letter he's looking for, even if it doesn't resemble the letter as described by

[82] Poe (2012), p. 601
[83] Leer (1993), p. 68
[84] Poe (2012), p. 609

the Prefect. It is the "the dirt, the soiled and torn condition of the paper" combined with the "hyperobtrusive situation of this document" that he recognizes the letter for what it is.[85]

The next day, Dupin returns to the apartment, having left a snuff-box to secure a second visit. He has hired a man to cause a commotion outside, and as the Minister is distracted, he exchanges the letter with one of his own. This act mirrors the one through which the Minister has retrieved the letter originally from the Queen. Because the Minister doesn't know the original letter is no longer in his position, the roles have been reversed.

> "For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers; since, being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction."[86]

The downfall of the Minister is suggested, but isn't displayed in the narrative. Even though there is a retribution for the Minister's crime – his own downfall – he isn't brought to justice in a legal way. Dupin leaves a personal message in the letter he plants, making the whole event seem more of a personal revenge exacted on someone who has slighted him in the past, rather than the righting of a wrong.

After this extensive introduction into the source material, we will take a closer look at the key concepts that return in all three of these stories. These concepts will be connected with the theories on Romanticism that were introduced earlier. By comparing the theories on science that make up the Dupin universe with Romantic science, we will learn more about what makes these stories exceptional within the detective genre.

[85] Poe (2012), p. 610-611
[86] Poe (2012), p. 611-612

4 KEY CONCEPTS IN DUPIN

When reading these texts, the first characteristic that we encounter is the amount of time spent on discussing philosophical concepts of knowledge, observation, and the nature of truth. As A.E. Murch points out, the plots in the Dupin stories are designed to display the powers of Dupin's observation and deduction.[87] With the narrator Dupin discusses "ways in which analytical reasoning can be applied to practical problems, and certain mysterious crimes committed in Paris serve as examples for elucidation."[88] Not only is Dupin's solving of the mysteries methodical, it's important for the reader to be educated in the aforementioned concepts. When considering the goal of these stories, the effect they are supposed to produce, a passage in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' can shed some light on this matter. When Dupin is discussing a newspaper article from *L'Etoile*, he says:

> "To me, this article appears conclusive of little beyond the zeal of its inditer. We should bear in mind that, in general, it is the object of our newspapers rather to create a sensation—to make a point—than to further the cause of truth."[89]

While the story holds quite some criticism of the sensationalism of the newspapers, it's the last part of this quote that is especially noteworthy. The aim of 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' is exactly "to further the cause of truth", both in the real and the fictional world. As Dupin says at some point, "It is not, however, with *L'Etoile* that we have to do, but with the truth."[90] Dupin solves the case of Marie Rogêt's murder, while Poe himself attempts to unravel and discuss the reporting surrounding the Mary Rogers case. These ambitions shine through in a footnote in the story, where Poe extends the success of Marie Rogêt's case to Mary Roger's case.

> "It may not be improper to record, nevertheless, that the confessions of two persons, (one of them the Madame Deluc of the narrative) made, at different periods, long subsequent to the publication, confirmed, in full, not only the general conclusion, but absolutely all the chief hypothetical details by which that conclusion was attained."[91]

[87] Murch (1958)
[88] Murch (1958), p. 68
[89] Poe (2012), p. 467
[90] Poe (2012), p. 468
[91] Poe (2012), p. 455

At this point, a full circle is reached. In Poe's words, it seems as if the fictional analysis has led to a real-world result. Van Leer has commented however that this was more wishful thinking on Poe's part, as one of the key witnesses on her deathbed confessed that Mary passed away during an abortion gone wrong – something that isn't part of Dupin's analysis, though Poe surely knew about this confession.[92]

How accurate a portrayal Poe's story is of real-world crime aside, these passages give us a handle on how to interpret the discussions on observation and knowledge in the stories. They are not merely a backdrop for the detective – instead, these discussions hold real-world importance. Through these stories, Poe actively engages in a methodological discourse on science through the medium of literature. Especially the discussions on knowledge, observation, and mathematics are of import when trying to distill the scientific implications of these stories. In order to fully understand the world of the Dupin stories, however, it is also valuable to discuss its treatment of the supernatural, ethics, duality, and how the stories engage with the Gothic tradition. These subjects do not reflect directly on science, but they do influence the way the science is contextualized in the stories, and are therefore significant.

4.1 IDEAS ON SCIENCE

As stated above, the main interest of the stories is one of discovering truth. There are different ways that truth can be reached, and different ideas on what constitutes truth. In the stories, there are two ways of receiving information: either information is provided by others, or the information is actively gathered by the detective himself. 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' is an example of information being provided by others – Dupin only has access to the facts such as they are presented by the newspapers and his own knowledge of concepts such as the time it takes for a body to surface after drowning. Dupin searching the neighbourhood of the murder in 'The Murder of the Rue Morgue' presents information that is actively gathered by Dupin himself. The latter sort of gaining information is concerned with observation. Before returning to the question of what truth constitutes, I will discuss how observation is handled.

In the introduction of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', the narrator uses the game of whist to highlight how important observation is for the analyst.

[92] Leer (1993)

> "He [the analyst] makes, in silence, a host of observations and inferences. So, perhaps, do his companions; and the difference in the extent of the information obtained, lies not so much in the validity of the inference as in the quality of the observation."[93]

Essential to the analyst's observation is that he looks where others don't bother to look. Instead of focusing solely on the game, he also takes into account his surroundings. He watches how his opponent sorts his cards, and catalogues the opponent's facial expressions. The point that the narrator makes here, that it is the quality of the observation that counts rather than quality, is one that is repeated throughout the story. Later, Dupin remarks on Vidocq, a real-life detective that lived in nineteenth century Paris. His main criticism of Vidocq is that he could not see things as they were in entirety:

> "But, without educated thought, he erred continually by the very intensity of his investigations. He impaired his vision by holding the object too close. He might see, perhaps, one or two points with unusual clearness, but in doing he, necessarily, lost sight of the matter as a whole."[94]

In the introduction the theme of the analyst taking into account of his surroundings was introduced. In this passage this idea is expanded upon – where the analyst from the introduction took "taken in the whole" rather literally (considering, for example, his opponent's facial expression), this particular passage seems to point towards a larger concept of a holistic approach. Dupin compares Vidocq's type of error with one made when star-gazing.

> "To look at a star by glances – to view it in a side-long way, by turning toward it the exterior portions of the retina (…) is to behold the star distinctly – is to have the best appreciation of its lustre – a lustre which grows dim just in proportion as we turn our vision *fully* upon it."[95]

Finally, he concludes that "it is possible to make even Venus herself vanish from the firmament by a scrutiny too sustained, too concentrated, or too direct."[96] Dupin clearly doesn't mean this literally – but rather, he means that the essence of Venus, that what makes Venus into Venus, cannot be observed by looking at it too directly. This ties in directly with

[93] Poe (2012), p. 370
[94] Poe (2012), p. 380
[95] Poe (2012), p. 380-381
[96] Poe (2012), p. 381

one of the core principles of Romantic science, which posits that meaning cannot be "forced" out of nature. We can compare Dupin's statements with Goethe's Faust, who despises "the cold-hearted attempt to extort knowledge from nature 'with levers and screws'".[97] The correct way to observe is one in which the phenomenon is respected, rather than forced (such as a star being observed too directly). These concepts might seem vague for a contemporary reader, but for Romantics these notions were serious concerns. Samuel Tayor Coleridge, an nineteenth century poet and philosopher, argued that the mechanical view, such as promoted by Enlightened scientists, would only lead to superficial and partial insight.[98] Dupin makes a similar point, as true knowledge of Venus cannot be fully caught under a mechanical gaze. Staring too directly at it will only ever provide superficial knowledge.

So far we have encountered two rules for proper observation in Dupin's eyes: one must take in the "whole picture", in order not to lose sight of the matter as a whole, and one must not "force" the object of observation. The third rule is that in observation, quantity must not be mistaken for quality. Dupin often stresses the need for quality of observation, and in 'The Purloined Letter' he demonstrates how useless quantity of observation without quality is. The Prefect details how the police force has conducted the search of the Minister's apartments.

> "We examined, first, the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer. (…) There is a certain amount of bulk – of space – to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ (…) We examined the rungs of every chair in the hotel, and, indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly."[99]

Everything, from the books to the floor boards, is scrutinized under a microscope. They use a microscope in order to search for the most miniscule distortions, signifying a hidden letter, literally zooming in on the smallest details.

The usage of the microscope can be seen as a metaphor for Enlightened science. Not only did a lot of research actually take place using it as a tool, it's properties are closely related to the

[97] Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 4
[98] Cunningham & Jardine (1990), p. 4
[99] Poe (2012), p. 602

conduct of Baconian science. A Romantic scientist might object to using a microscope, arguing that nature shouldn't be "forced" in this way. In 'The Purloined Letter' the microscope is used as a symbol of conducting research in the wrong way with too narrow a focus. The reason the police hadn't found the letter is because they looked in the wrong place, and didn't notice the letter lying in plain sight. A good analyst (and scientist) takes everything into account, and doesn't mindlessly stare through a microscope. By focusing on too small a particular, the police fail to observe like an analyst, who takes the whole into account. The fact that the police have tried again and again to find the letter. The quantity of their observations will never make up for the fact that the quality is not sufficient.

Keeping these three rules of observation in mind, we now proceed to Dupin's method of deduction itself. As has been remarked before, it is the "outré" that Dupin sees providing an easy starting point to unravel a case. It is the unusual elements that Dupin uses as a way of solving the crime.

> "But 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. In investigations such as we are now pursuing, it should not be so much asked 'what has occurred,' as 'what has occurred that has never occurred before.'"[100]

Speaking in general concepts, Dupin moves from an exception (that which has never occurred) towards an inevitable conclusion (it must be because of that reason). This determinism can further be illustrated with the following quote. In 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', he uses the fact that the words spoken were not understandable by the witnesses as the starting point for his entire further argumentation, claiming,

> "I do not hesitate to say that legitimate deductions even from this portion of the testimony – the portion respecting the gruff and shrill voices – are in themselves sufficient to engender a suspicion which should give direction to all farther progress in the investigation of the mystery. (…) I designed to imply that the deductions are the sole proper ones, and that the suspicion arises inevitably from them as the single result."[101]

There is no evidence that could disprove this result, because from the evidence as Dupin has perceived, this is the inevitable conclusion. Dupin here chooses a method where he builds his

[100] Poe (2012), p. 382
[101] Poe (2012), p. 384

entire case in the light of one deduction. He uses this fact as a starting point for his further argumentation. Even though he has yet to consider all other pieces of evidence, his mind is already made up as towards the direction his deductions will go; as he says, it gives him "a definite form – a certain tendency to my inquiries in the chamber".[102] Dupin takes a clear position in the debate on whether presuppositions of the researcher should influence further research or not. For Dupin it is only natural to conduct research on the basis of the "single result".

As Van Leer points out, when examining the evidence, there is only one way in which the evidence can be interpreted.[103] About the means of egress of the murder in the Rue Morgue, Dupin says "Fortunately, there is but one mode of reasoning upon the point, and that mode must lead us to a definite decision."[104] Specific to this form of truth is that it makes it possible to predict future events. When all ground principles are known, a logic conclusion must follow – even if that conclusion seems impossible, as Dupin adds:

> "Now, brought to this conclusion in so unequivocal a manner as we are, it is not our part, as reasoners, to reject it on account of apparent impossibilities. It is only left for us to prove that these apparent 'impossibilities' are, in reality, not such."[105]

This sentence illustrates Dupin's *a priori* reasoning strategy. His opinion precedes further observed evidence, and he is actively looking for evidence that corroborates his theory. However, Dupin doesn't see this as a bias as a problematic way of conducting an investigation – he sees this as an irrefutable way to truth. The reason Dupin sees this as a solid foundation is because his conclusion drawn from the voices cannot be refuted. There is no falsification possible, because the truth that is reached through his deduction is universal.

That empirical falsification has no value for Dupin is illustrated in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'. As he is refuting the theories posited by the editors, Dupin engages in an elaborate discussion of whether drowned bodies float. Dupin initiates this discourse to prove that the identified body could indeed be that of Marie Rogêt. *L'Etoile* argues that it might not be, because of the assumption that bodies thrown in the water don't float until six to ten days – while Marie's body was found afloat after only two days. Another newspaper, *Le Moniteur*,

[102] Poe (2012), p. 384
[103] Leer (1993)
[104] Poe (2012), p. 384
[105] Poe (2012), p. 384

goes against this assumption by giving examples of bodies that have been found afloat after two or three days.

> "This latter print endeavors to combat that portion of the paragraph which has reference to 'drowned bodies' only, by citing some five or six instances in which the bodies of individuals known to be drowned were found floating after the lapse of less time than is insisted upon by *L'Etoile.* But there is something excessively unphilosophical in the attempt on the part of *Le Moniteur* (…) Had it been possible to adduce fifty instead of five examples of bodies found floating at the end of two or three days, these fifty examples could still have been properly regarded only as exceptions to *L'Etoile's* rule, until such time as the rule itself should be confuted. Admitting the rule, (…) the argument of *L'Etoile* is suffered to remain in full force; (…) and this probability will be in favor of *L'Etoile*'s position until the instances so childishly adduced shall be sufficient in number to establish an antagonistical rule."[106]

This passage gives an interesting insight into Dupin's though process. His goal is not to provide evidence that it could be possible that Marie's body floated after two days (any kind of exception, such as plenty were given by *Le Moniteur* would have been sufficient for that), but that it *had* to be afloat after three days. He isn't searching for proof of a plausible explanation of Marie's murder, but to find the undoubtable truth.

When we consider Dupin's method in the light of Horkheimer's theory on Enlightenment, we can see that his is diametrically oppositional. Where in the eyes of Enlightenment only comparisons, averages, and large numbers truly count, Dupin claims it is the exceptional that constitutes knowledge. It's only by considering what is *outré* about the case will show us what has happened. In this way, the murder in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' is the exact opposite from the one in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. We are now shown the other side of Dupin's theory of finding truth; an average murder cannot be easily solved, because there is nothing singular about the occurrence. Even though murders like this are committed often in Paris, the repetitious nature of similar crimes is no source of knowledge for Dupin.

Speculation sits at the core of Dupin's method, and it's that aspect that puts him firmly into our model of a Romantic scientist. Not only is speculation seen as acceptable practice in science, *a priori* reasoning stands at the foot of research. For a Romantic scientist, it isn't unheard of to first deduce the existence of something (usually relying on principles of

[106] Poe (2012), p. 468-469

symmetry, the unity of natural phenomena, or duality), and then proceed to prove this exists just so. When Dupin or the narrator stress that Dupin's method is very methodical, they are responding to criticisms that Baconian scientists would express. He is methodical, but not in an Enlightened sense. His method includes, and in some ways, is dependent on his ability to speculate.

Related to Dupin's ideas on knowledge and the exceptional is his view of mathematics. The subject of math is introduced in the essayistic part of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. According to the narrator, to calculate is not the same as to analyze. Calculating is seen as to be "playing by the rules", which isn't much of a skill and lacks imagination. The importance of imagination and speculation has been touched upon several times in this section, and it will be further discussed below. The image that is created in the introduction is one where mathematical skill and calculating is of a lower value than analyzing is, which is here taken as to being something separate from mathematics.

In the first paragraph of 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', Dupin concentrates on one specific sort of mathematics, "as it is technically termed, the Calculus of Probabilities"[107], which he contrasts to the supernatural. Some coincidences can seem so "marvelous", that it's hard to believe that they're actual coincidences. It is only by realizing the principles of chance, "purely mathematical" method, that these thoughts of ascribing supernatural causes to an event can be "stifled". "[T]hus we have the anomaly of the most rigidly exact in science applied to the shadow and spirituality of the most intangible in speculation."[108] An important work on inductive probability was written by French scholar Pierre-Simon Laplace in 1812, which applied probabilistic tools on the odds of future events happening.[109] It's probably this theory that Poe had in mind with his "Calculus of Probabilities".[110] Dupin uses probabilistic theory in order to dispel any ideas of the supernatural.

In the last paragraph of 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', it is explained that when two dice rolls produce a six, the probability of another six is not influenced by events "which lie now absolutely in the Past".[111] The expectation in the first paragraph is raised that these principles of chance are applied to the mystery at hand. While he is inspired by Laplace's theory of probabilities, Dupin at no point actually engages in any calculating activities, nor are concrete

[107] Poe (2012), p. 456
[108] Poe (2012), p. 456
[109] As stated on http://www.britannica.com/biography/Pierre-Simon-marquis-de-Laplace accessed 10-08-2015
[110] Murch (1958)
[111] Poe (2012), p. 492

mathematical formulas referred to. Throughout the story Dupin often refers to events being either probable or improbable. The Calculus of Probabilities is, however, also applied on the text as a whole. In the last section, it is implied that while between the events concerning Mary Rogers and Marie Rogêt "there has existed a parallel in the contemplation of whose wonderful exactitude the reason becomes embarrassed"[112], the one does not influence the other, and that it would be a logical fault to assume that "measures founded in any similar ratiocination, would produce any similar result".[113] Interesting about this passage is that, while it on one hand gives a measure of protection against criticism for Poe by stressing that the resolution to Marie Rogêt's mystery might not be the same as the one to Mary Rogers', it does so by putting the two on equal footing. Both the mysteries of Marie Rogêt and Mary Rogers are considered equally "real".

The most interesting section about mathematics, however, can be found in 'The Purloined Letter'. The Prefect, with his "boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope"[114], supposes "that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet."[115] Dupin states that it is because he is a poet that the Minister has any analytical abilities: "as poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all".[116] Dupin uses this as an opportunity to expand further on his ideas on mathematics.

> "I dispute, in particular," he says, "the reason educed by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied to observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called pure algebra, are abstract or general truths. (…) Mathematical axioms are not axioms of general truth."[117]

He has two main objections against mathematical explanations. First, there are situations in which mathematical axioms aren't applicable. He illustrates this by saying that two parts don't necessarily equal the sum of the two, such as in morals or chemistry. The second, maybe the more important one, is illustrated in the quote above. Dupin condemns mathematicians for believing that their formulas are real rather than relational, and "the

[112] Poe (2012), p. 492
[113] Poe (2012), p. 492
[114] Poe (2012), p. 606
[115] Poe (2012), p. 607
[116] Poe (2012), p. 607
[117] Poe (2012), p. 607-608

inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory, as through an unaccountable addling of the brains"[118]. Their *p*s and *q*s and other variables cannot be found in real life; rather, they are "only truths within the limits of *relation*". [119] At the core of his argument lies the proposition that mathematical reasoning doesn't lead to absolute truth (the "real"). Life can never be fully caught in mathematical formulas. Dupin doesn't seem to be opposed to mathematics in general, as he often refers to his Calculus of Probability in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', but he does disapprove of seeing math as "an absolutely general applicability".[120]

After examining the topics of what constitutes truth and knowledge in the Dupin universe, and how the stories deal with observation and mathematics, it's time to focus on the less rational components of the story. These are as part of the story as much as the scientific method of Dupin.

4.2 IRRATIONALITY, IMAGINATION, AND THE GOTHIC

Poe was a writer in many genres, but it's his tales of horror that he is remembered for.[121] Although there are no ghosts or mysterious diseases in the Dupin stories, there are still traces of Gothic elements in the stories, and some of these were later adapted by writers like Arthur Conan Doyle. In other areas, the stories are specifically written to warn the reader not to compare the stories of Dupin's analytical genius with the supernatural. The Dupin stories are written for an audience that knows of Poe's other – supernatural – stories, but also strive to distance themselves from the overtly supernatural in order to convince the reader of the science they describe.

In 'The Murders of the Rue Morgue', the narrator describes Dupin as someone whose analytical skills are so great, that his "acumen" appears "to the ordinary apprehension praeternatural", and "his results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition."[122] Because Dupin's inductions such as he performed in solving the crime in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', the Prefect and the general public see his accomplishments as "miraculous", and his "analytical abilities acquired for him the credit

[118] Poe (2012), p. 608
[119] Poe (2012), p. 608
[120] Poe (2012), p. 608
[121] Murch (1958)
[122] Poe (2012), p. 369

of intuition.[123] Dupin himself however, the narrator says, would "disabuse every inquirer of such prejudice"[124], were it not that he had lost interest in the topic.

Only "ordinary" minds would describe Dupin as intuitive or praeternatural, implying that Dupin's mind is extraordinary. The reader is persuaded to believe that while Dupin solves cases in a manner that might seem miraculous, this is merely the result of his intellect being so great. Along with the narrator, we are invited to express our appropriate astonishment; but, not to credit Dupin's success to luck, providence, or a supernatural entity. His mind works in a different way than that of an ordinary person – in short, Dupin is a genius.

The detective hero as an eccentric genius finds its origin by Dupin, and is often emulated by subsequent writers, including Arthur Conan Doyle. In the article "Our Genius Problem", Marjorie Garber explains how the contemporary obsession with the genius has its roots in Romanticism, and connects it to the eccentric detective geniuses like Sherlock Holmes and Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe. "The genius was (…) the Romantic hero, the loner, the eccentric, the apotheosis of the individual."[125] The genius is someone who, through an exceptional and intrinsic talent creates exceptional art or science. Since its conception, this use of the word genius has had connotations to eccentricity, and brought to its extreme, madness. The fervent determination that a genius shows in the creation of a perfect work of art or the solution of a mathematical problem resembles the manic energy and single-mindedness found in the insane. Dupin is the prime example of what Garber calls the "natural genius", a person who has an innate propensity towards the extraordinary. The natural genius was admired by Romantic writers such as Coleridge and Shelley.[126]

> "The cult of genius inherited from these Romantic writers (…) tells us that ordinary mortals can achieve many things by dint of hard work, but the natural and effortless gifts of a true genius (like Shakespeare) will forever elude the diligent overachiever."[127]

The spatial setting of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' is closely related Dupin being a lone genius. Dupin and the narrator detach themselves from society through their odd habits, such as closing all shutters of the house when morning arrives and only going into the city when

[123] Poe (2012), p. 456
[124] Poe (2012), p. 456
[125] Garber (2002)
[126] Garber (2002)
[127] Garber (2002)

darkness has fallen. Their detachment is completed by their house of residence itself, "a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted through superstitions into which we did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain."[128] They don't allow any visitors, and as the narrator concludes, "we existed within ourselves alone"[129]. They stay inside during the day, deciding only to come out at night.

> "It was a freak of fancy in my friend (for what else shall I call it?) to be enamored of the Night for her own sake; and into this bizarrerie, as into all his others, I quietly fell; giving myself up to his wild whims with a perfect abandon."

Dupin's forbidding house and he and the narrator's love for the night and darkness is reminiscent of Gothic fiction, of which Poe has written his fair share of himself. However, Dupin and the narrator aren't fazed by the "superstitions" that caused the house to be empty, and make it into their home. Though 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' isn't a story that deals with the supernatural, as Dupin and the narrator aren't impressed by the superstitions connected to the house at all, it also doesn't completely sets itself apart from the Gothic tradition. The way Dupin separates himself from society has additional implications apart from it being inspired by the lone genius and Gothicism – it also ties in with the ethic system inherent to the story and Dupin's position in it.

In this passage Dupin is described as to be on the outside of society. However, as Thoms points out, the detective is also surprisingly well connected: he is acquainted with the Prefect of Police, but also Le Bon (a suspect in "Rue Morgue") and Minister D— (the criminal of 'The Purloined Letter').[130] Dupin doesn't ever seem to leave his house or to receive visitors, yet he knows many of the key figures in the stories. He keeps himself apart from the day to day life of other Parisians, choosing only to go outside when most of the city is sleeping. Dupin is given an air of mystery, of someone who doesn't abide to middle-class social norms. Dupin isn't part of the bourgeois, in contrast to the detectives after him, which are most often an bourgeois ideal.[131] Dupin is drawn as a reluctant public figure – one who is well-known, but who doesn't care about his fame and what the public thinks of him. It takes over three weeks for Dupin and the narrator to learn about the murder of Marie Rogêt, as "it had been

[128] Poe (2012), p. 372
[129] Poe (2012). P. 372
[130] Thoms (2002)
[131] Hühn (1987)

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 papers".[132]

Additionally, he seems to be on the edge of madness; when he uses his analytical skill he is "frigid and abstract; his eyes were vacant in expression; while his voice, usually a rich tenor, rose into a treble".[133] Later the narrator describes the possibility of this being the result of a "diseased intelligence". His habits are reminiscent of the Romantic genius. The creative genius, as conceived in the Romantic way of thinking, is someone who has great imagination, and who stands outside of society.[134] Madness and creativity go largely hand in hand for the Romantic genius – and Dupin seems to be close to madness himself.

Earlier the idea was introduced by Horkheimer and Adorno that Enlightened science is essentially utilistic. It only has worth for as far as it can be useful – there is no intrinsic merit in conducting science for itself. Dupin's analyzing, in contrast, has no use. While at first it seems like solving a murder is quite useful, his motives for getting involved are not of a moralistic nature. Dupin's reason for wanting to inquire further into the murder in 'The Murder in the Rue Morgue' is for his enjoyment. "An inquiry will afford us amusement"[135] he says, before adding that Le Bon, a suspect, has once done him a favor which he would like to return. Dupin here echoes the analyst from the introduction. Solving the mystery of the murders evokes the same satisfaction in Dupin as the analyst in the introduction, who "derives pleasure from (…) occupations bringing his talent into play".[136]

Bringing the sailor, whose orangutan kills two women in 'The Murder in the Rue Morgue', to justice isn't Dupin's design. He doesn't deem the sailor to be in the wrong:

> "I perfectly well know that you are innocent of the atrocities in the Rue Morgue. (…)You have done nothing which you could have avoided – nothing, certainly, which renders you culpable. You were not even guilty of robbery, when you might have robbed with impunity. You have nothing to conceal."[137]

He merely need a confession so to free his acquaintance, Le Bon, from suspicion. Dupin's apathy towards the fate of the sailor, and his lack of interest in bringing anyone to justice

[132] Poe (2012), p. 458
[133] Poe (2012), p. 372
[134] Doorman (2012)
[135] Poe (2012), p. 381
[136] Poe (2012), p. 369
[137] Poe (2012), p. 392

seems odd in the light of detectives after him, in whose stories the righting of the wrong is an important part of the story.[138] For Dupin, however, his analytical skills don't need to serve a specific purpose – his own enjoyment in solving the case seems to be greater than the necessity of absolving Le Bon from suspicion. Dupin doesn't seem to be concerned with society, as he and the narrator explicitly hold themselves away from it, nor does he use his analytical capacities to improve society. In this sense, he opposes the Enlightened ideal of the individual participating in and working on the improvement of society. He analyzes for his own enjoyment or from individual motives, never in the name of "the greater good". The downfall of the Minister in 'The Purloined Letter' is suggested, but isn't displayed in the narrative. Even though there is a retribution for the Minister's crime – his own downfall – he isn't brought to justice in a legal way. Dupin leaves a personal message in the letter he plants, making the whole event seem more of a personal revenge exacted on someone who has slighted him in the past, rather than the righting of a wrong.

Returning to Dupin's apparent madness, his seemingly conflicted personality is part of a larger theme in the stories. Before the Dupin demonstrates his analytical abilities in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', the narrator muses: "Observing him in these moods, I often dwelt meditatively upon the old philosophy of the Bi-Part Soul, and amused myself with the fancy of a double Dupin – the creative and the resolvent."[139] There are no further clues in the narrative as towards what "old philosophy" this theory refers to. Craighill suggests that Poe's notion of the "Bi-Part Soul" is based on the Aristotelian split between rational and irrational human virtues.[140] This ties in with a broader discourse that runs through his entire body of work. Dupin holds within himself a duality, fusing scientific logic and creative consciousness. The theme of duality is closely connected to Romantic fiction, being adapted by writers such as Goethe and Mary Shelley.[141]

In a highly complex work, Derrida extensively analyzes the doubling, both in scenes and methods in 'The Purloined Letter', creating a quadrangular representation of its structure.

> "In matching wits with the Minister, Dupin first doubles the Minister's thought process – a mental operation that Dupin illustrates by telling the story of the schoolboy who always won at the game of even and odd – and he then replays, that is, temporally

[138] Hühn (1987)
[139] Poe (2012), p. 372
[140] Craighill (2010)
[141] Craighill (2010)

> doubles, the scene in which the Minister originally seized the letter, but with himself now in the Minister's role, thus shifting the Minister into the role played by the Queen in the original event and evoking the destabilizing reversal-into-the-opposite inherent in doubling."[142]

While this structural analysis is intriguing, in the light of this thesis it's mainly important to consider the significance of how deeply 'The Purloined Letter' is concerned with doubling. "The motifs of doubling, doubles, duplicity and bipolarity are a typical feature of Romantic literature."[143] It is usually used to explore the irrationality of the mind in a psychological manner or of culture of a whole. Dupin's "Bi-Part Soul" can best be seen in the light of the Romantic identity, which is a "split self" which "dissolves the rational self of the Enlightenment".[144] The large amount of doubling in 'The Purloined Letter' is more complex though, and scholars don't agree on one general interpretation.[145]

Lastly, let us consider the first sentence of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. The first sentence holds a paradox: "The mental features discoursed of as the analytical, are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis."[146] In a way, analysis is obscured from external analysis. Secondly, apparently the "mental features discoursed of as the analytical", namely the intellect, cannot be analyzed itself. This goes against the mechanical assumptions of the Enlightenment, in which the intellect might be highly complex, but in essence it is susceptible like anything else within the natural world. Immediately at the start of the story, we are given an indication of the fact that although the story might be about analysis, there is also an element of the unexplainable inherent to it. Van Leer comments on this when he says that "in detecting truth, Dupin wishes merely to assert his authority over reality, but Poe encourages us as well to examine the undetectable truths suppressed by Dupin's detection."[147] Poe invites us to form out own opinion on Dupin's analytical skills, and in extension, on the issues on science and methodology that are discussed in the stories.

[142] Irwin (1986)
[143] Grabovszki (2008), p. 168
[144] Grabovszki (2008)
[145] Irwin (1986)
[146] Poe (2012), p. 369
[147] Leer (1993), p. 88

5 SHERLOCK HOLMES: DUPIN'S SUCCESSOR

We already briefly discussed the connection between Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe in the introduction. Conan Doyle was an avid fan of Poe's stories.[148] Before comparing the two detectives, we will return to the quote from the introduction and use it as a starting point for the comparison.

> " 'It is simple enough as you explain it,' I said, smiling. 'You remind me of Edgar Allen Poe's Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories.'
>
> Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. 'No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin,' he observed. 'Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine.' "[149]

In this passage the fictional character of Holmes distances himself from the other fictional character of Dupin – implying that while he was an interesting character, he was nothing like the "real thing". This form of self-consciousness becomes increasingly popular in the detective novels of the Golden Age in the 1920s, according to Susan Rowland.[150] The detective is aware of other detective fiction, and uses this to show that this particular detective is better in solving problems than those other fictional ones are. Holmes in this passage distances himself from Dupin, yet by mentioning him, he also acknowledges him as a predecessor. Although he deems Dupin's method of showing his analytical skills "superficial", yet he has done something similar on meeting Watson for the first time, stating that Watson had clearly just come from Afghanistan. Watson puts Holmes' negative statements of Dupin and another fictional detective, Lecoq, in perspective later in this section, thinking "This fellow may be very clever, (…) but he is certainly very conceited."[151]

In addition to being inspired by Poe's detecting character, Conan Doyle also uses some parts of the plot of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', most notably the imagery of the footsteps on the stairs before the mystery is introduced, and using the advertisement section in the

[148] Murch (1958)
[149] Doyle (2005), p. 31
[150] Rowland (2010)
[151] Doyle (2005), p. 32

newspaper as a means to lure the person responsible for the murder. When we consider the method of Sherlock Holmes in *A Study of Scarlet* alongside that of Dupin, we can see how this detective story challenged many of the assumptions with regards to the nature of truth and science made in the stories by Poe. Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* was as much as a reaction on Dupin as he was inspired by it.

Arthur Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer of many genres, including science-fiction and fantasy. His most popular stories, however, are those starring Sherlock Holmes. In total Conan Doyle has written 56 short stories and four novels about Sherlock Holmes. His four novels are zijn *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), *The Sign of the Four* (1890), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901-1902), en *The Valley of Fear* (1914-1915). His short stories have been published in many different editions and volumes. Because of the extent of his work, it's impossible to analyze it in its entirety for this thesis, nor is it necessary. Instead we will focus on the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, the first Sherlock Holmes book. In this book Holmes and his method are extensively introduced, and it sets the tone for the other stories to come.

The novel *A Study in Scarlet* is divided in two parts. The first part introduces John Watson, the narrator. It touches on his history, from his education to his time in army. In Afghanistan he suffers from a bullet wound in the shoulder, which gets him sent back to the United Kingdom to convalescence. In London, he meets a friend, to whom he confides that he is in search of new accommodations. "Young Stamford" introduces him to Sherlock Holmes, a student who is also looking for a place to live.

Watson and Holmes move into Baker Street 221B; Watson is intrigued by Holmes and sets out to study his new companion. He discovers that Holmes is a "consulting detective", whose help is requested from Inspectors Lestrade and Gregson in a mysterious murder. A body is found in a room where the word "RACHE" is written on the wall, and the body has not been robbed. After the investigation of the scene of the crime, Holmes claims to have solved the case's main points – but he is not yet willing to share the details with Watson yet. He says:

> "You know a conjuror gets no credit when once he has explained his trick, and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all."[152]

[152] Doyle (2005), p. 50-51

Though he hereby claims to be an ordinary person who is well learnt into certain skills – the science of deduction – he withholds the conclusion of the mystery as part of some sort of showmanship. Holmes and Watson continue to collect clues, including by conducting interviews with key characters, so they "may (…) learn all that is to be learned."[153]

The first part of the story ends with Holmes apprehending the murderer, and he says, "we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I will refuse to answer them."[154] In reality this is only halfway through the novel – then the second part starts. In this part, there are several chapters written in third person omniscient. It follows the story of several characters in the United States, in the events leading up to the murders in London. The story ends with Holmes and Watson discussing a newspaper article that describes the case they have solved.

In Poe's stories Dupin relied heavily on newspapers, for information and as a voice opposite his own and as a catalyst for the plot. Conan Doyle adapted the use of newspapers, using it as a catalyst and as a source of amusement. To lure a suspect called Stangerson to his apartment, Holmes places advertisements in the newspapers stating he has found the wedding ring – a scene heavily reminiscent Dupin's advertisement to find the orangutan's owner. In the sixth chapter, Watson describes how the case is mentioned in several papers, dubbed the "Brixton Mystery". Watson repeats several of what the newspapers write, though he doesn't literally cite them, like is done in the stories of Poe. The articles don't give any clues, but rather form a sort of political joke: the *Daily Telegraph* blames socialists, the *Standard* blames liberal administration, and the *Daily News* blames hatred of liberalism. Holmes finds these articles amusing, but doesn't spend any further attention to them, very much unlike Dupin. The focus of Holmes lies fully in the worldly, and not in engaging with other voices through commenting on newspaper articles.

This behavior is repeated in the last paragraph of the story. It concludes with the quoting of a newspaper article from the *Echo* concerning the case. It quickly summarizes the connections between the murderer and his American roots in the Church of the Latter Day Saints. The main purpose of the article is to create a joke: the credits Lestrade and Gregson as the capturers of the murderer, saying of Holmes:

[153] Doyle (2005), p. 48
[154] Doyle (2005), p. 89

> "The man was apprehended, it appears, in the rooms of a certain Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who has himself, as an amateur, shown some talent in the detective line, and who, with such instructors [Lestrade and Gregson], may hope in time to attain to some degree of their skill."[155]

Holmes finds this amusing, not minding what the public thinks of him. Watson, however, is determined to publish the facts so "the public shall know them"[156], implying that the account we have been reading has been written by Watson. The treatment of newspapers in *A Study in Scarlet* is a nod towards the important role of newspapers in the Dupin stories. Holmes acknowledges the articles, doesn't engage in them, but rather finds them amusing and trivial.

While in Poe's stories Dupin's methodology is introduced before the character, Conan Doyle inverses this order. Holmes is introduced in the first chapter, and his method in the second.[157] From the first moment, Holmes is connected with the natural sciences. He works in the chemical laboratory at the hospital and is "well up in anatomy".[158] Stamford says: "Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes (…) He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge". It's not immediately clear what exactly Holmes uses his knowledge for.

The reader first learns about Holmes' method by a fragment of an article written by him and accidentally read by Watson. It introduces the idea that "all life is a great chain".[159] One can learn follow that chain, inferring from one's appearance what that person's history is. Although this idea that everything is connected can also be found in Poe, there is a subtle difference in how this chain is perceived. In the Dupin stories, when the first link of the chain is established, the course of all events connected to that (all "links" of the chain that are connected to the first event) are determined. This assumption lies behind Dupin's analysis of what the narrator is thinking in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. In this way, the metaphor of the chain is seen as deterministic for Dupin. For Holmes, however, the chain more seems to imply that there is a connectedness between events, and that this chain can be traced. It doesn't imply a necessity of the one following the other event.

Uncovering this chain of events is done in different ways by both detectives. Dupin's method constitutes of forming one statement that is undoubtedly true, and constructs the rest of the

[155] Doyle (2005), p. 185
[156] Doyle (2005), p. 185
[157] Dover (1994)
[158] Doyle (2005), p. 14
[159] Doyle (2005), p. 28

chain based on this first link. Holmes, in contrast, collects all information he needs before distilling the chain of events. This is illustrated as Holmes and Watson are underway to the crime scene, and Watson remarks that Holmes doesn't seem to be thinking about the crime at all. "No data yet," he answered. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."[160] Holmes approaches the scene without any preconceptions, "with my mind entirely free from all impressions."[161] This reliance on data is repeated in many subsequent Holmes stories, including almost literally in 'A Scandal in Bohemia'.[162] Holmes refrains from making judgments before he has collected sufficient data, sometimes despairing when he doesn't have enough of it.[163] His approach to solving a mystery is oppositional to the one adopted by Dupin; where Dupin reasons from one small amounts of data, Holmes collects large amounts of data and performs an induction. Holmes takes a typically Baconian stance, not wanting his preconceptions influencing the way he collects data.

His collection of data includes him engaging in experiments. On a suspect's nightstand, who was also found dead, Lestrade has found a small box containing two pills. With this case of pills, the case is fully solved, according to Holmes. To prove his theory, he lets Watson bring up a dog that had to be put to death out of old age, and he feeds half a pill to the dog. The first half doesn't bring along any change in the terrier – it isn't until he feeds half of the second pill to the dog that it suddenly drops dead. Lestrade, Gregson, and Watson don't really understand what Holmes is doing, so reflects on his reasoning itself, repeating Dupin's statements closely.

> "It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery. The most commonplace crime is often the most mysterious because it presents no new or special features from which deductions may be drawn. This murder would have been infinitely more difficult to unravel had the body of the victim been simply found lying in the roadway without any of those *outré* and sensational accompaniments which have rendered it

[160] Doyle (2005), p. 37
[161] Doyle (2005), p. 161
[162] "I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data." In 'A Scandal in Bohemia'. Doyle (2004) p. 11
[163] "As to Holmes, I observed that he sat frequently for half an hour on end, with knitted brows and an abstracted air, but he swept the matter away with a wave of his hand when I mentioned it. "Data! data! data!" he cried impatiently. "I can't make bricks without clay." In 'The Adventure of the Copper Beeches'. Doyle (2004) p. 346

> remarkable. These strange details, far from making the case more difficult, have really had the effect of making it less so."[164]

Holmes too reasons that the parts of the crime that make it seem strange or mysterious are the parts that make the mystery easy to solve, just like Dupin does in both 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' and 'The Purloined Letter'. These ideas are clearly heavily influenced by Poe. There is a huge difference between how Holmes deals with the exceptional, though. The pills can be seen as something exceptional which gives the detective a handle on the mystery. Where Dupin would have used the pills merely in a hypothetical sense as a subject in his rationalizations, the pills present an empirical experiment to Holmes. The fact that the dog dies after being given a dose of the pill proves that it contains poison, which then can be used in Holmes' further investigation.

Holmes uses the information he gathers to uncover the chain of events. When he investigates the cause of death of a dead man, he connects the "agitated expression" on the dead man's face to a "slightly sour smell" on his lips.[165] He states that "men who die from heart disease, or any sudden natural cause, never by any chance exhibit agitation upon their features."[166] Since the man does have an agitated expression, he cannot have died from a natural cause. Coupled with the sour smell, Holmes determines it must have been poison. "By the method of exclusion, I had arrived at this result, for no other hypothesis would meet the facts."[167] This method ties in with Holmes' reluctance to formulate a theory before gathering clues. Instead of trying to find evidence to support his ideas, he collects clues until there is only one theory possible, which must be corresponding with the truth. There is no room for doubt, nor for deviating explanations. As Sparling states, the universe of Conan Doyle's stories is completely rational.[168] There are only a select number of rational options, and Holmes has the power to consider them all. His power is limited to this measuring of options, though. When he deems something to be probable, there is always a chance that events don't unfold in the most probable way. In this respect Holmes is fallible, as is displayed in 'The Five Orange Pips'. In this short story, Holmes sends home a young man whose life was threatened, and who is killed on his way back. Holmes isn't surprised when he learns of the man's death,

[164] Doyle (2005), p. 85
[165] Doyle (2005), p. 163
[166] Doyle (2005), p. 162-163
[167] Doyle (2005), p. 163
[168] Sparling (2011)

which implies that he has considered the possibility, but deemed it small enough to let the man leave on his own.[169]

Holmes calls the "art" of following the chain of life, the "Science of Deduction and Analysis".[170] He uses art and science, two words which, in the twenty-first century are often considered mutually exclusive, close to each other. In the nineteenth century, there was no clear division between the humanities and the natural sciences.[171] The opposite of science was not art, but practice. The choice of the word "art" in the context of Holmes most likely refers to the more general application of human skill. However, the word art always implies a form of creativity, of use of the imagination. Holmes' Deduction and Analysis are as much of an art as a science. It can be learnt like a science, yet it is impossible to perfect like an art. By using the word "art" in this context, this novel ties in with a discourse of the Dupin stories, in which there is a close connection between the use of the imagination and the work of the analyst (which can be equated with the detective). It seems as if by using "art" to describe Holmes' science, Conan Doyle makes a concession to the roots of his detecting method, while putting it in a more Enlightened framework by giving it the characteristics of a Baconian science.

The Enlightened framework that is used in *A Study in Scarlet* is also visible in how Holmes relates to his theories. As we saw earlier, Dupin is an archetypical innate genius. Holmes can be seen in the light of the Romantic concept of the genius as well, but not fully. His analytical skills are exceptional, and he shares the eccentric personality.

> "Holmes, with his pip, his violin, his cocaine habit, his melancholy, his diverse and erudite publications (on topics from motets to shag tobacco, from the ancient Cornish language to bee culture), his avoidance of women, and his disdain for ordinary police work, is a classic embodiment of the genius."[172]

While the character of Holmes is definitely a genius, his deductions aren't a direct result of his genius. It is stressed in the text that Holmes' knowledge is the result of hours of research and practice. He explains to Watson how he recognizes traces in the mud.

> "No doubt it appeared to you to be a mere trampled line of slush, but to my trained eyes every mark upon its surface had a meaning. There is no branch of detective

[169] "Ah!" said he, laying down his cup, "I feared as much. How was it done?" In 'The Five Orange Pips' – Doyle (2004)
[170] Doyle (2005), p. 28
[171] Knight, in Cunningham & Jardine (1990)
[172] Garber (2002)

> science which is so important and so much neglected as the art of tracing footsteps. Happily, I have always laid great stress upon it, and much practice has made it second nature to me."[173]

It is because he has concentrated on interpreting footprints for a long time that his eyes have been "trained" to detangle their meaning. All of Homes' inferences imply that he sees details other people miss. For example, from the hoofmarks on the ground, he deduces that the horse had one new shoe. As for the cigar ashes, he positions himself as an authority on the matter, having claimed to have made a study of cigar ashes, even having written a monograph on the subject. It is important to note here that the statements made by Holmes are supported by his being a scientist. His knowledge of cigar ashes isn't accidental, but the result of a long period of research spent outside of the narrative. "Background and setting thus point to scientific inquiry; action confirms it."[174] It is upon this credibility as a scientist that Holmes' authority as a detective is based – albeit a special sort of scientist – while Dupin relies mainly upon his having an exceptional intellect.

Just as Holmes' skills are relativized in order to fit an Enlightened frame, so is the Gothic mansion of Dupin turned into the more orderly and bourgeois 221B Baker Street. Instead of the geographical exclusion of Dupin's house, the house of Holmes and Watson is located within the city. The sitting-room is "cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by two broad windows".[175] Not only are the accommodations in stark contrast with those of Dupin, also Holmes' behavior is different. Where Dupin and the narrator spend the bulk of their time inside in the dark, or taking nightly walks, it is "rare" for Holmes "to be up after ten at night".[176] Where Dupin doesn't seem to participate in civil society at all, Holmes has a public life and doesn't shut himself away from other people.

The fact that Holmes is involved with society also expresses itself in his attitude towards crime and his role as someone who uses his exceptional skills in order to help others and improve society as a whole. At their first meeting, Holmes demonstrates both his interest in analyzing the appearance of people as his passion to solve crime. Between happy exclamations on his discovery of a chemic method to indicate blood, he says: "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."[177] While Watson is left astonished, Holmes immediately returns

[173] Doyle (2005), p. 162
[174] Dover (1994), p. 73
[175] Doyle (2005), p. 21
[176] Doyle (2005), p. 21
[177] Doyle (2005), p. 16

to his discovery, pointing out the legal implications: "Had this test been invented, there are hundreds of men now walking the earth who would long ago have paid the penalty of their crimes."[178] Unlike Dupin, who rarely seems interested in any legal implications, Holmes is introduced as someone to whom justice is of great importance.

The murderer in *A Study in Scarlet* is captured and put in jail. Before his punishment can be decided upon though, his aneurism bursts, and he is found dead. Although the murderer is never truly punished because of his premature death, the fact that he is apprehended and seen as responsible is a definite step up from Dupin's motives for solving the mysteries. The goal of Holmes, like most detectives after him, is to restore balance in a society disturbed by a crime. His analytical powers are given a practical use, which ties in with Horkheimer and Adorno's concept of Enlightenment. In Holmes' world, knowledge is power, and Holmes uses his knowledge to remove disruptive forces from society.

Much has been written about how realistic the science in the Sherlock Holmes stories is. Some scholars argue that Conan Doyle was ahead of his time, and that Holmes uses many techniques that are later adapted in forensic science.[179] If focusing on the ideas in science of the time of writing, it doesn't refer often or too deeply to nineteenth century science. What seems to be more important for Conan Doyle is the "atmosphere of science and method".[180] He models his detective after Dupin, but makes more concessions to storytelling rather than tying in with an intellectual debate on the nature of science and truth. Secondly, the fictional is firmly set within the narrative. No incorporation of fact, nor do the Holmes stories have any pretense of being anything more than stories. This leads to a fundamental difference between the two writers and their work.

> "For Poe, atmosphere was not enough. It was not aesthetic obtuseness that encouraged him to include those labored Discourses on Method in each of the Dupin tales; they were the source and substance of the tales, and Poe excused no reader from the obligation to comprehend them. Conan Doyle, was less demanding (…); the impression of science and of methodological thinking was for him usually sufficient."[181]

[178] Doyle (2005), p. 17
[179] Berg (1970)
[180] Dover (1994), p. 81
[181] Dover (1994), p. 81

That being said, it is clear that the “impression of science and of methodical thinking” in the Holmes stories is based on an Enlightened point of view rather than a Romantic one. In this way, Conan Doyle adapted the detective such as it was created by Poe into the Enlightened shape that became incredibly successful in the decades after its inception.

6 CONCLUSION

Using the article by Sparling as a starting point, I discussed how the detective stories by Edgar Allan Poe engages with the Romantic tradition – and with Romantic science in particular. The stories thematize subjects like observation and the nature of truth. Poe uses the stories as a platform for long philosophical discourses on these subjects. His goal is an ambitious one: through his stories, he tries to create arguments that have real-world consequences. This is most visible in his treatment of the fictional in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'. Following the example of Romantic thinkers, the stories argue for non-reductionist science, where the subjects of scrutiny are observed as a whole. The texts criticize Baconian scientists, who lose sight of the whole by "zooming in" too far – quite literally, as the Prefect of the Police scours the Minister's apartments in 'The Purloined Letter' with a microscope. Mathematics are, in Dupin's eyes, quite useful. Scientists are mistaken however, if they see it as a tool for obtaining truth, instead of what Dupin calls relative truth. Dupin fits the model of the Romantic scientist that was outlined in the chapter on "Science in the nineteenth century".

This results in the universe of the Dupin stories being rational, in the sense that Sparling defined rationality. Dupin's analyses are based on a Romantic methodology. This becomes even clearer when contrasted with *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle. This novel adapts many of the assumptions made in the Dupin story and molds them into an Enlightened frame, again, such as it was defined in the chapter on "Science in the nineteenth century". In this way, the development of the detective novel from Poe to Conan Doyle follows the larger cultural phenomenon of Enlightened science eclipsing romantic science in the nineteenth century. Where Dupin exercised his analysis for his own enjoyment or for personal reasons, Holmes does it in order to improve society by ridding it of criminals. Dupin's authority is based on his intellect, while Holmes' is based on a background in scientific research. Dupin allows preconceptions dictate his research, while Holmes collects data in an unbiased manner before drawing any conclusions. These two detectives can be seen as two positions in the debate on science and methodology that was specific to the nineteenth century – Dupin representing a Romantic scientist, Holmes an Enlightened Baconian scientist.

What the two detectives have in common is that they are both geniuses. While Holmes' genius is downplayed somewhat by the stressing of his background in science and how his theory can be learned by others, his character conforms to the exceptional and eccentric nature

that is associated to the Romantic genius. Both the Dupin stories as the Holmes ones revolve around a main character solving puzzling cases while amazing their sidekicks and the reader. While the two series of stories are based on different epistemologies, they were equally important in shaping the detective genre.

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