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EUREKA: A WARNING AGAINST THE DANGERS OF SOLIPSISM

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EUREKA: A WARNING AGAINST THE

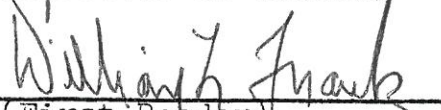
DANGERS OF SOLIPSISM

by

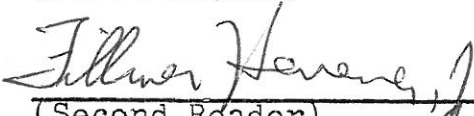
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THESIS

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EUREKA: A WARNING AGAINST THE
DANGERS OF SOLIPSISM

Thesis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education at Longwood College.

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Edgar Poe's prose-poem Eureka is his most deliberate and successful creation. It is also his most controversial work. The few critics and scholars who have acknowledged and analyzed Eureka have offered divergent and often contradictory interpretations of its intent and meaning. However, they do agree on one major point: that Poe is the narrator of this work. And it is upon this concept that their critiques are based. They view Eureka as a serious expostulation of Poe's beliefs rather than as a comic fiction written by an author who is totally divorced from his characters.

Eureka is a fictional creation employing the trappings of science and investigating the mentality of the purely solipsistic man. It is not a serious lecture on the state or future of astrophysics nor a scientific treatise on the cosmology of a limited universe. As it is fiction, the narrator is a fabricated character who attempts to create a personal

cosmos. He is a totally subjective man enamored with his perceptions of self-importance and superior intuition and ratiocination. He is not his author, Poe. He is not the embodiment of Poe's beliefs nor a character whom his author intended to be admired and emulated. Rather, Eureka and its narrator are a manifestation and reflection of a mentality for which Poe demonstrated a deep concern and issued a warning through the use of exemplification.

The structure and content of this prose-poem support these conceptions that Eureka is a hoax with a plot and characterization. The mode of this cosmology is satire. Instead of expostulating on the dangers of the self-absorbed personality, Poe created the most ludicrous situation in which this character would demonstrate the absurdity of his introspective notions. Eureka is a hoax on the narrator and on those who extoll the virtues of its literal meaning. It includes a tale in which the narrator, in attempting to create a cosmos where man is God, inadvertently "proves" that there is no universe, no God, and no man. The tone which establishes this farce is comic. It asserts that the narrator is intoxicated by delusions of grandeur and is trapped by an overwhelming desire to expostulate endlessly upon his newly discovered realization that, as God, he produced

himself in total isolation from the rest of humanity. The narrator's circuitous reasoning and the irrational and contradictory inconsistencies of his logic underline the absurdities in this hoax.

As an exemplification of a certain order of mind, Eureka can be read as a tale or a prose-poem. It is a dramatization which demonstrates that even ideas and thoughts may have dire consequences or, specifically, that belief solely in oneself leads to total isolation and self-destruction. This theme is exemplified through varied means in Poe's other tales and poems, but not with the immense scope or with such elements of pure thought as in Eureka. The narrator of this work creates, through his reason and imagination, a fictitious universe which is revealed to be his depersonalized and fragmented self. Then he annihilates his universe in an attempt to achieve unification and thus destroys himself. Unfortunately, as this is purely a mental exercise and not a physical manifestation as in "William Wilson," "Ligeia," or The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, the narrator of Eureka is not aware of the awesome and destructive potential of his subjective thoughts. He is a confirmed solipsist but he does not know it. Because he espouses the concepts of subjective thinking such as pantheism, romanticism, and transcendentalism, he must

accept the attendant consequences which, according to the recurrent conclusions of Poe's works, are isolation and annihilation. Therefore, because Poe is not the narrator, the beliefs expressed in Eureka are not those of its author. In fact, it was Poe's intent to dramatize this theme in order for his readers to realize the disastrous potential of subjectivism. Thus, Eureka is a warning against the dangers of solipsism.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF EUREKA

Poe's warning is communicated through a pseudo-scientific argument based upon an imaginary cosmology. By combining Newton's Law of Gravity and Laplace's theory of the origin of the universe with his imagination and reason, the narrator expands the Nebular Hypothesis to its most absurd conclusion. He begins his expostulation with a proposition that indicates not only the origin and essence of this fictitious cosmos but also its inevitable conclusion. The subtle characteristics of its internal construction manipulate the elements of both astrophysics and logic, while the external components of this work, which Poe requested to be read as a poem, appear to violate the principles that Poe outlined for poetry.

In a letter to G. W. Eveleth, written to correct the misinterpretations by critics after the initial lecture, the author of Eureka offered a brief summary of the most important elements in the literal argument of this work. Poe also defined the terms employed to explicate the thesis of Eureka. The

general proposition of this work implies that "because Nothing was, therefore All Things are."¹ In the specific circumstances of Eureka, this means that where there is a void there is a necessity to fill it, and because there are no restrictions upon the conditions of action there is a potential for all possibilities. From this limitless sensibility, the narrator creates a personal universe in which he is the sole creator and inhabitant. He employs the terminology of astronomy and physics under the guise of a seer who will offer to the world a most pretentious revelation.

Upon this initial hypothesis, the narrator builds his solipsistic vision with the unwitting aid of Newton, Laplace, and a god-head. The first tenet of his theory rests on the "universality of Gravitation,"² which causes all particles of matter to be attracted to one another as a general condition rather than to any given point in space. Thus, though these particles are diffused and individual, they have a potential for "absolute unity."³ This potential is merely "the reaction . . . [to] . . . the first Divine Act"⁴ which dispersed each particle into space from its original state of a single, unified speck. Therefore, Newton's Law of Gravity is the only possible reaction to Laplace's Nebular Theory. In other words,

the narrator uses Laplace's theory of creation, which is based on the concept of a single, primary particle --Original Unity--to explain the initial diffusion of matter. Then, he demonstrates that the sole purpose of Newton's Gravity is to return matter to this original condition of Oneness. Thus, the narrator's cosmos is an illustration of the hypothesis that from Nothing, all things were created and to Nothing, all things will return. Because he is unable to grasp the concept of infinity, the narrator must limit the scope of his illustrative cosmos which he titles "The Universe of Stars."⁵ This limited universe is contained within Pascal's infinite Universe of Space. Another element of this discourse is the definition of matter. Although the narrator offers many explanations, the most useful is that Matter is Attraction and Repulsion: it is the embodiment of the tension between the dispersal of the original particle and the reaction of gravity to return matter to the condition of that single particle. Therefore, without the interplay of attraction (gravity) and repulsion (electricity), matter ceases to exist. The single particle, devoid of another particle with which to interact, self-destructs into the Original Unity or Nothingness. A more detailed examination of the contents of Eureka will clarify this circuitous logic

which the narrator employs to illustrate his hypothesis.

The subtitle of Eureka is, "An Essay on the Material and Spiritual Universe,"⁶ and it begins with a Preface in which Poe dedicates the work to his greatest source of scientific information, A. Von Humbolt, and claims that the work is "an Art-Product,"⁷ a poem of truth and beauty. The subject of Eureka, "the Physical, Metaphysical, and Mathematical--of the Material and Spiritual Universe: --of its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition and its Destiny,"⁸ rests upon the general proposition that "In the Original Unity of the First Thing lies the Secondary Cause of All Things, with the Germ of their Inevitable Annihilation."⁹ This means that his limited Universe of Stars was created from a single particle, radiated through space and that, by its inherent nature, all of these diffused parts of matter will return to their original condition of unity, when the reconstructed single particle will destroy itself. In order to illustrate this proposition and to survey his cosmos, the narrator stresses that he will view everything as a whole, which he calls the state of individuality, where one man represents all men and where the earth is an extension of the solar system rather than a populated planet.¹⁰

Before he begins the pseudo-scientific treatise of his discourse, the narrator interjects a letter, in its entirety, miraculously written in 2848. The unnamed author of this letter details his reasons for assuming that the deductive processes of Aristotle and the inductive methods of Bacon are vastly inferior to the intuition of Kepler. His epistle explains that Kepler used "seemingly intuitive leaps"¹¹ and a recognition of true consistency to guess the principles upon which Newton established the Laws of Gravity. For the writer of this letter, Kepler's intuitive process provides a more direct and rapid route to truth than do the methods of logic.¹²

The next step in the narrator's process employs Aristotelian deduction. Through this method he realizes the necessity of a limited cosmos which he calls "The Universe of Stars,"¹³ as opposed to Pascal's limitless Universe of Space. This necessity arises from the narrator's inability to define or to circumscribe infinity, of which his cosmos is only a part. Then the narrator claims a god-head to be the sole creator of his universe. This element is also necessary because he begins his universe with a void which must be filled through a Divine Act or by a Prime Actor. But since God is incomprehensible to mere mortals, man must become God. Thus, the narrator offers his "sole

absolute assumption"¹⁴ that out of the void, nothingness, God created a single, unified particle. Then God acted again to radiate the fragmented particles through space. But He ceased this action, causing a reaction or attractive force called Gravity. Thus, Matter, or the energy of Attraction and Repulsion, was created. The narrator has surveyed the major points of his thesis by analyzing the evidence from the most general to the most specific.¹⁵

Through a reversal of the preceding process, the narrator uses induction during this part of his discourse in an attempt to arrive at the same general conclusion as through deduction. He commences with Newton's Law of Gravity "that all bodies [or atoms] attract each other with forces proportional to their qualities of matter inversely proportional to the squares of their distances."¹⁶ To this law he adds, "the general result being a tendency of all, with similar force, to a general center."¹⁷ Or in other words, all particles are attracted to one another (the closer they are the stronger the force and the greater the distance the weaker the force) and all atoms have a general tendency to return to their original, undivided unity, which is not a place but, rather, a condition. Thus, through induction, the narrator returns to the general statement of his deduc-

tive reasoning; that is, from Unity the first particle was created by God, who divided and radiated it into space where Gravity occurred at the cessation of the diffusion, causing a reverse tendency to return to Unity.¹⁸

In an attempt to anticipate criticism of his logic and theory, the narrator indicates various areas of contention and offers appropriate responses. He includes scurrilous references to his critics in his clarifications. He also summarizes the central theme and the elements of his discourse. In order to reinforce and to explicate further the basic tenets of his theory, the narrator delves into the specific manifestations of his cosmos. First, he asserts that our solar system was created according to the shrinking sun theory; that is, our sun with its original circumference extended to Neptune's orbit, diminished in size, throwing off planets, moons, rings, and asteroids. Then he expands this assertion to include the existence of a multitude of such systems in the Milky Way. Again, an atom becomes an agglomeration of atoms, or a planet, and an agglomeration of planets, or a solar system, is generalized into a universe.¹⁹

At this point, the narrator provides incredible statistics in order to communicate the vast size of his universe. From these measurements, he determines

that Time and Space are one; thus, the center to which Gravity is attracting atoms and galaxies is the condition of Unity. The narrator then determines that Unity is equal to Nothingness because at the instant of unification the Attraction and Repulsion, which are Matter, cease, in turn causing the annihilation of Matter. As Matter is the manifestation of spirit, so man is the physical being of God, the pure Spirit. Therefore, when Matter sinks into Unity, man becomes whole with God again. This phenomenon occurs not only in the narrator's cosmos but also in the limitless number of other Universes of Stars which coexist in isolation from the narrator's universe.²⁰

Another important aspect of this work is the comparison of the creation of the Universe of Stars to that of a tale or a poem. For example, the narrator identifies his cosmos as a "perfect . . . plot of God,"²¹ which reflects the interchangeable elements of "symmetry and consistency . . . Poetry and Truth."²² The components of each are manipulated in order to propel the course or plot to its conclusion. He also compares the scientific principles of his Nebular Theory to those of literary criticism. Both sets of these guidelines control the elements and the development of their respective creations and aid in the subsequent analysis of their constructions and essences.

In the Preface to Eureka, Poe declares that this work is a poem and a "romance," an idea which is supported in its contents by the narrator. All of this indicates that Eureka was intended to be read as a poem or a tale. Many critics, such as Paul Valéry, Daniel Hoffman, and Allen Tate, agree at least in part with this interpretation.²³ Eureka does have a plot or course of action and a character, the narrator. Likewise, many passages in this work contain examples of Poe's clearest and most lyrical prose. But did Poe really intend for his most monumental work to be read as a fictitious literary creation or as a scientific treatise? A brief analysis of Eureka as a poem or tale indicates both compliances with and violations of Poe's principles of literary criticism, as stated in "The Poetic Principle" and "The Philosophy of Composition."

In "The Poetic Principle," many general requirements are offered in terms of what poetry should not be and what it is. The three heresies of poetry, according to this critical work, are the epic poem, didacticism, and pure entertainment.²⁴ Because of its incredible length, Eureka appears to be an epic poem, thus complying with the first heresy. However, as it is an exemplification, an illustration, Eureka is neither didactic nor purely entertaining, so it is not

totally heretical to the requirements of poetry. However, it does not have the physical attributes of a poem. Poetry may be defined positively as "The Rhythmical Creation [of the effect] of Beauty"²⁵ in that it has "meter, rhythm, and rhyme."²⁶ As a prose work, Eureka appears to violate this primary requirement. However, despite its apparent lack of strict adherence to the external characteristics of poetry, such as meter, it does have the qualities of symmetry and consistency in its content and structure. Also, its tone is rhymical, and many sentences are lyrical, as demonstrated in the following line: "What terms shall I find sufficiently simple in their sublimity--sufficiently sublime in their simplicity--for the mere enunciation of my theme."²⁷ The final requisite for poetry in this critical work is truth, the perception of "a harmony where none was apparent before."²⁸ Both Poe and his narrator would agree, for different reasons, that Eureka does not violate this principle. According to Poe, this work is a "Book of Truths"²⁹ because of its subtle beauty and meaning, while the narrator sees in it the realization of the harmony and symmetry of science and beauty. Likewise, the critics of this cosmology appraise its truth from differing perspectives. Many feel it is pretentious nonsense while Valéry claims that it raises poetry to the exacting

level of science.³⁰ Some extol the veracity of its theme of solipsism, and others condemn it for the same reasons. Although this comparison of the qualities of Eureka to the general principles of poetry demonstrates apparent inconsistencies, it does imply that this cosmology may be an imaginative creation.

Further analysis of Eureka through the tenets of "The Philosophy of Composition" support this conclusion. This critical work also adds credence to the assumption that this apparent scientific treatise should be read as a prose-poem or fiction. The first consideration involves personal judgment, because the specific definition of poetry offered by Poe in this critical discussion is that a poem "excites, by elevating, the soul"³¹ through its unity of effect or impression. Some critics extol Eureka's compliance with this principle while others condemn it for the same reason, but many agree that it does excite through its effect and therefore, they consider Eureka to be a poem, a prose-poem. According to Poe, in "The Poetic Principle" and "The Philosophy of Composition," the effect in a poem is created by various elements. One component is the tone of sadness and melancholy-- "the most legitimate of all the poetical tones--"³² which this work violates by its expressions of exaltation and intoxication. Another element of effect

involves "the construction of the poem--some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn."³³ In a general sense, this cosmology complies with this requirement in that the circuitous logic of Eureka revolves around the acceptance of the narrator's general proposition. But it violates the specific requisite that the refrain should have a "pretext for the continuous use of the word 'nevermore',"³⁴ as in "The Raven." It also lacks "the death . . . of a beautiful woman . . . [which Poe deems] . . . the most poetical topic in the world"³⁵ for achieving "Beauty . . . that intense and pure elevation of the soul."³⁶ Although, according to the narrator, this general impression is achieved through man's absorption into God, Original Unity, and Nothingness. Another specific requirement is "a close circumscription of space,"³⁷ as exemplified by the chamber in "The Raven." Considering the scope of the subject, even with its limited Universe of Stars, Eureka would appear to negate this element. The final requisite which differentiates the poem from the tale is "the undercurrent . . . of meaning . . . the suggested meaning"³⁸ that is overt in fiction and covert in poetry.³⁹ Analyzing the intended effect and meaning of Eureka rests upon identifying this "undercurrent of meaning," which it seems Poe deliberately avoided defining.

However, an indication of the direction of this "suggested meaning" may be found in Poe's definition of "originality . . . [the] . . . attainment less of invention than negation."⁴⁰ Although Eureka ambiguously meets and violates various principles and elements of poetry, it does appear to satisfy his interpretation of originality. And, because it complies with some of these requisites, at least in general, this cosmology may be read and analyzed as fiction.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Although criticism of Eureka is not voluminous, most of it is very serious in nature. The analyses by the critics who have chosen not to ignore this work may be grouped generally into the following categories. Most view Eureka as a serious expostulation on cosmology based upon pseudo-science while others see it as an anticipation of exacting science and "an exaltation of man's intuition."¹ Some interpret Eureka as the epitome of subjective reasoning and the ultimate extension of individualism. But others analyze this prose-poem as the most dramatic demonstration that Poe fell victim to his own solipsism. All critics agree, however, that the narrator expresses the honest feelings and thoughts of Poe whether they see Eureka as an individual creation or as an expression of a greater whole. None of them have considered it to be a fiction which sets forth beliefs that are not personally those of the author.

In consideration of the scientific value of its contents, two broad points of view have been

offered by critics. Those who place little credence in its accuracy are of the opinion that Eureka is the author's serious attempt to elucidate a cosmology through the use of pseudo-scientific terminology. They support their criticism by noting the narrator's circuitous logic and by determining that this work is little more than the combination of Newton's and Laplace's theories. However, critics who hold an opposing point of view consider this work to be a monumental effort, created by Poe in order to expand the significance of these scientific theories through his imagination. Paul Valéry, who represents this opinion, accepted the basic premise of Eureka and extolled the truth of its development and conclusion. According to Valéry, this cosmogony not only introduced him to Newton's Law of Gravity and to Laplace's Nebular Theory, but also has been confirmed through subsequent scientific research and findings. For Valéry, "Eureka . . . [demonstrates] . . . that Edgar Poe expanded the law of gravity just as he extended Laplace's hypothesis. On mathematical foundations he has constructed an abstract poem that is one of the rare modern specimens of a total explanation of the material and spiritual nature--a cosmogony."² Whether these critics view this cosmology as pretentious nonsense or as lofty scientific symmetry, they read and

interpret the subject and theme on a literal level. They see the narrator as the spokesman for Poe's concepts of the creation and state of the universe.

Other critics have emphasized the logic employed by the narrator and the significance of his conclusion. They recognize the subjectivity of the narrator's ratiocination and of the solipsistic view of man in the subject's development. One such critic, Louis Broussard, reads the literal level as a philosopher, so he sees Poe as a metaphysician rather than as a scientist. He compares the proximity of man and God in Poe's universe to that of the early existentialists who described the same depersonalized relationship.³ Broussard declares that Poe, through his work's subjective man, is a romantic,⁴ a pantheist,⁵ and a transcendentalist. He bases these characteristics of the poet upon his notion that Eureka "is an illustration . . . not [of] his own disintegration but the disintegration of reality . . . because Eureka became Poe's vision of a life beyond the reality of matter, a scientific and metaphysical paradise."⁶ Another critic who admires the narrator's universe and embraces the beauty of the subjectivity which he discovers there is Daniel Hoffman. He also views Eureka as "the ultimately depersonalized and mechanical characterization of the psychic rhythm of existence,"⁷ which, through

the medium of astrophysics, leads inevitably to solipsism. Although Hoffman believes that Poe intended for Eureka to be read as a prose-poem or a tale, he sees the purpose of this work to be the creation of an "imagined world from which human suffering has been banished . . . [which is] . . . more endurable than that of modern astrophysics."⁸ Hoffman embraces this subjective and imaginary view of man and his existence because he believes it to be closer to truth than is the universe of scientific reality, for it is a dream from which all "pain is banished."⁹ Hoffman chooses to delight in this solipsistic universe of pure thought, which he credits Poe with creating.

An antithesis to Hoffman's point of view is expressed by Allen Tate, who condemns Eureka for the same reasons that Hoffman praises it. Tate demonstrates little trouble in assessing the intentions of Poe's previous works. He admits to the poet's "flash of unsustained insight in 'The Colloquy of Monas and Una'."¹⁰ He also analyzes Poe's capability for "faking his science, and of appearing to take seriously his own wildest inventions."¹¹ However, with Eureka, Tate assumes that Poe has abandoned these previously held positions of detachment and has succumbed at last to the repeated message of solipsism which his works seem to set forth. According to Tate, Poe, who has

remained intact despite the disintegration of his characters' personalities, has finally fallen victim to his own "angelism;"¹² that is, he tries to make "an angel of the soul."¹³ For Tate, it seems, believes that such works as "The Power of Words" and Eureka were based upon similar concepts expressed in Pascal's analogy:

The slightest movement affects the whole of nature; a stone cast into the sea changes the whole face of it. So, in the realm of Grace, the smallest act affects the whole by its results. Therefore everything has its importance.

In every action we must consider, besides the act itself, our present, past, and future conditions, and others whom it touches, and must see the connections of it all.¹⁴

Poe, however, either inadvertently or deliberately ignored the counterbalancing effect of the last line, "And so we shall keep ourselves well in check,"¹⁵ and eliminated its impact on his characters. Tate, therefore, attaches a personal involvement by Poe to his final creation, Eureka. Tate declares that in spite of the poet's self-control in his earlier works, he ultimately descends into his own maelström;¹⁶ that because he lost his ability to keep his subjectivity "in check" Poe becomes the solipsistic man of Eureka. Because of the poet's apparent entrapment in his own angelic desires, Tate condemns him and his creation for the glorification of solipsism, which the critic believes he has discovered in this work.

Although some critics accept the scientific premises and trappings of this work as exacting while others emphasize the meaning and conclusions of Eureka, all include in their critiques the personal influence of Poe's imagination on the development of the prose-poem's subject matter. For example, Valéry believed this cosmology to be a poem, as Poe claims it is, which raised poetry to the exacting and symmetric level of science. And Hoffman stated that Eureka should be read as one of Poe's tales, "a tale which is a poem."¹⁷ However, none have classified the narrator as a character. So despite the admitted creative control by the poet, these critics do not attribute the imaginary world of Eureka to the narrator. Instead, they praise or condemn the work as the honest opinions of the author. Without question, they claim that the narrator of Eureka is Poe. However, as critic James W. Gargano has explained, the characters in the poet's other works demonstrate that they "speak their own thoughts and are the dupes of their own passions."¹⁸ Poe created situations in which his narrators are limited in their views of the action and of the other characters because of their own innate shortcomings. The author of The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson" is well aware of the conclusions to

which these stories lead, and he offers clues to the attentive reader which he withholds from his narrators in order to produce a deeper understanding of the covert meanings of his tales in his audience. Therefore, if the concept that Poe is not the narrator is applied to Eureka, the aforementioned criticism must be viewed in a new light. If we consider the admitted "fancy" employed by the narrator to expand his cosmos beyond the limits of science, Valéry's appreciation of this work's scientific value does not fully elucidate the intent of the author. Likewise, if Poe is not the metaphysician of this cosmology, then he is not the transcendentalist of Broussard's critique; the transcendental aspects of this work must be assigned to the narrator only. And the solipsism, in which Hoffman finds solace and which Tate deems to be repulsive, can only be limited to the disintegrating personality of the narrator and, thus, cannot be attributed to Poe. As Nabokov's characters, Kinbote in Pale Fire and Hermann of Despair, do not reflect the beliefs and personality of their creator, so the unnamed narrator of Eureka does not mirror the opinions and mind of Poe.

Evidence for this concept appears not only in an analysis of the characters of Poe's previous work, but also in the tone of Eureka. The Preface of this

work, which in itself is a novelty to the format of the poet's creations, is extremely somber and does not express the moods which proceed from it. The body of the work alternates between the poetic depressions of one who is intoxicated and the excited incantations of one who is exhilarated by his own imagination. The mysterious Letter of 2848 communicates its message through the use of trite puns and pompous pretentiousness. It is necessary, therefore, to analyze Eureka as a tale, or as many critics have called it, a prose-poem, in which the narrator is not Poe, in which the character does not express the beliefs and personality of his creator.

CHAPTER IV

THE ENTRAPMENT

Despite the lectures which he gave and the essays which he wrote, Poe was neither a lecturer nor an essayist. He did not write theses or treatises in order to explicate an element of his general philosophy on literature or human potential. Instead, Poe was a poet and an author of exemplification. Everything he wrote, whether it was in the structure of a poem, a tale, or a rhetorical essay, contained a plot, characters, and a theme, as seen in such works as "The Imp of the Perverse" and "The Philosophy of Furniture." Each of his works is a drama within itself, demonstrating itself. As Poe was ardently against the influences of didacticism and pure entertainment, he developed a style of composition in which each work contains an example of its literal theme and is in itself an illustration of its "undercurrent of meaning." On the obvious, literal level, Eureka appears to be a cosmology of fascinating, scientific foreshadowing, with descriptions of imploding stars, which modern astrophysics accepts as "black holes" in space, and

of fanciful pseudo-science full of inconsistent logic. On the subtle, expressive level, Eureka is a comic fiction, a hoax, in which its narrator unwittingly proves that he does not exist when he desperately attempts to prove he is everything. And, in the "undercurrent of meaning," a terrifying portrait of man's potential for destructive solipsism is presented.

Despite the many deceptions and inconsistencies amassed one upon the other in this work, Poe intended for Eureka to be accepted as a serious prose-poem rather than as the "arrant fudge,"¹ which critic C. F. Hoffman called it. These discrepancies plague literalists such as Paul Valéry and Louis Etienne. For Valéry, the idiosyncrasies of Eureka mar his admiration for and the exaltation of man's intuition as expressed in this scientific cosmology. According to Etienne, the superficial flaws in the logic of this work reduce it to a "very obscure little book"² which simply reiterates previous scientific theories. To these critics, a re-reading of Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition," particularly the section concerning the "undercurrent of meaning" should indicate the necessity of investigating beyond the literal level in order to determine the significance of Eureka. And, to critics such as Etienne who recognize little beyond modifications of the theories of Newton and

Laplace, Poe replies that this accusation is untrue, for their theories are but a microscopic instance in the enormity of his cosmological discourse.³ This opinion is supported by his previously unpublished addenda, "A Prediction," in which he "penned" notes, mental exercises, scientific data, and intuitive estimates for material to aid in formulating and amending Eureka.⁴ These addenda demonstrate that he had a wealth of personal opinions, which he altered on occasion, and that he utilized a wide variety of references on cosmology and astronomy, as were available to him. Accordingly, the critics who restrict themselves to the delightful fantasies and intriguing initiative of the narrator are, thus, duped by the very elements of this tale which attract them to it.

For the readers and critics who heed Poe's advice to inquire beneath the limits of the literal, the inconsistencies express a state of incompatibility between the poetic soul and reality. These reviewers, such as Daniel Hoffman, also accept the seriousness of the surface level, but they perceive it to be symbolic of a glorious hoax which the poetic soul of a dreamer has played on the science of reality. As with the aforementioned critics of the literal level, these interpreters are also the victims of the traps and ruses set forth in the surface tale of cosmogony.

Another group of reviewers discounts the serious effect of the literal level entirely. They recognize it to be a hoax and search for deeper implications for the poet's use of inconsistent and deceptive images and logic. These critics, such as Allen Tate, proclaim that Eureka symbolically portrays the greatest subject of modern literature, that of the disintegration of the personality of modern man. Unfortunately, they believe that Poe is his characters, that he has written confessional tales of the alienation and annihilation of his own personality. Thus, while they comprehend that Eureka is a hoax, they believe that the hoax is played on Poe, that Poe is the ultimate victim of his own distortions and ruses. Because of their inability to perceive that Poe is a separate entity from his creations, they also become casualties of this fine line between the serious and the hoax. But what proof is there that Poe is not his characters and, thus, is not the captured prey of his own traps?

Although Eureka has the characteristics of both poetry and prose-fiction, it may not be either. But as Poe insisted that it be read "as an Art-Product alone,"⁵ there must be a positive motivation behind his insistence. Thus, analysis of Eureka should include examinations of its tone, its structure, its

traps and inconsistencies, and Poe's revisions of it, which will indicate his intentions in this work.

The general tone of Eureka oscillates between the pretentiousness of one intoxicated by delusions of self-importance and the "uncontrolable longing . . . [to expostulate endlessly] . . . (to the [unconscious] deep regret and mortification of the speaker, and in defiance of all consequences) . . ." ⁶ The mood of this work begins very solemnly in the Preface, then proceeds through many abrupt changes, until the end which indicates barely controlled rapture.

In the Preface, the expressed feeling is entirely different from the tone of the rest of the cosmology. The very fact that Poe included a preface in Eureka is not characteristic of his previous style, and its contents are rather startling. He dedicates the work to transcendentalists as a "Book of Truths" ⁷ but then claims that it is an "art-product," the key to properly interpreting its "undercurrent of meaning." The mood which he evokes is forthright and deadly serious. And as Poe initialed the Preface (another element which is not characteristic of the poet), it appears that he wished to be personally associated with this part of the cosmology.

This is especially apparent in the direct and abrupt change which occurs between the Preface and

the first line of the discourse that is attributed to the narrator. With the assumed air of humility by one who believes that he is the sole possessor of all knowledge, the narrator expresses, in the very first line, a sentiment which belies his real mood. In the second sentence of Eureka, he speaks with the lyrical circumlocution of one who is inebriated and, yet is attempting to prove that he is sober. Then, perhaps with a wide sweep of his arm, the narrator states the all inclusive subject of this discourse. He seems secure in the knowledge that his guise is successfully hiding any uncertainty.

But then he interjects the Letter of 2848, causing another shift in tone. It is included unexpectedly and concluded abruptly. The epistolist tries to dazzle his readers with a comic routine based on trite puns, such as "Aries Tottle [Aristotle] flourished supreme, until the advent of one Hog [Bacon], surnamed 'the Ettrick shepherd,'"⁸ and an urgency for acceptance of the subject, which causes another oscillation between bitter sarcasm and deep seriousness. The mood of this Letter builds to an outburst of acrid enthusiasm in an unexplained expression that the epistolist's notions will ultimately be avenged. This melodramatic ploy communicates a sense of futility on the part of the letter writer.

The body of the narrator's discourse begins with the use of deductive reasoning which he calls, "commencing with a descent."⁹ In Poe's previous works, this process signifies the encroaching influence of the dream-state on one's mentality. In Eureka, this descent also means a deeper involvement in the inconsistencies and traps which follow. He then states that he will "proceed as if even the more obvious facts of Astronomy were unknown to the reader,"¹⁰ thus appearing to slight the intelligence of his audience. This attitude is reflected later in his discussions of individuals who "deceive" themselves into imagining their grasp of infinity, and of those "diminutive thinkers"¹¹ who dare to criticize his hypothesis. Another mood, that of over-confidence, is asserted in his statement, "I am proudly aware that there exist many of the most profound and cautiously discriminative human intellects which cannot help being abundantly content with my suggestions."¹² This is supported by his claim that "the great mind of Newton"¹³ was inadequate for the task which the narrator has conquered. Then, there is an immediate shift in which he appears to be gripped by an uncertainty that causes him to expatiate on the specifics of astrophysics. His seemingly futile attempts to convince through an abundance of scientific details

cause him to comment: "it is . . . with no unwarranted fear of being taken for a madman . . .,"¹⁴ that he feels compelled to intimidate his readers. But in condemning the critics who may not be persuaded, he sentences himself to the same censure that "there may be a class of superior intelligences . . . [who] . . . wear all the character of monomania."¹⁵ And, for those who still are not certain of the veracity of his theory, the narrator attempts to dazzle them with startling statistics, as in the following quotation:

If, for example, we suppose the Earth, which is, in reality, 95 millions of miles from the Sun, to be only one foot from that luminary; then Neptune would be 40 feet distant; and the star Alpha Lyrae, at the very least, 159 . . . 159--miles.¹⁶

He closes his discourse with an attitude that reflects one who is enamored of his own self-importance. He reveals in the conclusion of this cosmology that man is God and that his "novel Universe swelled into existence . . . at every throb of the Heart Divine . . . [which] . . . is our own."¹⁷ And, if some of his readers are stunned by his pretentiousness, he attempts to sooth and to reassure them by stating that "Inevitable Annihilation" holds the greatest degree of "Happiness" for mankind.¹⁸ This constant oscillation reflects, both in mood and attitude, the over-confidence and the insecurity of the narrator.

It also reiterates the absurdity of the situation through which he communicates his theory and of the comic and inconsistent elements which comprise this literary creation by Poe. The pseudo-scientific terminology and details appear to represent an allegory of a deeper level of meaning rather than the characteristics of a staid scientific treatise. An analysis of Eureka's structure as a work of fiction will explicate further the irrational influences of the narrator and the competent control of his author on the development of Eureka's fabrication.

In his anthology, Story and Structure, Laurence Perrine identifies and explains the elements of fiction. By applying his definitions to Eureka, the subtlety of this prose-poem is illuminated. The plot of any tale or story-poem, according to Perrine, "is the sequence of incidents or events of which . . . [it] . . . is composed."¹⁹ It includes conflict, suspense or mystery, a climax, and an appropriate ending.²⁰ Eureka fulfills these requirements, abundantly. The action of this poem involves the creation of the limited Universe of Stars. Briefly, these events, which the narrator explains in "properly graduated steps,"²¹ begin with God creating "Matter in its utmost conceivable state . . . of Simplicity."²² This single and unified particle is then diffused in series into

the infinite Universe of Space by Divine Will, which in turn ceases, causing countermotion to occur. The central conflict of this story entangles both the major and minor personalities, who have been created with this dispersal of Matter, in combat for their existence. Thus, each of the equal and complementary pairs of characters constrains one another to insure the present condition of its existence, at least temporarily.

The climax of this tale is the realization that one existed prior to the "first act" and will continue to exist after annihilation, in the natural state of Singleness with God. Therefore, in minute steps, the stronger absorbs the weaker; one individual becomes another, a lover consumes a lover, and one man consummates the knowledge of himself. Then, these steps accumulate into gigantic stages in which suns devour planets and galaxies cannibalize solar systems until the entire Universe of Stars implodes upon itself. Similarly, the desire to be "one" with another person is exaggerated into a desire to be "one" with mankind. In turn, this obsession is manifest in the compulsion of man to become God; the figure waiting at the vortex of self-destruction. Thus, the limited Universe of Stars, representing humanity, returns to its natural condition of Oneness. Man, his universe, and his God are finally one particle of matter. However, as matter

cannot exist without the energy of attraction and repulsion between two particles, everything is annihilated. Man, the Universe of Stars, and their Creator, God, cease to exist. The plot of this fiction proceeds from the first action, in which the primary Nothing materializes, to the appropriate conclusion, in which this Nothing returns to its natural state of Nothingness.

The element of mystery in this story is fostered through the narrator's use of foreshadowing. At the beginning of his discourse, the narrator suggests the major points of his theory and the course of their development. For example, in the beginning of Eureka, he infers that "We should have to be God ourselves"²³ in order to comprehend the creation of the universe. By the end of his treatise, he has proven this fact to himself. Each of the suggestions and inferences which he outlines is explicated later at a startling but subsequently logical moment in the body of Eureka. Critics Richard Wilbur and Stephan Mooney have theorized that this work as a whole, this cosmology, is God's version of Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition." As Poe created the only possible poem, "The Raven," from the principles expressed in "The Philosophy of Composition," so it follows that God has created the one, true Universe of Stars through

his physical embodiment's prose-poem, Eureka.

When creating a poem, by Poe's definition, the poet strives for "unity of effect." Likewise, when creating a universe, the god strives for "an individual impression."²⁴ This singular conception is, therefore, the theme of Eureka. It is delineated in the perfect Nothingness which prevailed prior to creation and in the sublime Nothingness which returns upon annihilation of Existence.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspects of this "romance," however, are to be discovered in its symbolic recurrences. Excluding the obvious reappearances in character, plot, and theme discussed previously, there are many repeated references and images which have appeared in previous works. The most blatant is the Letter of 2848. This device is used to impart previously unknown information or to instigate action. In this particular tale, the Letter is employed to explicate the notions of intuition and of ratiocination at the unfortunate expense of Aristotelian deduction and Baconian induction.²⁵ Although these impertinent concepts are discounted without respectable comment, they become vitally important to the tale. Before the narrator even offers the first step of his re-creation--that of admitting a god-head--he diagrams the two-fold procedures which he will use in attaining

his conclusion. First, he and his audience will descend, as in a dream-state, into the subject matter through the philosophy of deduction. Then, as with a swinging pendulum, he will repeat the entire process through the scientific method of induction.²⁶ However, along this alternating path, the narrator will encounter an overwhelming necessity to exercise his powers of intuition and ratiocination, particularly in areas where research, data, or physical manifestation concerning his revolutionary concepts are non-existent. Another aspect of this letter is that the bottle in which it was discovered was "found corked . . . and floating on the Mare Tenebrarum,"²⁷ an image reminiscent of the "Ms. Found in a Bottle." An extremely subtle reference, on the other hand, involves placing in its proper perspective the influence of Newton's laws on this comprehensive exercise. When the narrator extolls the impact of Newtonian reasoning on science, he executes it in a manner which implies that Newton's contributions are impressive although relatively insignificant in comparison to the thesis of Eureka.²⁸ The narrator's attitude is reflective of the disposition expressed by Montresor for the health and well being of his double, Fortunado, in "The Cask of Amontillado," just prior to sealing him in a vault for premature burial. Another

recurrent motif, that of the vitality and power of the human will, is distended to its utmost potential. In Eureka, man not only resolves himself and the universe into life, but also wills himself to be God, the supreme gesture of human magnanimity. Again, this smirking pretentiousness and the absurd implications of the narrator's logic express two important keys to Eureka: that of conscious control of the subject and construction and the personal objectivity of the author. They imply that the poet is not the dupe of his own creation.

If Poe is not the victim, if he is not his characters and, therefore, is neither Pym at the vortex of the Earth nor the narrator of Eureka at the vortex of the Universe, then who is the one who is sacrificed to subjectivism? In Eureka, he is the individual who is entrapped in a series of deceptions perpetrated by an unsuspecting narrator upon an unwitting audience. This prose-poem contains three major snares which subsequently create numerous repercussions, and if one succumbs to the apparent logic of them, then one is doomed, along with the narrator, to self-annihilation.

The first trap is readily apparent and should suffice to warn fellow voyagers of this work of the imminent jeopardy which lies ahead. This snare is the very subject of Eureka; that is, "the Physical, Metaphysical and Mathematical--of the Material and

Spiritual Universe: --of its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition and its Destiny."⁴⁹

If One believes this statement of intent, then one can only read Eureka on a literal level and, thus, is vulnerable to the pitfalls which follow it.

The second deception is surreptitiously hidden in the narrator's "general Proposition: . . . [that] . . . --In the Original Unity of the First Thing lies the Secondary Cause of All Things, with the Germ of their Inevitable Annihilation."³⁰ It is a beautifully written sentiment which concluded the speaker's pronouncement of design. Unfortunately, its distilled meaning presents volatile intentions. In order to comprehend the concealed meaning of this proposition, one must seek clarification from Poe in a letter which he presumably wrote to G. W. Eveleth concerning a misunderstanding of this statement. Poe wrote, "The General Proposition is this--Because Nothing was [Original Unity], therefore All Things are."³¹ Or, in other words, in a state of Unity, which means Nothingness, all things are possible because there are no constraints. In this state of non-existence the narrator of "The Imp" could have committed the perfect crime, then boasted of it, thus receiving the acknowledgement he desired. But he could not have been punished because his condition of Unity would have

disallowed restraint. The perfection of his crime would have remained unassailed. Also, this proposal may be translated on a more personal level which would imply that as a totally conscious being, free from "his savage condition"³² of instincts for such things as survival, one would be capable of "All Things" which would naturally include the potential for one's own annihilation.

The third and most deceptive trap is that "God originally created . . . Matter in its utmost conceivable state . . . of Simplicity."³³ This trap is supported with twisted logic which seems reasonable to the reader's impulse to believe it. What other course could the Creation have taken except to begin with "one particle . . . [totally homogeneous] . . . 'without form or void'?"³⁴ This proposal of "Original Unity," upon which the narrator's entire thesis is established, is tendered under the guise that "this will be found the sole absolute assumption of . . . [the narrator's] . . . Discourse,"³⁵ which, unfortunately, permits little acceptance of his later statements and findings that are presented in the terms "let us now fancy"³⁶ and "it is an idea, in fact, which belongs to the class of the excessively obvious."³⁷ But, the narrator qualifies his explanation of this "assumption" by maintaining that of his proposal

"nothing was ever more certainly . . . more rigorously deduced: --but, alas! the processes lie . . . out of the human analyses-- . . . beyond the utterance of the human tongue."³⁸ In "Marginalia," this problem of unconscious deduction is elucidated further in that no concept is out of reach of the "human tongue" and so all thoughts, ideas, and processes can be delineated in writing, except of course the "fancies," the shadows of mental procedures and evasive images which are evoked from the soul at the "very brink of sleep."³⁹ These shadows, as explained later in his discourse, haunt youth and are "the curse of a certain order of mind"⁴⁰ in the adult. They are "memories . . . saying: 'There was an epoch in the Night of Time, when a still-existent Being existed-- . . .,'"⁴¹ who is God, the Being of our pre-existent souls. It is, therefore, the knowledge of pre-existent Unity which subtly informs the narrator of his concept of Original Unity and simplistic Matter. As indicated in his "Notes to Eureka," Poe intended for his narrator to expand this statement concerning "assumption" and covert deduction with the following conceit:

If, however, in the course of this Essay, I succeed in showing that, out of Matter in its extreme of Simplicity, all things might have been constructed, we reach directly the inference that they were thus constructed, through the impossibility of attributing supererogation to Omnipotence.⁴²

Or, in other words, if the narrator can prevail on the reader to accept his theory, that acceptance will be sufficient proof of his assumption. This is yet another example of his circuitous logic which uses both deduction and induction to reach the identical conclusion of his "general proposition" that originated in his imagination. In induction and deduction, the means justify the end but with ratiocination and intuition, the end is supposed to vindicate the means.⁴³ The narrator attempts justification for employing indirect arguments when he admits, "thus according to the schools, I prove nothing. So be it: --I design but to suggest--and to convince through the suggestion."⁴⁴ Thus, the procedures which the narrator utilizes to propose his thesis and then to prove it are faulty. But are the contents of his "general proposition" and his "sole assumption" equally erroneous? Does the end justify the means?

Exactly what does the narrator suggest by this notion that the original state of Matter is Simplicity? According to the theorist, Matter is created in the normal, natural condition of Oneness: "Matter . . . [is] . . . Simplicity."⁴⁵ Then it is forced or divided into the abnormal, unnatural state of "Many"⁴⁶ by "dint of . . . God's Will."⁴⁷ In this form, Matter becomes the Electricity which repels it in God's second Act--

that of division-- , and the Gravity, which attracts it upon the cessation of His involvement. "Attraction and Repulsion are Matter: there being no conceivable case in which we may not employ the term 'matter' and the terms 'attraction' and 'repulsion.'"⁴⁸ Thus, Matter is Complexity. After gravity exerts its intensity over electricity and after Matter is unified into Oneness again, Matter "will sink at once into . . . Nothingness,"⁴⁹ because it lacks the tension between Attraction and Repulsion, which define Matter. Therefore, before its "Inevitable Annihilation," Matter is, for a brief instant, Simplicity again. This, then, is the entire process from "Original Unity" to "Inevitable Annihilation" based upon the concept that the original state of Matter is Simplicity. During this development, the narrator offers the definition for Matter which is the following: Matter is "Oneness," "Simplicity," "Attraction and Repulsion," "Complexity," and "Unity,-- . . . Matter without Matter . . . Matter no more . . . Nothingness."⁵⁰ "The truly ultimate principle [of this Nebular Theory] is . . . the consummation of the complex [of which simplicity is part]--that is to say, of the unintelligible,"⁵¹ Who is God, the Creator of Simplicity. Or, in other words, the basic premise upon which the narrator's theory rests and of which he must convince his audience, is

that Simplicity is Complexity in the form of Matter which is Nothingness. If one is duped by this now obvious deception, then one must also admit that because Matter cannot exist in a state of Simplicity or Unity, then Matter has never existed. Therefore, if Nothingness was the condition prior to Matter, and if Matter cannot exist, then Nothingness is Existence. And, as God created this non-existent existence, then God is Nothingness, also. A seemingly endless inventory of corresponding pairs--material and spiritual, matter and energy, body and soul, gravity and electricity, impulse and will, space and time, truth and beauty, reality and dream, science and art, geometry and music, ratiocination and intuition, thought and feeling, creation and annihilation, existence and nothingness--support this basic conflict that Simplicity is Complexity. "Life-Life-Life within Life . . . [is not] . . . all within the Spirit Devine"⁵² as the theorist wishes us to believe, for there is no such concept as Life. Likewise, "Because Nothing was; therefore, All Things are"⁵³ not. Thus, the narrator proves nothing, except perhaps that this is not the manner in which Existence was created.

In addition to these three major deceptions, another important device, that of the Letter, is used to entrap the unsuspecting reader. Even prior to

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determining his analytical approach and offering his primary assumption, the narrator introduces to his discourse the Letter of 2848 in its entirety, except of course for the salutation and the signature.

Although the narrator apparently did not discover the Letter himself, he assumes that this "somewhat remarkable letter . . . [was] . . . found corked in a bottle and floating on the Mare Tenebrarum--." ⁵⁴ This "Sea of Shadows" is a "dry plain" on the surface of the Moon "described by the Nubian geographer, Ptolemy Hephestion" ⁵⁵ who is symbolic of the solipsistic man in that he presumed the Earth to be the center of the Universe.

This desolate "ocean" is also a nightmare of poetic memories "frequented in modern days . . . by the Transcendentalists," ⁵⁶ who believe only in their individual invisible spirits as the ultimate reality, "and some other divers for crotchets," ⁵⁷ who descend into odd or whimsical notions. The Letter is "remarkable" not only for its revealing contents but also for its unique predate of 2848; a letter retrieved from the Moon one thousand years before it was written. All of these elements, the unexpectedness of its appearance, the previous location, the predate and the symbols, indicate a descent into the hypnogogic state of subjective dreams by the narrator and the willing reader. This descent involves only the literal or

superficial level of the letter, however. Included with the "oddities" surrounding its appearance is the peculiar style in which it is written. This epistolist employs puns for deciphering some of the "ancient" names from philosophic and scientific history, such as Aries Ram Tottle for Aristotle, Tuclid for Euclid, Cant for Kant, Hog for Bacon, Miller for J. S. Mill who "rode a mill-horse . . . called Jeremy Bentham."⁵⁸

However, the names of those who believed in or at least manifested his views on reasoning are miraculously intact despite their similar antiquity with those who succumbed to the fates of humor. Likewise, the writer's tone is at times inconsistent with the seriousness of his subject, as it is influenced by his ludicrous sense of humor and a bitterness which provokes unpleasant sarcasm. This surface level of symbolic discovery, mocking humor, and acrid tone indicate a hoax upon the reader who embraces its text as truth.

As the narrator of this cosmological tale merely introduces the Letter, allows it to present itself, and denies it the respect of a reply, it would appear that this epistle is of little consequence to either his philosophy or his scientific treatise. Then why does he include the Letter? Although he makes a valiant effort to remain totally objective and scientific in his procedures, he discovers a need in the

beginning of his discourse to offer an assumption, a guess. After he has committed the very act applauded by the Letter which he deems "impertinent," he discovers the ease with which he may continue to commit this act of guessing until, by the end of his treatise, he has embraced the Letter's philosophy of logic completely. Specifically, the epistolist's view of the process of reasoning asserts that intuition is superior to either deduction (descent) or induction (ascent) because "true Science, . . . makes its most important advances . . . by seemingly intuitive leaps."⁵⁹ The word "seemingly" means that guessing or "intuition . . . [is] . . . but the conviction resulting from deductions or inductions of which the processes . . . [are] . . . so shadowy as to have escaped . . . consciousness, . . . reason, or . . . expression;"⁶⁰ a concept which is echoed in the narrator's "assumption." In the literary criticism of 1848 which followed the publication of Eureka, many misrepresentations were made concerning this Letter. In an effort to clarify its meaning, Poe replied to one such critic, a C. F. Hoffman, in a "letter to the editor," "What I really say is this: 'That there is no absolute certainty either in the Aristotelian or Baconian process--that, for this reason neither Philosophy is so profound as it fancies itself--and that neither has a right to

sneer at that seemingly imaginative process called Intuition."⁶¹ Based upon the foundation of guessing, other important observations are advanced, some of which contradict one another. The first is the axiom: "for no such things as axioms ever existed or can possibly exist at all,"⁶² which coincides with the narrator's self-evident belief that "as for 'self-evidence,' there is no such thing."⁶³ Both of these statements, "if admitted axiomatic, must at once neutralize both itself and its predecessor;"⁶⁴ or, the very nature of the suggestion nullifies its content. The second point involves disproving J. S. Mill's proposition that "'Ability or inability to conceive . . . is in no case to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth;"⁶⁵ by asserting "that a perfect consistency can be nothing but an absolute truth."⁶⁶ Therefore, if one conceives or perceives a certain consistency he has discovered a truth. Again, this supports the narrator's obsession with "fancies" and "obviousness" and in turn contradicts his position on the lack of value of "self-evidence." This ability to rely on one's perceptions develops, in circuitous logic, the foundation for "intuitive leaps" which is the third observation of the Letter. Thus, the Letter is a manifestation of the truths which it propounds. And, it is to this deeper level of meaning that its

conclusion refers:

"--I care not whether my work be read now or by posterity. I can afford to wait a century for readers when God Himself has waited six thousand years for an observer. I triumph. I have stolen the golden secret of the Egyptians. I will indulge my sacred fury."⁶⁷

Because his generation has accepted intuition already as a legitimate scientific method, the epistolist's reason for including Kepler's "prophetical and poetical rhapsody"⁶⁸ seems unintelligible unless one appreciates it in relationship to the narrator instead, for the letter writer and the narrator prove to be one and the same. Thus, the underlying purpose of this Letter is to introduce the purely solipsistic man of the future, who dares to "utter a truth for which he felt himself indebted to his soul alone,"⁶⁹ to the man of similar potential of 1848. Their arguments are the same, their inconsistencies are identical, and if their names be given, they would no doubt prove to be of similar spelling. Therefore, this Letter foreshadows the direction and significance of the discourse, because the epistle is an obvious hoax on its literal level but reveals a serious indictment in its "undercurrent of meaning."

Despite the major discrepancies of their aforementioned deceptions, the narrator unconsciously indicates many other less dramatic but equally

significant inconsistencies. The first of these minor incongruities reveals itself in the narrator's claim that his "survey of the Universe"⁷⁰ is an illustration of his "general proposition" in spite of his belief that "there is . . . no such thing as demonstration."⁷¹ This means that he will offer an example of a concept for which he cannot prove an example exists. Similarly, in his attempt to clarify the reasonableness of his ratiocination, the narrator compares his logic to that of "any demonstrations in Euclid,"⁷² which he has asserted previously do not exist; therefore, his ratiocination is equal to the logic of nothing. The third and most insidious of these minor deceptions concerns the narrator's passion to be God. If man desires to contemplate any term such as "'Infinity' [or God, which] belongs--[to] the class representing thoughts of thought--he . . . feels himself called upon . . . simply to direct his mental vision toward some given point,"⁷³ without the need to resolve the comprehension of it because understanding it is impossible and inessential.⁷⁴ Also, this man "perceives that the Deity has not designed it [any thought of thought] to be solved . . . [for] . . . it lies out of the brain of man."⁷⁵ Therefore, if "we know absolutely nothing of the nature or essence of God"⁷⁶ and if the need to know is impossible and inessential,

then how "should . . . [we] . . . be God ourselves,"⁷⁷ as the narrator commands? If we cannot be God, then we cannot perceive the Universe to be as the theorist demands that we see it.

This is exactly what Poe expected his readers to comprehend. The tone of this work, its poetic and fictional elements, and its insane, circuitous logic seem totally wasted if the author wished to trap his readers into either extolling or condemning the qualities of pseudo-astrophysics or of self-consuming solipsism in Eureka. His true intent, therefore, was to be original; that is, to suggest the negation of everything which he appeared to be exalting.⁷⁸ And, this intention could only be executed through the most careful and conscious control of which he was capable in constructing such a monumental effort.

If one inspects Poe's long succession of creations deeply enough, one will discover evidence to support the theory that Poe exemplified the opposite of what he believed. Poe constructed each work with as much meticulous deliberation as he could possibly afford, given the constraints of publishing deadlines and of financial insecurity. Repeatedly he rewrote and reworded many, if not all, of his works and Eureka was no exception to these conscious efforts. In the various collections of his editorial revisions and

addenda to Eureka, Poe demonstrated a sincere and scrupulous desire to create the most exacting work of which he was capable. A brief survey of the notes, deletions, and additions which he proposed for Eureka reveals this earnest effort.

An investigation of the majority of Poe's editorial revisions indicates a concern for minute detail in mechanics, structure, and diction. He corrected misleading or erroneous punctuation marks such as replacing a colon with a semicolon or adding a comma where it was needed. When the text identified a particular expression or usage, he added quotation marks or an enclosed apostrophe. For example, Poe altered the punctuation of "the word hypothesis . . . [to] . . . the word 'hypothesis'"⁷⁹ and "the thinker a fool . . . [to] . . . the thinker 'a fool.'"⁸⁰ He also corrected the misspelling of names, such as Fourrier to Fourier,⁸¹ "Enck's comet . . . [to] . . . Encke's comet,"⁸² and Compte to Comte.⁸³ He denoted alterations in paragraph structure in at least two cases, dividing each paragraph to improve the emphasis on their respective subjects.⁸⁴ Other editorial revisions include the following: reducing some capital letters to lower case and raising lower case to capitals; adding or deleting italics; altering past tense to present in the discussions on gravity; cancelling

superlatives in some cases and qualifying absolutes in others; clarifying footnotes; adding "new" scientific information which apparently came to his attention after the first publication; and restricting verbosity. He also deleted all elements of his lecture style and designated changes in vocabulary, such as "radiation" for all cases in which the word "irradation" is used, and "with" for all cases in which "to" is used in indicating the relationship between the proportion of force and the proportion of mass or distance.⁸⁵

Through his very specific, line-by-line analysis of this work he deleted, altered, and added minute details which, if applied to Eureka en mass, demonstrate a change in tone and approach. If Poe had been afforded the opportunity to publish a revised edition of Eureka, it would have proven to be more specific in details and yet less demanding of acceptance in tone, more subtle in deception and easier to read.

Poe maintained a very narrow scope of interest, as shown by a comparison of his works. His tales have similar structures, characters, plots, themes, and images. They also counterbalance one another in that he wrote tales of the Arabesque and of the Grotesque. This sense of balance is exemplified in Eureka through its use of contradictions, for every positive statement there is a negative one; for each proposal there is

evidence to nullify it. Therefore, if the reader refrains from personal involvement with the characters and images in the tale, his objectivity will be receptive to the recurrences and inconsistencies. As Poe's narrator issues subtle warnings prior to occurrences such as imminent descent or awaiting deceptions, the consciously objective reader may avoid their subjective influences.

Through repeated exposure to Poe's limited interest, the reader divines the ultimate purpose of this poet-author's works. He initiated a sincere effort to depict the most dangerous man in modern society and through the use of meticulously devised entrapments he aided his unwitting, yet willing, readers to identify with this unscrupulous character. Then, in the conclusion of his work, be it a poem, a tale, or an essay, he hoped suddenly to outrage or surreptitiously to plague this self-deluded reader with the horrifying, or at least unsettling, realization of his entrapment and of his potential to be this often unnamed character. But this character is not Poe. The narrator does not control his creator; his creator manipulates him. Poe only needed to look deeply into his own human potentiality, and into the personalities around him, or into the very fabric of modern society to see the influences exerted by this unbalanced social environment

which fosters the growth of this character's manifestation--that is, of one's potential to become the purely subjective man. With regard to Eureka, it is this purely subjective narrator who creates a universe, at the vortex of which he stands in the raiments of a self-appointed god-head. It is this unnamed Everyman, who by dint of his creator, Poe, breathes this hoax into existence and then is annihilated by it. Therefore, the surface or literal level of this serious prose-poem is a hoax, which is created by the narrator, through the conscious and poetic guidance of Poe, only to collapse, as with the House of Usher, upon its creator. But Poe and his work remain intact; the serious prose-poem has not been diminished. It is this fact which Poe intended his alert and cautious readers to comprehend. As he stated at the close of his letter to G. W. Eveleth, his summary of Eureka was to be read in order to clarify any misinterpretations of the basic concepts. Then he made the mysterious comment, "As to the Lecture, I am very quiet about it,"⁸⁶ which he qualified by saying if Eveleth understood anything of "such topics, . . . [he would] . . . recognize the novelty and moment [significance] of my views."⁸⁷ He propounded that Eureka would drastically alter the state "of Physical and Metaphysical Science."⁸⁸ But, who is this unnamed Everyman, the narrator, of whom Poe so

ardently warned his readers? How would the revelation of his narration of Eureka effect such a radical change in man's perception of himself and of his environment? This narrator's identity is intimated in each of Poe's works, so a careful analysis of the clues which Poe offered should devulge the history and personality of this solipsistic man.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE OF ATREUS

Perhaps the most effective way to establish finally the identity, the personality and motivations of the Solipsistic Man, is to begin with his ancestry. This singular character has an ancient background, as horrifying as his present condition, which also holds a promise for succeeding generations.

A very important and pervasive reference in many of Poe's works is made to Ancient Greece. The images of Helen of Troy and classical beauty, of the raven or revenge, and particularly of murderous rivalry between dual characters, refer to a specific family in Greek mythology. The narrator, Dupin, indicates the name of it in the message which he left for D----- at the conclusion of "The Purloined Letter," that is, "S'il n'est digne d'Atree, est digne de Thyeste."¹ Dupin is Atreus and D----- is Thyestes. In fact, each of Poe's characters is related to the House of Atreus.

This great family of Ancient Greek mythology became "an ill-fated house"² because of the irrational

ambition of its earliest ancestor, Tantalus, a king of Lydia. This half-human, half-immortal son of Zeus committed the first solipsistic act in his family; he desired to be an immortal Greek god. He murdered his son and prepared a meal of him in order to taint the visiting gods with the stigma of cannibalism. In a futile effort to diminish their greatness, he hoped to elevate his status. For his horrendous ambition and jealousy, he was condemned to eternal thirst and hunger in the midst of plenty, and his progeny were sentenced to the potential for pure subjectivity.³

Other infamous individuals of this malicious family were no less zealous or bloodthirsty in their respective quests for absolute power and appropriate recognition. Tantalus' daughter, Niobe, claimed for herself the rights and privileges of the goddess Leto, which resulted in the slaughter of Niobe's fourteen children, causing her grief to metamorphose her "into a stone . . . forever . . . wet with tears."⁴ The reincarnated son of Tantalus, Pelops--the one whom he had prepared for dinner--had two sons, Atreus and Thyestes, who also inherited the overwhelming impulse to believe only in their own perceptions. Their feud began with adultery between Thyestes and the wife of his brother, and culminated with an act reminiscent of their grandfather, the murder by Atreus of his

brother's two children who were boiled, then eaten by their unsuspecting father, Thyestes. Although Thyestes suffered through the loss of personal power, Atreus, the King, felt no ill effects of this "atrocious crime [which] was not avenged in Atreus' lifetime, but his children and his children's children suffered."⁵ For example, Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus, were also victims, although to varying degrees.

Menelaus temporarily suffered the loss of his beautiful wife, Helen of Troy, to the Trojans while Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter for fair winds to save Helen and later paid for this murder with his own life at the hands of his adulterous wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, "Aegisthus, the youngest child of Thyestes."⁶ Clytemnestra "was not a murderer in her own eyes, she was an executioner,"⁷ but this murder was not the end to her unscrupulous attitude. She and her deceased husband's cousin banished her son, Orestes, and tortured her daughter, Electra; both children were by Agamemnon. When Orestes returned to avenge the murder of his father, he was trapped between the necessity of "righting" his father's death and the abomination of murdering his mother. Seeking the aid of Apollo, he was told to avenge Agamemnon, which he painfully did. But the full weight of the realization of his actions rested upon him and he was plagued by

visions, sorrow and guilt. Finally, he atoned for the remorse of his soul and pleaded for purification, which upon being received caused many miraculous effects.⁸ Thereafter, the ever-present susceptibility by a member of the House of Atreus to the impulse to destroy one's self surged from a desire to live only in the world of one's perceptions, despite Orestes' counter potential to live without the fear of reprisals from the evil of the House of Atreus.

From this ancestry of the House of Atreus, the narrator of Eureka has evolved and, of the two alternatives which this background provides, he chooses the course to inevitable annihilation. It is familiar to him, for it has been trod by his ancient relatives, Tantalus and Niobe. Thus, the narrator embraces the impulse to trust only in his own soul and to create an environment based solely upon his mental perceptions. He proclaims himself a god, which in turn guarantees the obvious conclusion to his world and to his life.

The first step in his process toward absolute solipsism is to declare that "a man . . . becomes Mankind; Mankind a member of the cosmical family of Intelligences,"⁹ which exalts the individual as a representative of all creatures to the level of the Angels. In this state "no soul is inferior to another-- . . . nothing is, or can be superior to any one

soul."¹⁰ However, in order to become God, to return to the perfect unity of God, Attraction must exert its power over Repulsion before implosion can occur. Therefore, in the final analysis, the souls of some must be superior to the souls of others to initiate the absorption process. But the narrator denies this. He excludes the soul, in this particular instance, from the same processes which create the unification of matter; that is, the physical bodies of greater mass absorb the physical bodies of lesser mass.¹¹ Instead, he deems that for the spiritual, "the former [stronger] will grow weaker, the latter [weaker grow] stronger . . . [until all] . . . individual Intelligences become blended."¹² This reference to the "former" and the "latter" implies that some souls are superior, which is simply another contradiction among many. In this act of blending the narrator concludes "that the sense of individual identity will be gradually merged in the general consciousness--that Man . . . ceasing imperceptibly to feel himself Man, will at length attain that awfully triumphant epoch when he shall recognize his existence as that of Jehovah."¹³ Thus, the man who imagines himself to be God will ultimately achieve this result at the expense of his individual existence. In his revisions to Eureka, Poe included the following note of explanation for

this phenomenon, to be added at the end of the text:

Note.--The pain of the consideration that we shall lose our individual identity, ceases at once when we further reflect that the process, as above described, is, neither more or less than that of the absorption, by each individual intelligences (that is, of the Universe) into its own. That God may be all in all, each must become God.¹⁴

In this first stage, the narrator considers Oneness to be the condition of normality and Diffusion to be the state of abnormality. This consideration promotes the second juncture in man's subjective development. He concludes that his "chief idiosyncrasy . . . [is] . . . reason, if [it] follows that his savage condition--his condition of action without reason--is his unnatural state."¹⁵ But he does not achieve fully this natural condition of reason until he has abandoned all savage instincts, such as survival, and has attained exactitude of ratiocination.¹⁶ As vitality, consciousness of reality, and investigative intellect are elements of individuality, they must be abandoned when one is "blended" into Unity. This situation of acquired perfection becomes "the curse of a certain order of mind, that it can never rest satisfied with the consciousness of its ability to do a thing. . . . It must both know and show how it was done."¹⁷

Therefore, the characteristics of pure

solipsism which this narrator embodies are the loss of "unnatural" human instincts, the self-perceived perfection of reason, and "self-cognizance,"¹⁸ "thoroughly self-conscious . . . accustomed to the introspective analysis of its own operation . . ."¹⁹ This man stands totally isolated from every element of reality which surrounds him, except as he perceives it to be. He is, as Daniel Hoffman describes, "self-alone" so that anything which lies outside of his self, outside of his absorption into pure thought, becomes a measure of that self. Thus the Universe of Stars is a measure of the narrator's self.²⁰ The narrator concurs with this definition of the subjective man, for ultimately he recognizes the true plot of his cosmology, Eureka.

As demonstrated previously, the surface level of Eureka is a hoax, but it has not reduced the impact of the subtle prose-poem, which produced the hoax. The narrator of the farce is presumably a poet-scientist of earnest belief in his entrapment of Nothingness. However, on the deeper level of the meaning, he is unmasked and shown to be the epitome of acquired subjectivity. The plot of the hoax is the creation of a non-existent Universe of Stars. While on the serious level, the plot becomes a detailed chart for a voyage to the total absorption in

self-thought. The narrator infers an awareness of this underlying machination when he admits, "I . . . feel impelled to fancy . . . that there does exist a limitless succession of Universes . . . [but] having had no part in our origin, they have no portion in our laws."²¹ Or, in other words, the narrator deems each universe to be an individual who is apart from all other beings and whose existence is not relative to his own essence. He is alone and must answer only to his own soul. So the theme of the narrator's surface tale is the quest for self-perfection in one's perceptions, the quest to be God, even at the expense of other individuals who have little relevance to the solipsistic man. Thus, the "undercurrent of meaning" in Eureka, and in all of his works, is the ardent warning against this character which Poe created as a manifestation of the potential of modern man. In his "Marginalia," Poe briefly identified this creature of his era and raised a serious challenge to him:

If any ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize, at one effort, the universal world of human sentiment, the opportunity is his own--the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unencumbered before him. All that he has to do is write and publish a very little book. Its title should be simple--a few plain words--"My Heart Laid Bare." But--this little book must be true to its title. . . . But to write it--there is the rub. No man dare write it.²²

But one man did dare to write it, and he is the

narrator of Eureka--"I have found it. I have found the mirror of solipsism and in it there is a reflection of me." Unlike the narrator of "The Man of the Crowd," who does not recognize himself and who is not recognized by the Man, this narrator has seen a glimpse of his reflection and has rejoiced "Eureka" at the instant of his annihilation.

As Poe was not a moralist he could not force himself to express in rhetorical language the warning in his works. He chose instead to create graphic images of this ominous shadow stirring in the modern personality. Each image fits into a mosaic of creations, the last piece of which is Eureka. It is a mirror which reflects this potential in every reader who succumbs to the inducements and traps of this prose-poem. But Eureka and Poe's other works also hold a promise for individuals who act responsibly without giving in to the impulse of total subjectivism. There is a faint echo in this prose-poem which invites the progeny of the House of Atreus to remember the lesson learned through misery by Orestes.²³

If a man should create "a novel Universe swelling into existence, and then subsiding into Nothingness . . .,"²⁴ he must realize that it was pulsated into being by his own heart,²⁵ and for this he must atone or be punished by complete disintegration.

In man's quest for truth, which prompts his submergence into self, the narrator offers a guide with which to discover it: "a perfect consistency . . . can be nothing but an absolute truth."²⁶ To this he adds, "we may take it for granted, then, that Man cannot long or widely err, if he suffer himself to be guided by this poetical . . . instinct."²⁷ But then he amends this definition with a condition reminiscent of the promise of Orestes; that man "must have a care, however, lest, in pursuing too heedlessly the superficial symmetry of forms and notions, he leave out of sight the really essential symmetry of the principles which determine and control them."²⁸ This concept is supported by the conversation between Monos and Una, two solipsistic individuals who have met their fate in the future. As Monos recalls the Modern Age of Man, he applauds the wise men of the past who "had ventured to doubt the propriety of the term 'improvement,' as applied to the progress of . . . civilization."²⁹ He is aware now, in his state of "disinfranchised reason,"³⁰ that these few individuals of "poetic intellect"³¹ supported the "principles which should have taught our race to submit to the guidance of the natural laws, rather than to attempt their control."³² For it was the subjective man, untethered by what Daniel Hoffman calls "to be part of a process,"³³ to be part of

Humanity, who robbed the Earth of its "holy, august and blissful days, when blue rivers ran undammed, between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes, primeval, odorous, and unexplored."³⁴ The beauty of this scene described by Monos suggests the beauty of the young woman in Poe's marriage tales and love poetry. This ideal beauty is also reminiscent of the perfection which the narrator hoped to achieve in Eureka. As the subjective man of Monos' past and Modern Man's present desecrated the delicacy of their natural environment, so in the end of each of Poe's creations, perfect beauty, be it in the form of a young woman or a Universe, is destroyed. Therefore, Poe's only subject is the murder of Beauty by the purely solipsistic man. And this warning contradicts Tate's charge of "Angelism," because Poe does include in the "undercurrent of meaning" the full impact of the last line in Pascal's analogy: "And so we shall keep ourselves well in check,"³⁵ or suffer the consequences of total subjectivity.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter II

¹Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. James A. Harrison, vol. 17: Poe and His Friends: Letters Relating to Poe (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1965), 17:339.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 17:340.

⁶Edgar Allan Poe, Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Prose, Poetry, and Eureka, ed. W. H. Auden (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., Rinehart Editions, 1950), p. 484.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., pp. 484-485.

⁹Ibid., p. 485

¹⁰Ibid., p. 484-486.

¹¹Ibid., p. 488.

¹²Ibid., pp. 486-495.

¹³Ibid., p. 500.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 502.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 495-509.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 509.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 514.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 509-526.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 526-559.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 559-579 and 584-590.

²¹Ibid., p. 572.

²²Ibid., p. 580.

²³Eric W. Carlson, ed., The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe, "On Poe's 'Eureka'," by Paul Valéry (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor Paperback, 1970), p. 110; Ibid., "The Angelic Imagination," by Allen Tate, p. 247; Daniel Hoffman, Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., Anchor Press, 1973), p. 273.

²⁴Poe, Selected Prose, pp. 416-417.

²⁵Ibid., p. 419.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 484.

²⁸Ibid., p. 420.

²⁹Ibid., p. 484.

³⁰Valéry, "On Poe's 'Eureka'," p. 110.

³¹Poe, Selected Prose, p. 421.

³²Ibid., p. 423.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 424.

³⁵Ibid., p. 425.

³⁶Ibid., p. 422.

³⁷Ibid., p. 428.

³⁸Ibid., p. 431.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 427.

Chapter III

¹Margaret Alterton, Origins of Poe's Critical Theory, University of Iowa Humanistic Studies, vol. 2, n. 3 (Iowa City: The University of Iowa, n.d.), p. 148.

²Paul Valéry, "On Poe's 'Eureka'," in Affidavits of Genius: Edgar Allan Poe and the French Critics, 1847-1924, ed. Jean Alexander (Port Washington, N.Y.: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1971), p. 239.

³Louis Broussard, The Measure of Poe (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 54.

⁴Ibid., p. 67.

⁵Ibid., p. 62.

⁶Ibid., pp. 103-104.

⁷Hoffman, Poe, p. 274.

⁸Ibid., p. 289.

⁹Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁰Tate, "Angelic Imagination," p. 247.

¹¹Ibid., p. 251.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Jacques Maritain, "The Cartesian Heritage," in The Dream of Descartes, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p. 165.

¹⁴Tate, "Angelic Imagination," p. 250.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁷Hoffman, Poe, p. 274.

¹⁸Eric W. Carlson, ed., The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe, "The Question of Poe's Narrator's," by James W. Gargano (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1970), p. 309.

Chapter IV

¹Poe, Letters, 17:302-303.

²Louis Etienne, "The American Storyteller," in Affidavits of Genius: Edgar Allan Poe and the French Critics, 1847-1924, ed. Jean Alexander (Port Washington, N. Y.: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1971), p. 141.

³Poe, Letters, 17:302.

⁴Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. James A. Harrison, vol. 16: Marginalia - Eureka (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1965), 16:337-346.

⁵Idem, Selected Prose, p. 484.

⁶Ibid., p. 90.

⁷Ibid., p. 484.

⁸Ibid., p. 487.

⁹Ibid., p. 496.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 528.

¹²Ibid., p. 514.

¹³Ibid., p. 515.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 516.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 558.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 566.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 587.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 590.

¹⁹Laurence Perrine, Story and Structure, 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), p. 43.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 44-50.

²¹Poe, Selected Prose, p. 496.

- ²²Ibid., p. 502.
- ²³Ibid., p. 501.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 485.
- ²⁵Ibid., pp. 486-495.
- ²⁶Ibid., pp. 495-496.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 486.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 516.
- ²⁹Ibid., pp. 484-485.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 485.
- ³¹Poe, Letters, 17:339.
- ³²Poe, Selected Prose, p. 432.
- ³³Ibid., p. 502.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 551.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 580.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 502.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 436.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 432.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 589.
- ⁴²Poe, Marginalia - Eureka, 16:321.
- ⁴³Idem, Selected Prose, pp. 488-489.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 514.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 502-503.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 503.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 502.

- 48 Ibid., p. 508.
- 49 Ibid., p. 587.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid., p. 515.
- 52 Ibid., p. 590.
- 53 Poe, Letters, 17:339.
- 54 Idem, Selected Prose, p. 486.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid., pp. 486-487.
- 58 Ibid., p. 491.
- 59 Ibid., p. 488.
- 60 Ibid., p. 494.
- 61 Poe, Letters, 17:301.
- 62 Idem, Selected Prose, p. 490.
- 63 Ibid., p. 515.
- 64 Ibid., p. 491.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid., p. 493.
- 67 Ibid., p. 495.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid., p. 488.
- 70 Ibid., p. 485.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Ibid., p. 528.
- 73 Ibid., p. 499.

- ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 500.
⁷⁵Ibid.
⁷⁶Ibid., p. 501.
⁷⁷Ibid.
⁷⁸Ibid., p. 427.
⁷⁹Poe, Marginalia - Eureka, 16:328.
⁸⁰Ibid., 16:319.
⁸¹Ibid., 16:333.
⁸²Ibid., 16:334.
⁸³Ibid., 16:331.
⁸⁴Ibid., 16:327-328.
⁸⁵Ibid., 16:319-336.
⁸⁶Poe, Letters, 17:340.
⁸⁷Ibid.
⁸⁸Ibid.

Chapter V

- ¹Poe, Selected Prose, p. 115.
²Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: New American Library, Mentor Book, 1969), p. 237.
³Ibid., pp. 236-237.
⁴Ibid., p. 239.
⁵Ibid.
⁶Ibid., pp. 240-244.
⁷Ibid., p. 443.
⁸Ibid., p. 244-248.
⁹Poe, Selected Prose, p. 486.

- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 589.
- ¹¹Ibid., pp. 581-589.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 590.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Poe, Marginalia - Eureka, 16:336
- ¹⁵Idem, Selected Prose, p. 432.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 500.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 499.
- ²⁰Hoffman, Poe, pp. 286-293.
- ²¹Poe, Selected Prose, p. 559.
- ²²Ibid., pp. 445-446.
- ²³Hamilton, Mythology, p. 246.
- ²⁴Poe, Selected Prose, p. 587.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 580.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe, ed., Edward H. O'Neill, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 1:359.
- ³⁰Ibid.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Hoffman, Poe, p. 288.
- ³⁴Poe, Complete Poems and Stories, 1:359.
- ³⁵Tate, "Angelic Imagination," p. 250.

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March 25, 1977
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