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Poe's Narrators: The Unity of Effect in The Narrative of
Arthur Gordon Pym and Selected Tales

Susan E. Frank

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in English at Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, May, 1986.

Poe's Narrators: The Unity of Effect in The Narrative of
Arthur Gordon Pym and Selected Tales

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband, Larry S. Frank; my parents Gerald and Elizabeth Sparkman; and my grandmother, Anna Brown.

I also wish to extend a very special thank you to my director, Dr. Martha Cook.

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Introduction

It has been extremely difficult for both nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics to separate Poe's life from his fiction. Poe's first biographer, Rufus W. Griswold, is largely responsible for distorting the events in Poe's life; however, as David Sinclair explains in his biography, Edgar Allen Poe, Poe provided various individuals with inaccurate details at various times throughout his life "in order to enhance his reputation" (259). Nineteenth-century rumors that Poe was both an alcoholic and a drug addict were quickly accepted as fact following his death. As a result, nineteenth-century readers could not distinguish proposed fact from fiction. As Eric W. Carlson points out in his book, The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Criticism Since 1829, "the nineteenth century reader and critic tended to confuse Poe's biography with his books, reading 'The Black Cat,' 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' and 'The Raven' as expressions of the personality of the notorious Mr. Poe, rumored to be an alcoholic and a drug addict" (viii).

Unfortunately, this view of Poe remained unchallenged for many years. It was not until the twentieth century that literary critics and biographers such as Arthur Hobson Quinn contested the Griswoldian approach to Poe. Poe's stories were not mere perversions arising from his own personality. One of the arguments against this autobiographical approach to Poe centers on the theory of unity of effect Poe described in "The Philosophy of Composition." Though Poe did not

publish his theory until 1846, it behooves any reader of Poe to understand the theory before embarking upon a literary analysis of his fiction.

In the third paragraph of the "Philosophy," Poe criticizes the approach frequently used in constructing a story:

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis--or one is suggested by an incident of the day--or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative--designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or authorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page render themselves apparent (978).

Immediately following this statement of what he believed was a "radical error" in storywriting, Poe attempted to define his theory of unity by revealing his approach:

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality always in view . . . I say to myself, in the first place, 'Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?' Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly, a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone--whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone--afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect (978-979).

The essence of Poe's argument is that stories are written without a planned theme; they are descriptions interspersed with "dialogue, or authorial comment." Poe had always maintained that the primary purpose of a story or poem should be to produce an effect. For

instance, in his review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales published in 1842, Poe explained his theory of the effect in detail.

In the review, Poe says that "in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance" (949). A unified impression can be achieved if the "literary artist" (950) combines incidents that contribute to "the one pre-established design" (950). In order to show and explain how a story should be constructed so as to achieve a unity, Poe writes,

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents--he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the out-bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no work written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction (950).

These statements are very similar to those Poe made regarding his approach to storywriting in the "Philosophy." Although the "Philosophy" presents Poe's careful and detailed approach to writing "The Raven," the principles governing his approach to poetry can be applied to his fiction as well.

In his discussion of "The Raven," Poe states that there is a "distinct limit, as regards length, to all literary art" (980). If two sittings are required to read a work, "The affairs of the world

interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed" (980). Unity of impression, however, is not achieved simply by length, as Poe further points out. The work must be "universally appreciable" (980) and effects must be "made to spring from direct causes--that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment" (981). Later on in his discussion, Poe emphasizes that a reader must feel presented emotions. An emotion must be presented in such a way as to "induce one on the part of the reader--to bring the mind into a proper frame for the denouement" (986). In other words, the author must transfer emotion through the work to the reader in order to achieve a total unity of impression.

In his poetry, Poe discovered that the best vehicle for transferring the "most intense," "most pure" emotional effect to the reader was through the "contemplation of the beautiful" (980). In his fiction, however, it will be seen that Poe found the best means for achieving a unity of impression was through a narrator. In his stories, Poe used both rational and irrational narrators to transfer intense emotional experiences to the reader. But, in order to transfer an experience from the narrator to the reader, the reader had to identify with the narrator. Poe found that this relationship could be accomplished through a narrator's "universally appreciable" (980) emotional, even physical reactions. Without the vital relationship between the narrator and the reader, a unity of impression could not be achieved. Poe achieved this unity through rational narrators who could easily transfer an emotional experience to the reader. In order to achieve a unity of impression through an

irrational narrator, however, Poe had to manipulate the reader. The reader had to be convinced that the irrational narrator was rational. He would be unaware of the fact that an emotional relationship existed between the narrator and himself until he had finished reading the story.

Even though his "Philosophy of Composition" was published eight years after Pym and three years later than "The Black Cat," it reflects Poe's articulation of the ways he achieved unity of effect. In the works I will examine, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1838), "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), and "The Black Cat" (1843), it will be seen that Poe was committed to achieving a unity of effect. In certain sections of the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, Poe achieves this unity; he seems to achieve it in a different way when the reader encounters a narrator who represents a rational, ordinary person such as the narrator of "The Fall of the House of Usher"; however, the unity of effect reaches its peak when the reader is able to identify with an irrational, if not insane narrator such as those of "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat." In all of these stories, Poe compels the reader not only to understand what he reads, but feel what he reads. This manipulation of the reader in order to achieve a unity of impression is one of Poe's greatest achievements.

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket

It has been said that the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym represented Poe's attempt to capitalize on America's intense interest in Antarctica. Although it may be true for the two installments that appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1837, it is not true of the novel as published by Harper and Brothers in 1838. The two important differences between the installments and the revised novel are the change in title and the addition of the Preface and Note. The Narrative was originally given the title of

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket. Comprising the Details of a Mutiny and Atrocious Butchery on Board of the American Brig Grampus, On Her Way to the South Seas, in the Month of June, 1827,--with an Account of the Recapture of the Vessel by Survivors; Their Shipwreck, and Subsequent Horrible Sufferings from Famine; Their Deliverance by Means of the British Schooner Jane Guy; The Brief Cruise of this Latter Vessel in the Antarctic Ocean; Her Capture; and of the Massacre of Her Crew, among a Group of Islands in the 24th Parallel of the Southern Latitude, together with the Incredible Adventures and Discoveries still further South to which that Distressing Calamity gave Rise.

When the novel was published, the only part of the title to remain was the first phrase: The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket. The Preface and Note sections were added to enhance the credibility of the narrator and Virginia gentleman, Mr. Poe.

The credibility of these characters is important because of the relationship that needs to be cultivated between the narrator and the reader. For unity of effect to be achieved, the reader must identify

with the emotional reactions of the narrator. Pym does not tell the entire story; it is Mr. Poe, editor of the Southern Literary Messenger who writes the narrative "in his own words" (723). Consequently, Mr. Poe and Pym become the narrator--one voice. The reader must find both characters credible in order to begin to understand and subsequently identify with the narrator and his story. Georges Poulet describes this identification process in "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority" as a phenomenon

indeed hard to explain, even to conceive, and yet, once admitted, it explains to me what might otherwise seem even more inexplicable. For how could I explain, without such take-over of my innermost subjective being, the astonishing facility with which I not only understand but even feel what I read. When I read as I ought--that is without mental reservation, without any desire to preserve my independence of judgment, and with the total commitment required of any reader--my comprehension becomes intuitive and any feeling proposed to me is immediately assumed by me (Thompkins 45).

In the opening paragraph of the Preface, it is made very clear that the Narrative is the direct result of several gentlemen in Richmond, Virginia, who have convinced Pym that it is his duty to convey "all matters relating to the regions" (723) he had visited. Pym states that he is reluctant to publish his story for personal reasons:

Having kept no journal during a greater portion of the time in which I was absent, I feared I should not be able to write, from mere memory, a statement so minute and connected as to have the appearance of the truth it would really possess, barring only the natural and unavoidable exaggeration to which all of us are prone when detailing events which have had powerful influence in exciting the imaginative faculties (724).

Pym's reason for not wanting to publish his adventures is logical and plausible. Further, Pym's admission that he may exaggerate and does indeed question the accuracy of his memory strengthens his credibility with the reader. By confronting obvious obstacles for the reader, Pym gains credibility and initiates the process of the narrator-reader identification. Mr. Poe's role in the Narrative is justified when Pym admits a distrust in his "own abilities as a writer" (724). Pym's choice of Poe is logical since he points out in the next paragraph that Poe is editor of the Southern Literary Messenger and will publish the Narrative "under the garb of fiction" (724).

It would appear that the Preface is nothing more than an explanation of why Pym chose to reveal his adventures and how he chose Mr. Poe to present them. On one level the Preface does indeed function as an explanation; however, on another, Poe encourages the reader to surrender his identity to Pym through the revelation of Pym's internal debate. Poe's emphasis on Pym's reluctance to reveal his adventures to the public increases the likelihood that the reader will accept Pym and the Narrative. Furthermore, the fact that Pym addresses the reader's concerns intelligently and directly supports the idea that Pym is a rational, logical character whom the reader can trust. Poe reinforces this confidence through Pym's assertion that the general public has accepted his story as truth:

The manner in which this ruse was received has induced me at length to undertake a regular compilation and publication of the adventures in question; for I found that, in spite of the air of fable which had been so ingeniously thrown around that portion of my statement which appeared in the

Messenger (without altering or distorting a single fact), the public were still not at all disposed to receive it as fable . . . and that I had consequently little to fear on the score of popular incredulity (724-725).

Through Pym's presentation of public acceptance, Poe capitalizes on the idea that the reader perceives himself to be a member of the general public. Consequently, it is easier for the reader to accept Pym because the reader includes himself in the same group of people Pym identifies as the public. This affiliation strengthens the developing relationship between Pym and the reader.

Chapter I provides the necessary background information on Arthur Gordon Pym and Augustus Barnard. Information such as Pym's mother's name is not included because it is not essential to the story. The reason for the presentation of limited and defined information is to help the reader more readily understand why Pym develops the "greatest desire to go to sea" (725). For example, in the opening paragraph the reader learns that Pym is approximately sixteen years old, having spent the last ten years in the "school of old Mr. Ricketts" (725); and his father is "a respectable trader in sea-stores of Nantucket" (725). Unlike Pym, it appears that Augustus has not always been in school; either prior to or during his enrollment in the academy "he had been on a whaling voyage" (725). The apparent contrast in early-life experiences is intentional and important. It emphasizes the idea that Augustus capitalizes on Pym's ignorance and is subsequently responsible for Pym's longing for the sea.

Augustus overwhelms Pym with descriptive stories of exotic, faraway places, based on the whaling voyage with his father. Pym states that Augustus "was always talking to me of his adventures on the South Pacific Ocean" (725); and when Pym spent the night with Augustus, "he would be sure to keep me awake until almost light, telling me stories of the natives of the Island of Tinian, and other places he had visited in his travels" (725). It is not difficult for the reader to accept the information Pym provides because the reader recognizes Pym's naivete. In the Narrative thus far Pym has had no reason to be suspicious of what Augustus has told him. Even after a near fatal incident involving Pym's sailboat, the Ariel, Pym does not question Augustus or his judgment.

Before Pym actually begins the "longer and more momentous narrative" (725-726), he reveals an adventure he has had with Augustus on-board the Ariel. The incident is important for two reasons. First, it reflects the spontaneity of youth. Since this is generally considered to be an accepted characteristic of the young, the adventure is plausible and Pym and Augustus' behavior typical. Pym's statement, "In this boat we were in the habit of going on some of the maddest freaks in world; and when I now think of them, it appears to me a thousand wonders that I am alive to-day" (725), is not unbelievable. Although he makes this comment before he actually tells the Ariel adventure, it prepares the reader for what is to follow. Second, the Ariel episode portrays Pym as a victim of uncontrollable circumstances.

Pym clearly displays an enthusiastic spontaneity associated with youth when Augustus expresses a determination to "go out on a frolic with the boat" (725): "I can hardly tell what possessed me, but the words were no sooner out of his mouth than I felt a thrill of the greatest excitement and pleasure, and thought his mad idea one of the most delightful and most reasonable things in the world" (726). Pym and Augustus are so determined to take the Ariel out to sea that neither one cares that the boat is half full of water. They simply bailed the water, "hoisted jib and mainsail, kept full, and started boldly out to sea" (726). It is not until Augustus has passed out from intoxication and cannot handle the tiller that Pym loses his enthusiasm. Pym's description of the feelings he experienced continues to strengthen the association between Pym and the reader. Since it is assumed that the reader can easily accept those actions associated with the spontaneity of youth, it can also be assumed that the reader can identify with the emotions of despair and terror because they are the direct result of Pym's predicament. Pym does not overreact: he simply tells how he feels. For example, when Pym describes the realization that he is helpless he reveals,

It is hardly possible to conceive that extremity of my terror. . . . I know that I was altogether incapable of managing the boat, and that a fierce wind and strong ebb tide were hurrying us to destruction . . . These thoughts, with a crowd of others equally fearful, flashed through my mind with a bewildering rapidity and for some moments paralyzed me beyond the possibility of making an exertion (727).

Though Pym is determined to "bear whatever might happen will all the fortitude" (728) in his power, he faints. These reactions clearly

reflect what Poe stated in "The Philosophy of Composition": "I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work "universally appreciable" (980).

The recap of events that follows Pym's resolution provides an excellent transition into the events on-board the Penguin; however, before he finishes describing those events, Pym feels compelled to tell the reader why he thinks he was rescued: "As the reader has seen, both Augustus and myself were rescued; and our deliverance seemed to have been brought about by two of those almost inconceivable pieces of good fortune which are attributed by the wise and pious to the special interference of Providence" (729). As Wayne C. Booth points out in The Rhetoric of Fiction, "The author may intrude, in short, even to work upon our emotions directly, provided he can convince us that his 'intrusions' are at least as carefully wrought and as pertinent as his presented scenes" (205). This interruption does not affect the reader's developing relationship with Pym because it is short; however, it does mark the beginning of future lengthy, non-essential interruptions which will interfere with the narrator-reader relationship and hence the unity of effect.

Immediately following his interruption, Pym finishes relating the events on-board the Penguin and appears at times to exaggerate; for instance, when he had been pulled on-board he was "immediately put to bed--although life seemed to be totally extinct" (730). This overstatement does not seriously affect the reader's view of the narrator because it is not a gross exaggeration or misrepresentation of facts. Pym addressed this possibility in the Preface. Thus his

exaggeration may reflect a tendency to fantasize about the past, but it does not affect the relationship adversely.

Following the rescue, the Ariel adventure ends quickly with the resolution of the crisis reinforcing the characteristics of the young. Augustus and Pym manage to appear at Mr. Barnard's in time for breakfast, "which, luckily, was somewhat late owing to the party over night . . . Schoolboys, however, can accomplish wonders in the way of deception" (731). Pym's final statement in Chapter I provides an excellent conclusion to the Ariel story and, more importantly, shows the reader that Pym, no longer a schoolboy, is able to see any number of possible consequences: "We two have since very frequently talked the matter over--but never without a shudder" (731).

As I have suggested earlier, one of the ways in which Poe is able to create a unity of impression is through the reader's ability to comprehend and subsequently identify with the narrator's emotional and physical reactions. These reactions are used as a device to transfer feeling from the narrator to the reader in the process described by Georges Poulet which I have cited:

When I read as I ought--that is without mental reservation, without any desire to preserve my independence of judgment, and with the total commitment required of any reader--my comprehension becomes intuitive and any feeling proposed to me is immediately assumed by me (Thompkins 45).

This transference is important because although the narrator-reader identification is not complete, the ability of the reader continually to identify with Pym's physical and emotional reactions strengthens the relationship. It is not essential that the reader identify with specific events in the Narrative, but it is imperative that the

reader identify with the emotional reactions of the narrator. A unity of effect can be realized when the reader identifies with the narrator and thus is able to experience the narrator's reactions.

Although there are eighteen months between the Ariel incident in Chapter I and the Grampus adventure in Chapter II, Poe is able to convey the growing intensity of Pym's desire for adventure at sea. Poe opens the chapter with Pym's relating a typical emotional response to a previous life-threatening situation: "It might be supposed that a catastrophe such as I have just related would have effectively cooled my incipient passion for the sea. On the contrary, I have never experienced a more ardent longing for the wild adventure incident to the life of a navigator than within a week after our miraculous deliverance" (732). Pym's reaction reflects a basic premise of an emotional response. As Pym himself points out, "This short period proved amply long enough to erase from my memory the shadows, and bring out the vivid light all the pleasurable exciting points of color, all the picturesqueness, of the late perilous accident" (732). Pym's emotional response strengthens the narrator-reader relationship because it appears to be a natural emotional reaction. The imminent danger Pym felt during the incident has been replaced by a sense of excitement. Pym's feelings continue to reflect those of a rational, logical individual. Consequently, the reader's perception of Pym begins to match the perception the reader has of himself. This alignment is crucial to Poe's intended denouement to the story; however, the reader must also be able to feel the intensity of Pym's ordeal.

Pym's tendency to fantasize about life at sea only reinforces the idea that Pym is young and seeking adventure; for example, Pym says, "my visions were of shipwreck and famine, of death or captivity among barbarian hordes" (732). It should be remembered that the enthusiastic spontaneity associated with youth was used earlier in the Narrative to help the reader better understand and accept the narrator. As Edward H. Davidson points out in his book, Poe: A Critical Study, "Pym enacts, in that first chapter, the idyl of American boyhood and innocence" (165). Pym's "prophetic glimpses" (732) are not exceptional because they reflect an acceptable form of youthful exaggeration which is periodic and brief.

In Chapter II, Pym's "long-cherished visions of travel" (733) are fulfilled: he becomes a stowaway on-board the Grampus. The fact that Pym is a stowaway provides an opportunity for Poe to strengthen the reader's emotional identification with Pym. As we will see, Poe was able successfully to intensify the emotional identification process early on in the Narrative so that even if the reader could not accept and subsequently identify with a particular experience, the intensity of the reader's emotional involvement with the narrator would be strong enough to maintain the unity of impression. The progression of the narrator-reader relationship continues even though Pym's experiences change; that is, even though the adventures or incidents that Pym will relate will no longer seem as believable as the Ariel adventure, the progression will continue. This change in the reader's orientation occurs in Chapter II.

It is unlikely that the reader has ever been confined in the after hold of a whaling vessel; therefore, it is impossible for the reader to comprehend Pym's situation fully. When the Grampus sets sail, Pym appears calm and rational; however, after living in the after hold for at least three days, he becomes disoriented, sick and emotional. Pym's feelings augment the momentum of the narrator-reader identification process. For example, in the following passage Pym is upset and desperately trying to overcome his emotionalism logically. His actions are unsuccessful and he loses control of his emotions:

The door, however, to my astonishment, remained steady and I became somewhat uneasy, for I knew that it had formerly required but little or no effort to remove it. I pushed it strongly--it was nevertheless firm: with all my strength--it still did not give way: with rage, with fury, with despair--it set at defiance my utmost efforts; and it was evident, from the unyielding nature of the resistance, that the hole had either been discovered and effectually nailed up, or that some immense weight had been placed upon it, which it was useless to think of removing.

My sensations were those of extreme horror and dismay. In vain I attempted to reason on the probable cause of my being thus entombed. I could summon up no connected chain of reflection, and, sinking on the floor, gave way, unresistingly, to the most gloomy imaginings, in which the dreadful deaths of thirst, famine, suffocation, and premature interment crowded upon me as the prominent disasters to be encountered (741).

Pym's feelings of frustration, dismay, and despair continue to appear throughout Chapters II and III. They are important elements in the evolving narrator-reader relationship, for they intensify the sense of Pym's total confinement. As Poe pointed out in the "Philosophy of

Composition," "it has always appeared to me that a close circumscription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident--it has the force of a frame to a picture" (984). Time and incidents become irrelevant; it is the emotional impact of Pym's confinement that becomes paramount. With the repeated emphasis on Pym's feelings versus his attempts to escape, it can be seen that the reader's identification with Pym's physical experience is not essential to the unity of effect as is the identification with the emotional experience. This emphasis marks the final stage in the process of identification of the reader with the narrator.

As soon as he describes his freedom from the after hold, Pym provides the reader with an overview of Dirk Peter's life. Pym interrupts the Narrative to provide a non-essential physical description of Peters; as if he realizes that the material is unimportant, he says, "I have been this particular in speaking of Dirk Peters, because, ferocious as he appeared, he proved the main instrument in preserving the life of Augustus, and because I shall have frequent occasion to mention him hereafter in the course of my narrative" (751). Poe allows Pym to interrupt the Narrative again in the following chapter with a lengthy discussion of "proper or regular stowage" (759) on-board a vessel. Pym's initial discussion contends that the Grampus lacked proper stowage. This discussion disintegrates into a lengthy monologue of tragedies at sea. It may add credibility to Pym's earlier confinement in the after hold, but it impedes the reader's identification with the narrator.

Pym reveals the events surrounding the mutiny; however, he makes it very clear that neither the men nor the mutiny is important: "As the events of the ensuing eight days were of little importance, and had no direct bearing upon the main incidents of my narrative, I will here throw them into a form of a journal as I do not wish to omit them altogether" (763). It is clear that regardless of the importance Pym attaches to the events, they are important to the reader. Without the basic information Pym provides such as the Grampus' taking water in "through her seams" and "men resolving to turn pirates" (764), Pym, Augustus, and Peters' subsequent actions would be illogical and unjustifiable. As I have pointed out earlier in my discussion of Chapters II and III, time and incidents are irrelevant; it is the emotional intensity these incidents create that further strengthens the narrator-reader relationship. The reader can more readily accept Pym's participation in the killing of the pirates because it becomes a case of self-preservation: Pym must either kill or be killed.

In a chapter entitled "Telling as Showing," critic Wayne Booth points out that some "interesting narrators perform a kind of function in their works that nothing else could perform. . . They are reliable guides not only to the world of the novels in which they appear but also the moral truths of the world outside the book" (220-221). Pym actually tries to kill Parker, a pirate, because of the imminent possibility that if he does not, Parker will kill him. The pirates pose a real threat to Pym's survival. Later on in the adventure when Parker, Peters and Augustus suggest cannibalism as a

means for survival, Pym is reluctant to participate. Consequently, Pym's character reflects a moral awareness that exists both within and outside the novel. Thus, it is not necessary for Pym to stop the Narrative and comment on what has happened. He continues to relay the events immediately following the victory over the pirates in a matter-of-fact way; and, it is not until Chapter IX that Pym's descriptions again reveal an emotional intensity.

In Chapter IX, Pym enumerates "the horrors" (776) of their situation:

Our chief sufferings were now those of hunger and thirst, and when we looked forward to the means of relief in this respect, our hearts sank within us, and we were induced to regret that we had escaped the less dreadful perils of the sea. We endeavoured, however, to console ourselves with the hope of being speedily picked up by some vessel and encouraged each other to bear with fortitude the evils that might happen (739).

While Pym's description may appear to provide evidence of the four men's hope for rescue, the fact that they must console each other "to bear with fortitude the evils that might happen" indicates that they do not expect to be saved. This pretense is sustained throughout the remainder of the chapter. Pym and Augustus break down when they realize "the slight probability which existed" (781) of their finally making an escape; and, although Pym and Augustus recover with a seemingly real sense of hope, Pym opens Chapter X on a solemn note:

Shortly afterward an incident occurred which I am induced to look upon as more intensely productive of emotion, as far more replete with the extremes first of delight and then of horror, than even any of the thousand chances which afterward befell me in nine long years, crowded with events of the most startling and, in many cases, of the most unconceived and unconceivable character (787).

Pym's statement prepares the reader for what is to follow. Because Poe emphasizes the conditions of extreme delight and extreme horror, the reader is obliged to anticipate future events. This anticipation complements the narrator-reader relationship. The reader not only understands, but feels what Pym describes. At no other point in the Narrative does Poe create the intense anticipation he produces in Chapter XI. This intensity is responsible for the achievement of the single identity that exists between the narrator and the reader. Once the reader and the narrator share an emotional unity, the unity of effect is achieved. The magnitude of this unity is realized when Pym encounters the Dutch vessel.

When Augustus sees the vessel, he becomes "deadly pale" (781) and his lips quiver; similarly, Pym becomes "motionless and unable to articulate a syllable" (781). Peters and Parker are "equally affected, although in different ways" (781): "the former danced about the deck like a madman. . . while the latter burst into tears, and continued for many minutes weeping like a child" (781). Pym's description is exceptionally powerful because it reveals the intensity of the characters' emotions. The anticipation Poe created in the opening sentence of the Chapter is united with a mounting tension as Pym reveals their encounter with the vessel:

No person was seen upon her decks until she arrived within about a quarter of a mile of us. We then saw three seamen, whom by their dress we took to be Hollanders. Two of these were lying on some old sails near the forecastle, and the third, who appeared to be looking at us with great curiosity, was leaning over the starboard bow near the bowsprit. This last was a stout and tall man, with a very dark skin. He seemed by his manner to be encouraging us to have patience, nodding to us in a

cheerful although rather odd way, and smiling constantly, so as to display a set of the most brilliantly white teeth. As his vessel drew nearer, we saw a red flannel cap which he had on fall from his head into the water, but of this he took little or no notice, continuing his odd smiles and gesticulation. I relate these things and circumstances minutely, and I relate them, it must be understood, precisely as they appeared to us (782).

Pym intensifies the excitement in the following paragraph when he says, "I cannot speak calmly of this event--our hearts leaped up wildly within us, and we poured out our whole souls in shouts and thanksgiving to God for the complete, unexpected, and glorious deliverance" (782).

The successful emotional identification with the narrator is fully realized when Poe combines emotional and sensory perceptions to describe an event. Through this powerful union, Poe is able to intensify the emotional relationship between Pym and the reader. The vital combination of emotional and sensory perceptions is apparent when Pym describes the encounter with the Dutch vessel. Pym stresses the statement, "I relate these things and circumstances minutely, and I relate them, it must be understood, precisely as they appeared to us" (782). After his initial visual description, Pym then emphasizes the olfactory experience:

Of sudden, and all at once, there came wafted over the ocean from the strange vessel (which was now close upon us) a smell, a stench, such as the whole world has no name for--no conception of--hellish--utterly suffocating--insufferable, inconceivable. I gasped for breath, and turning to my companions, perceived that they were paler than the marble (782).

Pym immediately provides another equally powerful auditory and visual description of the Dutch vessel:

As our first loud yell of terror broke forth, it was replied to by something, from near the bowsprit of the stranger, so closely resembling the scream of a human voice that the nicest ear might have been startled and deceived. . . On his back [the Hollander's], from which a portion of the shirt had been torn, leaving it bare, there sat a huge sea-gull, busily gorging itself with the horrible flesh, its bill and talons deep buried, and its white plumage spattered all over with blood. . . after eyeing us for a moment as if stupefied, arose lazily from the body upon which it had been feasting, and, flying directly above our deck, hovered there a while with a portion of clotted and liver-like substance in its beak. The horrid morsel dropped at length with a sullen splash immediately at the feet of Parker (783).

Through Poe's use of emotion and of powerful sensory descriptions of the Dutch Vessel, the reader develops an appreciation of Pym's experience even though he may not identify with Pym's physical situation. This appreciation results in the reader's complete emotional identification with Pym. Poe brilliantly maintains the reader's ability to identify emotionally with the narrator for many pages; thus, within these pages unity of effect is achieved. The reader feels the terror and horror as Pym describes what he sees, feels, and hears.

Once a unity has been achieved, the reader's association with the narrator must be perpetuated and reinforced throughout the work. If at any time during the story the reader cannot identify with the narrator's emotional reactions, the unity is destroyed; however, the reader cannot sustain a sequence of ultra-intense emotional experiences for an extended period of time. The reader would reject

the experience and his association with the narrator. It is apparent that Poe realized that the prolonged continuation of an intense emotional experience might jeopardize the reader's ability to continue to identify with the narrator. Therefore, Poe attempted to reinforce the relationship through the use of simple, identifiable images and physical reactions.

For several pages after the encounter with the Dutch vessel, Pym portrays simple images and physical reactions. For instance, Pym describes a "gnawing hunger" (786) that he would go "to any lengths in order to appease" (786). These images and physical reactions are not what Poe called "crevices of fact, or action" (978) in the "Philosophy of Composition." They serve the purpose of maintaining the narrator's link to the reader. Towards the end of Chapter XI, the emotions Pym describes intensify and reach their peak when Pym reveals Parker's proposal that one should die "to preserve the existence of the others" (789).

Pym's reaction is acceptable to the reader because of the perceived difference between the primitive act of cannibalism and the standards of a civilized society. Although Pym adamantly rejects the idea, when he apparently agrees to submit to the proposal the reader does not object because it is made clear that Pym hopes another ship will appear. Yet, despite his unwillingness to consider cannibalism as a means for survival, Pym interrupts the Narrative to state:

It is with extreme reluctance that I dwell upon the appalling scene which ensued. . . . Let me run over this portion of the narrative with as much haste as the nature of the events to be spoken of will permit (791).

Pym's interruption confirms what the reader may already suspect: the four men were so desperate for food that they ate human flesh. Though Pym quickly reveals the particulars of Parker's murder, he attempts to convince the reader that the cannibalism reflects the extremity of the situation. Pym constantly reiterates the horror of the reality and attempts to justify his actions: "Before any one condemn me for this apparent heartlessness, let him be placed in a situation precisely similar to my own" (791).

It is possible that the reader cannot understand or empathize with Pym's situation; however, this possible rejection is resolved when Pym reveals Augustus' physical and emotional condition: "Augustus' wounded arm began to evince symptoms of mortification. . . He constantly prayed to be relieved from his sufferings, wishing for nothing but death" (797). Pym and Peters appear genuine in their attempts to make Augustus comfortable even though they expect him to die. Pym's admirable attempts to comfort Augustus override any significant effect Pym's cannibalism may have had on the reader. Pym indeed regains any credibility he may have lost when he describes his and Peter's reaction to Augustus' death: "His death filled us with the most gloomy forebodings, and had so great an effect upon our spirits that we sat motionless by the corpse during the whole day, and never addressed each other except in a whisper" (798). Pym's mourning is credible; the reader will remember that Augustus and Pym had been intimate friends since adolescence.

Following Augustus' death, Pym and Peters continue to try to survive the ordeal no matter how physically and emotionally difficult

it may be; and as Pym points out, "our intellects were so entirely disordered by the long course of privation and terror to which we had been subject, that we could not justly be considered, at that period in the light of rational beings" (800). Pym's explanation of his and Peters' emotional reactions is extremely important. By admitting to the reader that he and Peters were irrational, Pym is reinforcing his credibility. The result is that the reader accepts and perceives Pym as an honest, reliable narrator. This perception of Pym must be reinforced so that his relationship with the reader continues and the unity of effect is maintained.

It has already been pointed out that the narrator-reader relationship is fully realized during Pym's encounter with the Dutch vessel. Likewise, it has been shown that once the relationship is achieved, the magnitude of the unity of effect is apparent. Shortly following Augustus' death and Pym's and Peters' rescue by the Jane Guy, the narrator-reader relationship quickly deteriorates and this deterioration consequently affects the unity of effect. The primary reason for this collapse is Pym's interruption of the Narrative with lengthy, non-essential information.

Pym and Peters quickly recover and become members of the Jane Guy's crew; however, Pym no longer describes any human interaction. Instead, he interrupts the Narrative to supply long, unimportant descriptions of islands, seals, birds, and previous explorers. Although Pym has interrupted the Narrative before to supply non-essential information, the breaks were brief. As Edward Davidson points out, Pym becomes "more a voice or a commentator" (176). For

many pages Pym describes animals and explorers that have no relationship to the Jane Guy. This apparent digression seriously threatens both the narrator-reader relationship and the unity of effect.

Poe must have realized that the long and extensive digressions would significantly detract from the Narrative's unity of effect. This would explain why at the conclusion of the interruption in Chapter XVII, Pym abruptly states:

While, therefore, I cannot lament the most unfortunate and bloody events which immediately arose from my advice, I must still be allowed to feel some degree of gratification at having been instrumental, however, remotely, in opening to the eye of science one of the most intensely exciting secrets which has ever engrossed its attention (819).

Earlier in the Narrative, this statement would have prepared the reader for what would follow as well as have heightened any possible tension; yet, in the following three chapters there is no evidence of tension, only digression. The apparent break in the Narrative creates a chasm between the reader and the narrator. There are no transitions from the rescue to Pym's interruption to the episode involving the natives of Tsalal. The emotional intensity Poe created earlier in the story was directly responsible for the achievement of a unity of effect. If the reader's relationship with the narrator is not reinforced, the unity of effect quickly dissolves.

The episode involving the natives of Tsalal does not revitalize the reader's identification with the narrator, nor the unity of effect. Several pages into the Tsalal adventure, Pym intervenes to provide "A description of the nature of this important article of

commerce [biche de mer], and the method of preparing it" (828). Pym's interruption is long and unrelated to the Jane Guy's relationship with the natives. Consequently, the "overwhelming destruction" (835) of the Jane Guy's crew does not recreate the horror which was found in the Dutch vessel episode. Pym's revelations do not have the same emotional impact on the reader because he can no longer identify with Pym's physical or emotional reactions. The reader's consciousness no longer "behaves as though it were the consciousness of another" (Thompkins 44).

Thus Pym's subsequent encounter with a "shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men" (852) fails to have a strong impact because the narrator-reader relationship has been severed. Pym's encounter becomes a mystical experience the reader can neither identify with nor understand. The Note attempts to explain some of the episode's ambiguities, but only succeeds in reinforcing the idea of Pym's inconceivable experience. Throughout the Narrative, Poe has endeavored to elicit an emotional response, a single impression, in the reader through the reader's ability to identify with the physical and emotional reactions of the narrator. In the remaining chapters dealing with Pym's final voyage into the "wide and desolate Antarctic Ocean" (848), Poe's attempts instead evoke an intellectual response. This is clearly seen in the Note. In lieu of a clear and concise statement, Poe mistakenly assumes that the reader will understand Pym's symbolic conclusions. Consequently, the apparent ambiguity does not cause the reader to

regret the loss of the final chapters of Arthur Gordon Pym's narrative because he can no longer identify with Pym.

As Daniel Hoffman points out in his book, Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe,

it has been charged by critics that the Narrative is shapeless and chaotic, a sprawling mass of compulsive repetitions which betrays its author as an obsessive neurotic, not an artist at all. I would not hold that Poe is everywhere in full control of what he writes, but that he desperately tries to control what is almost beyond control (266).

Although the unity of effect is not maintained throughout the Narrative, the reader must remember what W. H. Auden points out in his Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Prose, Poetry, and Eureka: Poe's stories "must be read in the light of his history and the America of the first half of the nineteenth century" (viii). Poe's readers were keenly interested in the Antarctic and would have enjoyed Pym's various adventures. Whereas Edward Davidson says Pym was "intended to be hardly more than hackwork" (157), and Poe himself later called the Narrative "a silly book" (130), the novel cannot be dismissed because it clearly reflects Poe's concern for unity of effect. Eight years later, in 1846, Poe would conclude in "The Philosophy of Composition," "It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art-- the limit of a single sitting" (978). The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket is the only novel Poe ever attempted to write. In comparison to his other works, it is clear that Poe felt that there was a direct relationship between the length of a work and the achievement of a unity of effect. In the next story I will examine,

Poe varies his approach to the narrator-reader relationship, yet still creates a unified impression.

"The Fall of the House of Usher"

Although there is only a year between the publication of the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym in 1838 and "The Fall of the House of Usher" in 1839, it is clear that Poe had understood by the publication of this story that the reader's ability to identify emotionally with a narrator was crucial to the unity of effect. In Pym, Poe attempted to encourage the reader to identify with the narrator in a number of different ways: first, the narrator's credibility was clearly established to begin the process; second, Poe sought to create an emotional bond between the narrator and the reader through a unique combination of emotional and sensory perceptions. Whereas Poe was able to create and maintain the narrator-reader relationship for a limited time in Pym and, in that time, achieve a total unity of effect, Poe subsequently destroyed the relationship and unity by interrupting the Narrative to supply the reader with lengthy, non-essential information. In conjunction with the unimportant interruptions, Poe tried unsuccessfully to lead the reader to believe in such events as Pym's encounter with the white figure.

With the publication of "The Fall of the House of Usher," it is clear that Poe realized the shortcomings of this approach to Pym. It is altogether probable that he understood that the reader's emotional involvement with the narrator was not enough to maintain the unity of

effect; the reader must also be called upon to use his intellect. The stories I will examine, "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat," illustrate that in subsequent stories Poe would write, he used his narrators in different ways in order to achieve a total involvement of the reader and thus the unity of effect.

As James W. Gargano points out in "The Question of Poe's Narrators,"

Poe intends his readers to keep their powers of analysis and judgment ever alert; he does not require or desire complete surrender to experience the sensations being felt by his characters. The point of Poe's technique, then, is not to enable us to lose ourselves in strange or outrageous emotions, but to see those emotions and those obsessed by them from a rich and thoughtful perspective. I do not mean to advocate that, while reading Poe we should cease to feel; but feeling should be "simultaneous" with an analysis (Regan 166).

The "Fall of the House of Usher" is a story about the life of Roderick Usher, not the narrator who tells the story. This situation is clearly different from the Narrative of Pym in which the narrator, Arthur Gordon Pym, seeks adventure and tells his own story. As Maurice Beebe points out in his essay, "The Universe of Roderick Usher," the narrator in the "House of Usher" is a "reluctant observer" (Regan 124). He is not an integral part of Roderick Usher's past, but he is the reader's link to Roderick and the trauma he experiences.

This analysis will not attempt to explore the various theories involving the Usher world but will focus on the narrator and his relationship to the unity of effect. Unlike the reader of Pym, the

reader of "Usher" immediately begins to identify with the narrator.

In the opening paragraph of the story he states:

I know not how it was--but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved. . . What was it--I paused to think--what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? (177)

The narrator offers no definitive reason for his feelings; he simply acknowledges that it is a "mystery all insoluble" (177). This approach sharply contrasts the one Poe had taken in Pym. Pym repeatedly explained the reasons for his actions and emotions; the narrator in "Usher," however, provides definitive reasons for his actions, but not his emotions. He is not the main character in the story and his emotions are only important in so far as he is telling Roderick Usher's story. At the end of the story the reader knows no more about the narrator than he did at the beginning. The reader is simply told that Roderick had been one of his merry companions in boyhood. It is not important that the reader know the narrator's past since it has nothing to do with Roderick's situation. His purpose is to tell a story.

In the quotation I have just cited, the narrator appears calm and rational; but unlike Pym, he continually tries to rationalize his emotions. For instance, after he has entered the House of Usher he cannot understand why he feels so nervous; he suggests that perhaps it is the furniture--if there were "a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene" (178), the house's "sorrowful impression" (178) could be eliminated. At this point the narrator

makes no attempt to draw similarities between the house and what he expects to find inside.

The narrator's relationship to Roderick Usher is extremely important. Since Poe makes it clear that the narrator has not seen Usher for many years, Poe provides convincing evidence of the emotional distance between the narrator and Roderick Usher. As a result, it becomes easier for the reader to accept the narrator and identify with his experiences. As we have clearly seen in Pym, it is the narrator who either maintains or destroys the unity of effect. Above all, the narrator in the "House of Usher" is important to the unity of effect because he establishes and maintains the crucial links between himself, Roderick Usher, and the reader.

Following their initial reunion, the narrator describes Roderick's physical and emotional condition. Although Roderick displays a "cadaverousness of complexion" and an "excessive nervous agitation" (180), the narrator's response is not overly dramatic: "I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe" (180). His reflections do not attempt to create the same kind of emotional intensity which was found in Pym. It is only Roderick's physical deterioration that seems to surprise the narrator. He was prepared for Roderick's mental condition in part by Roderick's letter and his "reminiscences of certain boyish traits" (180).

As the narrator begins to reveal the extent of Roderick's emotional condition, he describes Roderick's suspicions as "superstitious impressions" (181). The narrator does not agree with his assessment of the situation; that is, he does not believe that

Roderick is bound to "the dwelling which he tenanted" (181). It is impossible for the narrator to believe Roderick because there is no evidence to support his theory. An "atmosphere of sorrow . . . and irredeemable gloom" (181) dominates the house, but it does not substantiate Roderick's claim. If the narrator were to accept Roderick's belief blindly, there could be no subsequent identification with the narrator by the reader. The narrator would lose credibility and his demonstrated capabilities for analysis would accomplish nothing.

Although the narrator maintains an emotional distance from Roderick and the situation, he supplies the reader with emotional impressions. He describes sensations such as "utter astonishment," "dread," and "stupor," and adds "yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings" (182). The narrator's reactions reflect an intuition. Once the reader acknowledges the validity of the narrator's impressions and intuition, the narrator's experiences inside the House of Usher become more pronounced. Furthermore, if the narrator could not maintain an emotional distance between himself and Usher, his descriptions would be ineffectual; for example, the reader could not see or understand Madeline's condition: "A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affection of a partially catalytical character" (182).

By utilizing this kind of approach to achieve a unity of effect, Poe, as Hoffman explains, endows "his most subjective fiction with an air of objectivity: this is not a madman's confession, but the report, by a sensible observer, of the dire predicament of someone

else" (304). The narrator in "Usher" does not sympathize with Roderick. He describes the incidents within the house so he appears simply to be recounting actual occurrences. The reader comes to identify with the narrator through a combination of characteristics: the narrator appears to be rational, analytical, intuitive, unemotional, and hence a reliable communicator of events. As Norman Holland points out in his book, 5 Readers Reading, "We identify when a certain character . . . enables us to achieve a close matching of our own defenses within a total re-creation of our psychological processes" (205). In the "House of Usher," we are indeed provided glimpses of the narrator's psychological processes; we understand his bitterness when he confronts a harsh reality:

And, thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom (182).

Without still being able to ascertain a cause or remedy for Roderick's physical and emotional condition, the narrator begins to refer to him as a "hypochondriac" (183). The narrator's choice of the word "hypochondriac" to describe Roderick indicates that he has formed an opinion. This is substantiated in a statement two paragraphs later: "I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne" (183). The narrator does not need to tell the reader what Roderick's actions and thoughts reveal: it is so obvious that he is emotionally disturbed.

Throughout the story, the narrator makes no overt attempts to encourage the reader to identify with his story. Consequently, the narrator-reader relationship appears to be a by-product of the narrator's revelations. He does not attempt to coerce the reader into identifying with him in order to experience his unique encounter with the House of Usher. As a result, the reader develops a natural affinity with the narrator. Holland concludes that this kind of literary identification is the result of "an individual or an audience putting itself in the place of a character on the basis of either sympathy for his predicament or a superficial similarity between the character and themselves" (204). In the "House of Usher," the reader can sympathize with the narrator's predicament and see similarities between his and the narrator's thought processes.

Once he has told the reader about Roderick's belief in "the sentience of all vegetable things" (185), the narrator states, "Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none" (185). His statement reinforces the notion that Roderick is insane. The reader can easily accept the narrator's statement because it has been proposed by a sensible, rational person with whom the reader has developed an affinity. Yet, despite the apparent emotional distance between Roderick and himself, it is strange that the narrator does not dispute Roderick's intention to preserve Madeline's corpse for two weeks in a vault before its final interment. The narrator quickly explains his decision:

I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as

at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural precaution (186).

With Madeline's entombment, the narrator-reader relationship is realized. The reader has come to accept the narrator's reasons and reactions because the narrator appears to be a rational and reliable individual who is not given to sensationalizing previous events. At this point, for the narrator to become overly dramatic in his revelations of the story would be illogical and totally out of character. The reader's relationship with the narrator becomes so strong that the plausibility of the narrator's discovery that Roderick and Madeline are twins is overlooked. Perhaps the reader does not remember that the narrator and Roderick were intimate childhood companions; the narrator should have known the Ushers were twins. Since the reader has come to identify with the narrator, the crucial link between Roderick, the narrator, and the reader is established and the unity of effect reaches fruition.

Roderick's condition is infectious. As the narrator points out,

At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagueness of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified--that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influence of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions (187).

Despite his struggles to "reason off the nervousness" (189), the narrator succumbs to his emotions. He attempts to attribute the feelings to "the gloomy furniture of the room . . . the dark and tattered draperies . . . tortured into motion by the breath of a

rising tempest" (189), but he cannot overcome the "sentiment of horror" (187). He begins to experience Roderick's "morbid acuteness of the senses" (188): he hears "low and indefinite" (187) sounds which he cannot define as part of the storm raging outside the house. The narrator's reactions are both understandable and plausible. He has shown the reader that he can differentiate between what appears to be fact and Roderick's superstitious impressions; and, even though he can no longer maintain his emotional distance, he struggles to maintain his analytical capabilities.

The idea that Roderick's temperament has influenced the narrator is evident in the narrator's descriptions. From memory, he is able to provide detailed examples of his struggle to overcome unaccounted for feelings of terror and horror. This detailed view of the narrator's psychological processes serves further to intensify the narrator's response. Despite the "species of mad hilarity" and "restrained hysteria" (187) in Roderick's eyes, the narrator welcomes his "presence as a relief" (187) from the solitude. Roderick has saved the narrator from himself; his presence compels the narrator to regain control of his emotions.

Regardless of the similarities between the actions of Ethelred in "the 'Mad Trist' of Sir Launcelot Canning" (188), and what the narrator hears from some "remote portion of the mansion" (189), he makes an admirable attempt to conceal his emotions of wonder and extreme terror from Roderick. Roderick's demonstrated inability to maintain self-control during the reading creates a heightened tension for both the narrator and the reader. The narrator does not have to

tell the reader that he is frightened; the fact that he continues with the narrative indicates that he is desperately trying to maintain control. The emotional intensity the narrator has progressively created begins to reach its peak when Usher loses total control and cries: "MADMAN, I TELL YOU SHE NOW STANDS WITHOUT THE DOOR!'" (190)

Poe is able to impart the intensity of Roderick's exclamation through capitalization. Since the narrator undoubtedly believes that Roderick is emotionally ill, his surprise is clear: "There DID stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher" (190). Because the narrator's surprise is presented simply, the reader is able to experience the breadth of the narrator's emotions. The extent of the reader's emotional involvement with the narrator is fully realized with the narrator's description of lady Madeline's physical appearance. Madeline's appearance is directly responsible for the impact of her final act.

She appears before Roderick and the narrator as an "emaciated frame" (191), dressed in blood-stained white robes; she falls upon Roderick and, "in her violent and now final death-agonies" (191), makes Roderick "a victim of the terrors he had anticipated" (191). The narrator and the reader flee the chamber and the mansion, yet are compelled to stop and investigate the light that shines through the "once barely-discernible fissure" (191) which extended from "the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base" (191). The house disintegrates, and the narrator ends his story with the "deep

and dank tarn" (191) closing "sullenly and silently over the fragments of the 'HOUSE OF USHER'" (191).

Poe achieves complete unity of effect with the conclusion of the "House of Usher." Each detail and description of the narrator presents in the story is essential to the unity of impression that is achieved at the conclusion of the story. For instance, the narrator's choice of the word "hypochondriac" furthers the illusion that Roderick suffers from an emotional disorder and contributes to the impact of the reader's realization that Roderick's theory is real. Though the reader accepts the narrator's interpretation of Roderick's predicament, it is not until the end of the story, when the House of Usher collapses, that the reader realizes that Roderick's belief was based in fact.

Paramount to this realization, however, is Poe's ability to provide convincing evidence throughout the story that Roderick is simply a victim of his own neurosis. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe has been able to achieve and maintain a unity of impression through the successful cultivation of a unique emotional and intellectual relationship between the narrator and the reader. As Robert D. Jacobs points out in Poe: Journalist and Critic, Poe's stories "furnish evidence that he was aware that the reader's assent to the incredible could be achieved, in part, by the plausibility of the narrator" (175). It cannot be disputed that the narrator in the "House of Usher" is a plausible character who compels his reader to identify with him through a rational presentation of the story.

Through this narrator, Poe has successfully manipulated the reader into experiencing a unity of impression.

In comparison to the unity Poe sought to create and maintain in the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, the "Fall of the House of Usher" stands alone, for it creates an unsurpassed cohesiveness. As I have said earlier, each detail contributes to the ultimate goal of unity of effect; there are no unnecessary details or interruptions that detract from the emotional impact Poe creates at the end of the story. Yet, it appears that Poe envisioned an even greater goal: to achieve a unity of effect through an irrational, if not insane, narrator.

"The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat"

Although Poe was not successful in maintaining a unity of impression throughout the novel The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, he did achieve a consistency of effect in the story "The Fall of the House of Usher." One of the obvious differences between the two is length. Pym is a long story which realistically requires two sittings. With "Usher's" success, it is clear that Poe learned what he would later write in "The Philosophy of Composition": if two sittings are required to "read a work, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed" (980). As we have seen in Pym, Poe sought to create a narrator-reader relationship based on the reader's ability to identify with the emotional reactions of the narrator. In the "House of Usher," Poe not only achieved unity of effect but also created a balanced relationship between the narrator and the reader. The narrator in "Usher" encourages both an intellectual and emotional involvement; each detail the narrator supplies contributes to an overall unity within the work. In both Pym and "House of Usher," Poe was able to manipulate the reader into experiencing a unity of impression through the use of rational, sane narrators.

Poe's stories, "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat," represent two unusual approaches to the achievement of a unity of effect. First, the tales are considerably shorter than the "House of

"Usher"; second, Poe attempts to achieve a unity of effect through an irrational, insane narrator. In these tales, Poe uses the same technique he used in Pym and "Usher": achieve a unity of effect by enabling the reader to identify easily with the narrator's emotional reactions.

The first tale, "The Tell-Tale Heart," was published in the January 1843 inaugural issue of Lowell's The Pioneer. Because Poe used objectionable subject matter, the senseless murder of a helpless old man, "The Tell-Tale Heart" may have helped to foster the perception of Poe as an alcoholic and a drug addict. It appears, however, that Poe knew from the beginning what the general response to his subject would be; the rational reader would be in direct opposition to the irrational narrator. The story begins with the narrator talking to the reader:

True!--nervous--very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses --not destroyed--not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily--how calmly I can tell you the whole story (121).

His implied equation of calmness with rationality and this with sanity alerts the reader to the narrator's insanity. Furthermore, in trying to maintain control over his emotions while he provides a reason for his murder of the old man, the narrator only succeeds in exposing his illness. For instance, in the second paragraph of the story, the narrator seems oblivious to his own admission of premeditated murder:

I loved the old man; He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was . . . Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees--very gradually--I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever (121).

Unlike his approach in Pym and "Usher," Poe here does not attempt to establish the narrator's credibility. Similarly, the reader and the narrator are so far apart emotionally that it appears unlikely that the reader will identify with the narrator. The narrator does not try to convince the reader that he didn't murder the old man, simply that his action was justified. Yet, it appears as though the reader's possible disapproval of the narrator and his actions never enters the narrator's mind. In fact, the narrator continues to tell his story based on the assumption that the reader is in full agreement with him; that is, that the reader agrees that the old man's murder is justified and the narrator's preparations for the murder ingenious. For instance, after describing how he would go to the old man's room and put his head in the door to watch the old man sleep, the narrator boasts, "Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in!" (121)

The reader must reject the narrator's assumption because it is impossible for him either to understand or to appreciate the narrator's insane yet carefully wrought plans. Likewise, it is extremely difficult for the reader to define the narrator's emotions; he can make a definitive decision regarding the narrator's sanity, but the real reason for his actions and emotions is elusive. As W.H. Auden points out in his Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe: Prose,

Poetry, and Eureka, "in the stories of passionate states a certain vagueness of description is essential to the illusion" (vii). Poe does not use the words terror and horror as frequently in this story as he did in the others. By using an insane narrator, Poe cannot easily impart either an emotional intensity or a uniformity of effect. Yet, he does succeed in creating an emotional ambiance in the first several paragraphs of the story: the narrator reveals a malignant nature incapable of comprehending his own acts.

If the reader stands in opposition to the narrator, with whom, then, does the reader identify? Oddly enough, in the end it is the narrator. The narrator begins the initial process by unknowingly creating reader sympathy for the old man. The reader sees the narrator stalking the old man, entering the old man's room each night at midnight for seven nights. As he reveals the stages leading up to his "feelings of triumph" (122), the narrator leads the reader toward an appreciation and partial understanding of the old man's predicament. He does not lead the reader toward an admiration of his deeds; instead, he strengthens a growing awareness in the reader that he is totally committed to murdering the old man.

On the eighth night when the narrator awakens the old man by making a noise, the reader empathizes with the old man's cry of surprise, "'Who's there?'" (122). The narrator does not move; during that time the old man remains sitting up in bed "listening" (122). When the narrator hears "a slight groan" he knows it is "the groan of mortal terror . . . not a groan of pain or grief--oh, no! it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when

overcharged with awe" (122). The narrator is incapable of acknowledging that the old man might have known it was he who lay concealed in the chamber. His insanity and commitment to murder prohibit his understanding feelings outside his own consciousness; yet, it is the narrator who tells the reader that "the old man's terror must have been extreme!" (123).

With the old man's murder then, the reader is in direct moral opposition to the narrator. Even though the reader has difficulty understanding the basis of the narrator's insanity, it must be remembered that it is the narrator who is directly responsible for the reader's response. It is only through the narrator that the reader can see and have sympathy for the old man; that is, the narrator lies between the reader and the old man. The narrator's role in "The Tell-Tale Heart" is vastly different from the narrator's role in Pym and "Usher." In Pym, the reader is encouraged to begin identifying with Pym almost immediately. The narrator-reader identification process does not begin with the reader's ability to identify with those reactions of another character. Similarly, in the "House of Usher," the reader is not coerced into identifying with the narrator through Roderick Usher's character. The reader along with the narrator witnesses Roderick's suffering.

Another difference between this tale and Pym and "Usher" is the way in which the narrators present their stories. The narrators in Pym and "Usher" tell the reader their stories. In "The Tell-Tale Heart," however, the narrator re-enacts his story in the reader's presence. Just as the reader has no knowledge of either the

narrator's or the old man's background, their relationship to each other is never revealed. This deliberate omission impedes total reader condemnation. Consequently, the reader can regard the narrator's murder of the old man as a crime of passion by reason of insanity. This idea is more readily acceptable to the reader than cold, calculated murder.

Once the narrator describes the "wise precautions" (123) he took to conceal the body, the tone of his story changes completely. There are no more breaks in his sentences to indicate that he is behaving irrationally. Indeed, the narrator appears to be rational. This abrupt change in behavior invokes a sense of curiosity--a fascination--in the reader, due, in part, to the fact that following the old man's death there are no other characters of interest for the reader. The idea that the narrator appears rational rather than irrational is apparent when police officers come to investigate the possibility of "foul play" (123).

The reader's fascination with the narrator's apparent emotional control intensifies when the narrator invites the officers to search the house "well" (124). With this scene, the reader begins to admire the narrator because he exhibits an emotional control that was lacking in the beginning of the story. When the narrator leads the police to the old man's chamber and brings in chairs so they might "rest from their fatigue" (124), the reader begins to sense that the narrator's arrogance poses a serious threat to concealing the crime. This sense is the result of what Georges Poulet describes as "having a common consciousness" (Thompkins 47). Unknown to the reader, Poe

has drawn him into the narrator's conscious, thereby creating a single identity shared by the narrator and the reader. With this union, the identification process is complete and the unity of effect becomes apparent. Poe has convinced the unsuspecting reader that the narrator is rational. The reader does not become lost in the narrator's consciousness because although Poe has created the illusion that the narrator is rational, the reader maintains the ability to reason. As a result, the reader becomes frustrated by his own inability to prevent the narrator from revealing the crime.

The fact that the police officers do not appear to suspect the narrator undermines the narrator's ability to maintain control over his sanity. He begins to hear "a low, dull quick sound" (124) which continues to increase in pitch. Excited because the police do not appear to hear it, the narrator begins to talk "more vehemently . . . in a high key with violent gesticulations" (124). The narrator's nervous and excited manner apparent at the beginning of the story returns; however, at the end of the story the reader is not simply witnessing the narrator's emotions and reactions, he feels and reacts with the narrator. Thus, the intensity of the narrator's emotions is realized in the reader and unity of effect is achieved. In the last paragraph of the story, the reader experiences the narrator's agonizing insanity as it reaches its peak: "'Villains!' I shrieked, 'dissemble no more! I admit the deed!--tear up the planks!--here, here!--it is the beating of his hideous heart!'" (124) With the narrator's admission of guilt, the reader experiences a heightened unity of effect: terror.

The reader's relationship with the narrator is strictly emotional. In the story Poe has managed to move the reader away from his initial opposition and to an emotional identification with the narrator. We must keep in mind that the reader's identification with the narrator is a phenomenon which only exists while the reader is reading the story. When the reader has finished the story, he is likely to reject the narrator as he did in the beginning, because the narrator's thoughts and actions are far removed from those of the rational reader.

Despite his success with this irrational narrator and unity of effect in "The Tell-Tale Heart," it appears that Poe was not content to duplicate the approach. In "The Black Cat," he creates the same kind of emotional intensity but attempts to expedite the identification process by bringing the narrator closer to the reader rather than the reverse, the idea being that a reader will more readily accept and identify with an irrational narrator who possesses some degree of self-understanding. As we have seen Poe do in Pym and "Usher," he opens "The Black Cat" with the narrator attempting to gain credibility with the reader:

For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not--and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul (63).

By pointing out that he has nothing to lose by telling the truth, the narrator is trying to reinforce the idea that, although the story may appear fantastic, it is not fantasy, but truth.

In addition to trying to establish the narrator's credibility in the opening paragraph of the story, Poe attempts to initiate an emotional relationship between the narrator and the reader. The narrator says that the consequences of the events he will describe "have terrified--have tortured--have destroyed" (63) him. This approach to a relationship between the narrator and the reader is not new in Poe's fiction. In Pym, Poe attempted to create an emotional bond between the reader and the narrator. Unlike the narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator in "The Black Cat" initiates the identification process by providing the reader with a little personal background information. The initial information he provides, however, is an emotional sentiment:

From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets (63).

This sentiment is important because Poe leads the reader toward an understanding of the narrator's past which will help convey the extent of the narrator's insanity to the reader. Even though the narrator supplies the information, the reader will see a distinct change in behavior.

The narrator in this story behaves very differently from those we have seen in the other stories. He possesses a self-awareness, an understanding of both his past and present behavior. For example, he says that "I grew day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others" (64). The narrator's apparent insight into his behavior not only reinforces the idea that he is

rational, but increases the likelihood that the reader will accept and come to identify with his emotions and subsequent actions. The effects of the narrator's drinking manifest themselves in his behavior toward his wife and "favorite pet and playmate" (64), Pluto.

Although the narrator uses "intemperate language" (64) with his wife, it is Pluto who initially experiences the effects of his temper. As the narrator points out,

One night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. . . I took from my waistcoat-pocket a pen-knife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket (64).

Despite his initial feelings of guilt and remorse, the narrator claims to be possessed by the "spirit of PERVERSENESS" (65). While the reader may not identify with the narrator's violence against Pluto, he can understand the idea. When the narrator qualifies his definition of the perverse, the narrator-reader relationship progresses: "'Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action for no other reason than because he knows he should not?'" (60). The narrator-reader relationship progresses because the narrator's actions become childlike reactions. Though reactions such as his maiming of Pluto are exaggerated, the idea of doing "wrong for wrong's sake" (65) is realistic and acceptable. The reader's involvement with the narrator is strengthened by the certainty of the narrator's sanity while he is telling the story and the idea that he possesses some degree of self-understanding. These

ideas are substantiated by the perception that Pluto's murder is terrible, but not horrendous.

The narrator's "bitterest remorse" (65) while hanging Pluto reinforces the idea that the narrator's actions are desperate attempts to eliminate that which appears to be the direct cause of his guilt. It represents a childlike solution: remove the source of agitation and the discomfort will go away. Poe combines these childlike reactions with emotional restraint to create a narrator who is capable of limited hindsight: he makes a simple conclusion that the alcohol was instrumental in bringing about his insanity. Whereas the narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" assumed the reader was in agreement with his thoughts and actions, it is the reader of "The Black Cat" who agrees with the narrator. The narrator describes actions and then provides a reason for his reactions; the reader sees these actions and understands the reactions. Poe pulls the reader into the story through an unusual combination of immature responses and developed reasoning capabilities.

With the appearance of the second cat, the reader begins to anticipate the narrator's actions. Despite the strong resemblance to Pluto, the narrator avoids the animal. He says, "I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and the remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it" (67). Just as the shame and remorse he felt following Pluto's maiming compelled the narrator to further violence, the reader suspects the narrator will use violence against this animal because it reminds him of his senseless murder of Pluto. The narrator does come to hate the

cat because, like Pluto, it has been deprived of one of its eyes, and though he loathes the cat, the cat's partiality for the narrator increases. The narrator cannot deal with his own guilt. Consequently, he envisions a white spot on the cat's chest to be the gallows.

The narrator's delusion overrides his ability to retain control over his physical and emotional reactions. He becomes irrational and feels "the pressure of torments" (68). His descriptions begin to reveal the depth of his irrationality:

And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity. And a brute beast-- whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed--a brute beast to work out for me--for me a man, fashioned in the image of the High God--so much of insufferable wo! Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more! (67)

His tendency to have sudden, frequent "ungovernable outbursts of fury" (68) alerts the reader to what will happen. Similar to Pluto's biting the narrator's hand, the second cat nearly trips the narrator on the stairs and exasperates him "to madness" (68). Thus the reader is able to accept the narrator's accidental murder of his wife because he can understand the narrator's blind childlike rage. As the narrator points out,

Uplifting an axe, and forgetting, in my wrath, the childish dread which had hitherto stayed my hand, I aimed a blow at the animal which, of course, would have proved instantly fatal had it descended as I wished. But this blow was arrested by the hand of my wife. Goaded, by the interference, into a rage more than demonical, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain (68).

Despite the emotional intensity of the scene, the narrator is methodical. He shows no remorse over murdering his wife because he

has not eliminated the source of his disturbance: the cat. After carefully concealing the body behind the cellar wall, he searches for the cat. Unable to find it, the narrator says,

It is impossible to describe, or to imagine, the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. It did not make its appearance during the night--and thus for one night at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly and tranquilly slept; aye, slept even with the burden of murder upon my soul! (69).

Yet, like the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator in "The Black Cat" becomes too confident; he knowingly confronts his crime in front of police who are unaware of what he is doing. The reader senses that the narrator is becoming caught up in the "phrenzy of bravado" (69), yet the reader realizes that he is powerless to act.

When the narrator becomes so caught up in the "phrenzy" that he raps heavily upon the wall, the narrator-reader identification is complete. In the following scene the narrator is able successfully to transfer his intense emotional experience to the reader. In this scene, the narrator is "answered by a voice from within the tomb" (70). While the narrator describes the voice, he and the reader experience a unity of impression: terror. Like the narrator's cry in the "Tell-Tale Heart," the moment of realization is terrifying and climactic. Poe ends the story quickly because it is the narrator's emotional response to the revelation that unifies the effect. As Elizabeth Phillips points out in Edgar Allan Poe, An American Imagination, "If parts of 'The Black Cat' seem less convincing by comparison with the effect and imaginative control of the earlier

stories" (136), it's because Poe manipulates the reader into thinking that the narrator is rational and his reactions understandable.

In each of the stories, "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat," Poe is successful in transferring this narrator's emotional experiences to the reader. Yet, it is not until the narrator experiences the ultimate limits of terror and horror that the reader truly identifies with the narrator. Poe uses the narrator's inability to anticipate a final confrontation with his victim to achieve a unity of effect. It is only after the reader has finished the story that he rejects the narrator and his actions.

Conclusion

Poe sought to create a unity in his work. As I pointed out in my Introduction, to understand this unity we must analyze the "Philosophy of Composition" because it embodies the essence of Poe's theory. It reflects the sum of Poe's experience and accomplishments and reveals that throughout his artistic career, Edgar Allan Poe was committed to achieving a unity of effect.

Poe makes it very clear in the "Philosophy" that he realized why the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym failed to achieve and maintain a unity of effect. Poe writes, "If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression--for if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed" (979-980). Despite its length, however, Poe was able to achieve a unity of effect for a brief time through an emotional bond between the narrator and the reader. This relationship was created through a unique combination of emotional and sensory perceptions. It is easy for a reader to identify with Pym because Pym is a rational, plausible character whom Poe imbues with emotions which are "universally appreciable" (980).

Although there is only a year between the publication of Pym and "The Fall of the House of Usher," it is clear that Poe decided that the reader's emotional involvement with the narrator was not enough

to maintain the unity of effect; the reader must also be called upon to use his intellect. Like Pym, the narrator in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a rational, plausible character who simply tells a story. Whereas Poe achieved a limited unity in Pym through the reader's ability to identify with Pym's emotional responses, Poe uses the narrator in the "House of Usher" to achieve a total emotional and intellectual involvement of the reader. This balanced involvement, coupled with the apparent emotional distance between the narrator and Usher, deepens the reader's "ultimate impression" (985). Like Pym, Poe coerces the reader of the "House of Usher" into identifying with a rational narrator's emotions and thoughts. This identification, however, should not be viewed as an end in itself. As Wolfgang Iser explains in his essay, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," identification is "but a strategem by means of which the author stimulates attitudes in the reader" (Thompkins 65).

Lady Madeline's appearance in the last scene of the "House of Usher" is the event in the story that creates an emotional intensity for the reader; and, oddly enough, it comes at the end of the story. But as Poe would point out in the "Philosophy," "all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief" (980); they should "bring the mind into a proper frame for the denouement--which is now brought about as rapidly and as directly as possible" (986). In the "House of Usher," it is clear Poe discovered "that brevity must be in direct ratio to the intensity of the intended work" (980) in order to achieve a unified impression.

The "Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat" demonstrate that Poe used his narrators in different ways in order to achieve a total involvement of the reader and thus the unity of effect. The tales are considerably shorter than the "House of Usher," yet Poe manages to achieve a unity of impression in the reader through the narrator. The important difference between these tales and the stories of Pym and "Usher" is that Poe uses irrational, insane narrators to induce reader involvement. These narrators interact with the reader on a strictly emotional level. It is not until the reader finishes reading the story that he becomes aware of the association between the narrator and himself.

Poe's ability to manipulate the reader so that a total emotional involvement can be effected is made clear in the end of both "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat." For instance, the reader will remember that the narrator in the "Tell-Tale-Heart" confesses to killing the old man. Before this confession, the narrator displays an arrogance that threatens to expose his crime. Though still attempting to maintain his independence of what Poulet terms "common consciousness" (Thompkins 47), the reader becomes frustrated by his inability to prevent the narrator from revealing the crime. Poe is able to manipulate the reader so that he temporarily forgets that it is Poe who controls the narrator's actions. In the review of "Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales," Poe said that in the brief tale "the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control" (950).

As Poulet explains, while reading, "the consciousness is open to me, welcomes me, lets me look deep inside itself, and even allows me with unheard-of license, to think what it thinks and feel what it feels" (Thompkins 42). In his tales, Poe exposes his narrators' consciousness. Even though the narrator may be insane and unable to articulate his emotions, Poe succeeds in creating an emotional ambiance. Through this ambiance the reader is able to discern "universally appreciable" (980) emotions. These emotions then become the basis for the reader's subsequent involvement with the narrator. Poe's emotional manipulation of the reader in order to create a unity of impression is one of his greatest achievements.

Robert Hough points out in his book, Literary Criticism of Edgar Allan Poe, that Poe "was the first American writer to be so directly concerned with the reader's reaction" (xviii); he was not "primarily interested in human experience for its own sake, but for the emotion or effect that can be elicited from it. He chooses his subject matter not for its rational content but for its emotional potential" (xvii-xviii). Indeed, it must be remembered that Poe's stories need to be read as stories, not as reflections of a pre-existing reality. Poe is able to achieve a unity of impression in his stories by using various narrators who are able to elicit certain responses from the reader. Consequently, the reader not only understands what he reads, but feels what he reads. Poe's ability to involve the reader in a story is one of his greatest achievements and explains why generations continue to read and re-read his fiction.

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