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Abstract: Focuses on the link between the image of the labyrinth in *Borges'* detective stories and the locked-room puzzle in Edgar Allan Poe's first detective story, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue.' Occurrence of the word 'clue' in Poe's Dupin stories; Concrete spatialization of hidden-object and locked-room detective stories.

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A CLEW TO A CLUE: LOCKED ROOMS AND LABYRINTHS IN POE AND *BORGES*

IT SEEMS CLEAR that *Borges* produced his three detective stories-- "The Garden of the Forking Paths," "Death and the Compass," and "Ibn Hakkan al-Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth"--as an antithetical doubling, an interpretive reading-rewriting of the origin of the analytic detective genre, Poe's three Dupin stories--"The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Roger," and "The Purloined Letter." Part of the impetus for this project seems to have been a wish to memorialize the hundredth anniversary of the genre by writing an analytic detective story of his own that would recover what he took to be the genres original impulses. "The Garden of the Forking Paths" was published in 1941, one hundred years after the appearance of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *Borges* recalls that the English translation of the story was sent to a contest sponsored by Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine and that it won a second prize. The magazine had itself been founded in 1941, one of several publications meant to mark the genres centennial.

I would like to focus on the link between a central image in *Borges's* detective stories, the image of the labyrinth, and the fact that Poe's first detective story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," presents itself as a locked-room puzzle. In his note to the English translation of his second detective story, "Death and the Compass," *Borges* directs our attention to what he calls "a thread of red" that "runs through the story's pages," a recurrence of the color in crucial passages that is in fact to be found in all three of these stories. However, I am less interested in what this recurrence means in the stories than in the fact that *Borges* calls it to the reader's attention by imaging it as "a thread" running through the tale. For what *Borges* does is give us a clue to the very concept of clues, subtly reminding us of the importance of a thread in the story of the encounter of Theseus and the Minotaur in the labyrinth, and doing so within the context of three detective stories in which the final encounter between the protagonists occurs in a literal or a figurative labyrinth.

The "thread of red" which the author so obligingly isolates from the fabric of his story, as if to suggest that it is a clue whose unraveling will lead to the tale's solution, recalls the origin of a word that, perhaps more than any other, is associated with the analytic detective story. Under the spelling "clew," Webster's New World Dictionary gives "1. a ball of thread or yarn; in Greek legend, a thread was used by Theseus as a guide out of the labyrinth; hence, 2. something that leads out of a maze, perplexity, etc., or helps to solve a problem: in this sense generally spelled clue." A clue is literally, then, a ball of thread, and its common metaphoric meaning (as a hint to solve a mystery) is a function of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Given that the thread

running through the labyrinth of detective stories is specifically a red one, it is worth noting that in the ancient world one of the more common color schemes used in visually representing the labyrinth pattern, particularly as a decorative border design (the meander), was a red line on a yellow or pale background, a fact which suggests that for *Borges* the red line outlining the shape of a labyrinth (for example, the red ink line forming the triangle on the map in "Death and the Compass") and the red thread leading us out of the story's labyrinth may be continuous.

In giving us this clue to the origin of the word clue, this hieroglyph of the object from which the common meaning of the word derives, *Borges* is engaged at once in doubling the Dupin stories and in interpreting them, in the sense that any rewriting of another's work amounts to an oblique reading of that work by the second writer. And what *Borges*' reading of the Dupin stories focuses on in this instance is Poe's repeated use of the word "clue" in these three tales with what seems to be a clear sense both of its original meaning (a ball of thread) and of the association of its figurative meaning with the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The word clue or clew occurs seven times in the Dupin stories, and at least two of the occurrences are of special significance. In "The Purloined Letter," for example, the word is used only once, but in a position of great formal importance (the story's final paragraph). Oddly enough, however it does not occur in a context where one would have expected it, which is to say that Poe uses clue to refer, not to the hints that lead Dupin to solve the mystery of where and how the Minister D----has hidden the purloined letter, but rather to the trace which Dupin himself leaves in the substituted letter to reveal his identity to his double. Explaining his decision not to leave the interior of the substituted letter blank, Dupin says,

That would have been insulting. D----, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humoredly, that I should remember, So, as I knew he would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clue. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words--

Un dessein si funeste, S'il n'est digne d'Atree, est digne de Thyeste.

They are to be found in Crebillon's "Atree."

This reference to Dupin's manuscript, that is, to his immediately recognizable handwriting, as a "clue" to his identity suggests an imagistic association of that meandering line of ink on paper (which reveals the opponent concealed in the letter) with that meandering line of thread which leads to and from the opponent concealed in the labyrinth, an association clearly present in the detective story that *Borges* balances against "The Purloined Letter." In "Death and the Compass" the clue that Scharlach gives Lonrot to their meeting place in the maze—a line of red ink on a map—is also a veiled signature, its redness suggesting the doubly red name (Red Scarlet) of the man who is Lonrot's double.

That Poe associates a line of ink inscribed on a sheet of paper with a line of thread running through a labyrinth seems even more likely when we consider the elaborate hieroglyphic action that he constructs in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" around the word clue. What with the tales' startling device of a simian culprit, we often forget that Poe's first detective story initially presents itself as a locked-room mystery: Dupin's first problem is the murderer's "means of egress" from Mme. and Mlle. L'Esplanaye's apartment. When the police arrive, they find that the "large back chamber in the fourth story," from which the women's screams had issued, is "locked, with the key inside," and upon forcing the door, they find that the front and rear windows are "down and firmly fastened from within." Examining the chambers two rooms, Dupin satisfies himself that the murderer could not have exited through either of the doors to the hall, since each was locked with the key inside, nor through the chimneys, which are too narrow at the top to admit "the body of a

large cat," nor through the windows in the front room, from which "no one could have escaped without notice from the crowd in the street." All of which leads him to concentrate his investigation on the two windows in the back room. Each has a "gimlet-hole" drilled in its frame with "a very stout nail . . . fitted therein, nearly to the head." The police had tried to raise the sashes but, failing, had concluded that the murderer had exited in some other way. Dupin, however, carries out a more minute examination. With some difficulty, he removes the nail from one of the frames and then tries to raise the sash, only to find that it still cannot be budged. He theorizes that the sash must be fastened by a hidden spring which snaps into place when the sash is lowered. He quickly discovers the spring, but this still leaves him with the problem of the nail inserted in the frame. Even if the sash had latched automatically when lowered, how had the murderer reinserted the nail in the gimlet hole on the inside of the closed window?

With this in mind, Dupin turns his attention to the other window, seemingly identical to the first, with a nail inserted in the frame and a hidden spring that fastens automatically. Dupin reasons that since all other possible means of escape have been logically eliminated, this window must have been the murderer's way out; and though it seems identical to the other one, it must, he concludes, be different in some respect, and the difference must involve the nail in the frame. As he explains to the narrator,

You will say that I was puzzled; but, if you think so, you must have misunderstood the nature of the inductions. To use a sporting phrase, I had not been once "at fault." The scent had never for an instant been lost. There was no flaw in any link of the chain. I had traced the secret to its ultimate result,--and that result was the nail. It had, I say, in every respect, the appearance of its fellow in the other window; but this fact was an absolute nullity (conclusive as it might seem to be) when compared with the consideration that here, at this point, terminated the clew. "There must be something wrong," I said, "about the nail." I touched it; and the head, with about a quarter of an inch of the shank, came off in my fingers. The rest of the shank was in the gimlet-hole, where it had been broken off.

The murderer had indeed, then, exited through this window, with the hidden spring automatically fastening the lowered sash, and the police mistaking "the retention of this spring" for that of the apparently undamaged nail. Dupin's description of the unbroken, step-by-step process that led him to the nail is significant for several reasons. First, "the clew" that terminates at the nail clearly suggests, in the context of the imagery of following a marked path (e.g., tracking a scent), that Poe uses the word clew here to evoke both its literal, original meaning and also that mythic account of following a thread out of a labyrinth from which the word derives its standard figurative meaning, and that he is doing so precisely because of (and perhaps to call attention to) the structural similarity between a locked-room mystery and a labyrinth. In both, the problem is one of understanding how an apparently exitless enclosure may be exited, in one instance by following a figurative clue that leads to the discovery of the criminal's "means of egress," in the other by following a literal clew that leads out of the maze. (One might note here in passing that Poe's image of a clew terminating at a nail in the exits frame implicitly raises the question of how Theseus kept the thread in place at the labyrinth's entrance as he unwound the clew along his path. Though the question is not addressed in any of the major classical versions of the myth, the Scholiast on Apollodorus explains that Theseus fastened "one end of the thread to the lintel of the door on entering into the labyrinth," and one might easily imagine the thread's being tied to a nail driven into the lintel.)

What seems dear is that Borgess antithetical reading/rewriting of the Dupin stories registers not only the resemblance between the mystery of a locked room and the puzzle of a labyrinth, but also the resemblance between these two structures and the purloined letter. The basic similarity of the three turns upon each figure's problematic representation of the relationship between inner and outer. In a locked-room mystery, for example, the notion that a solid body requires a physical

opening to pass from inside a room to outside it seems to have been violated. Inside the room there is physical evidence, usually a dead body, of the earlier presence of another body in the room, that of the killer. But when the room, with all its entrances locked from within, is broken into by the police, that other body is absent--a situation that seems to question assumptions as basic as the physical continuity of inner and outer and the noninterpenetrability of solid bodies. A locked-room mystery confronts us with an enclosure that appears, from both inside and outside, to be unopened, indeed unopenable, without there being left some physical trace of its having been opened, such as a broken lock from the police's forced entry or an unfastened window from the murderer's escape. The solution generally involves showing that the room's appearance of being unopened is only an appearance, an outward illusion that does not represent an inner reality.

In contrast to the locked room, a labyrinth is always open from the outside but appears to be unopenable from within. It permits access to a physical body but denies it exit by subtly disrupting the link between relative and absolute bearing, by confusing the self's control of itself through the disorientation of the body. A labyrinth is in a sense a self-locking enclosure that uses the directionality of the human body as the bolt in the lock.

The relationship of inner and outer is even more problematic in the case of the purloined letter, for there it is a matter not only of the letter being turned inside out as part of its concealment in the open but also of whether the letter is hidden inside or outside a given physical space, the Minister's house. During the Prefect's account of his minute but unsuccessful search of the Minister's dwelling, the question arises as to whether the Minister might in fact carry the letter about with him or whether he might have "concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises." The Prefect maintains that the letter cannot possibly be in the Minister's possession, since he has twice had the Minister "waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched." As to the letters being hidden somewhere other than the Minister's house, Dupin reasons that since "the instant-availability of the document--its susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice" is "a point of nearly equal importance with its possession," the letter must be hidden in the Minister's residence.

The mystery depends, of course, on this rigorous circumscription of the letters possible hiding places. If the Minister had the whole world in which to conceal the letter, what would be mysterious about the Prefect's inability to find it? Only because it is logically certain that the letter is hidden in a specific finite enclosure whose space has been painstakingly searched, does its continued nonappearance become mysterious. All of which is to say that, as opposed to a locked-room mystery in which the criminal's patent absence from an internally sealed space constitutes the problem, the mystery of the purloined letter turns upon an object's unperceived presence within what we might call an externally sealed space, a space that is closed off not physically but logically, since all the possible external hiding places for the object must be analytically eliminated if there is to be something odd about the object's nonappearance. A locked-room mystery asks how a solid body got out of (or into) an internally sealed space without violating the space's appearance of closure; a hidden-object mystery asks how a solid object remains present within a finite physical space without, as it were, making an appearance. In one case we are certain that what we seek is not inside a given space, in the other that what we seek cannot possibly be outside it.

Part of the peculiar force of hidden-object and locked-room detective stories is that they seem to present us with a physical embodiment, a concrete spatialization, of that very mechanism of logical inclusion/exclusion on which rational analysis is based, indeed, present us with this as an apparent confounding of rational analysis. In the case of the purloined letter the problematic relationship of inner and outer takes on an added twist. For while the object must be present inside the Minister's house without its making an appearance, the relationship of appearance to reality as outer to inner is itself further put in play by the fact that the object is hidden out in the open within

this enclosed space. Which is to say, the letter is concealed in plain sight on the surface, on the outside of this ins/de (the house), a concealment accomplished by, and symbolized in, the turning of the letter itself inside out. Thus everted, the letters outside--the part of the letter whose appearance is known to the Prefect and Dupin from the Queens description, the part that usually serves to conceal, to envelope, the letters contents--now becomes the content to be concealed from the eyes of the police; while the inside-the reality that gives this letter its special significance, the part of it that is not known to the Prefect and Dupin--becomes a new outside that gives the letter a different appearance.

Analyzing the structure of hidden-object and locked-room mysteries in terms of an inner/outer problematic not only allows us to see that the first and last Dupin stories are variations on the same mystery of consciousness, it also reveals a further link between these stories and the labyrinth, a link involving the intersection between the inner/outer and the right/left oppositions. As we recall, Poe compares the turning of the letter inside out to the turning of a glove, and the reversal of a gloves inner and outer surfaces is also a reversal of its handedness, a right-handed glove turned inside out becoming a left-handed one and vice versa. But the reversal of inner and outer depends upon the fact that inner and outer, like the poles of any mutually constitutive opposition, are not separate entities but rather opposing aspects of the same entity. And this sense of inner and outer as opposing appearances presented by a single continuous surface recalls one of the traditional methods for finding both the center of and, more importantly, the exit from a labyrinth, a method that works by aligning the continuity of the inner and outer surfaces with the handedness of the individual exploring the labyrinth. In his classic study *Mazes and Labyrinths*, W.H. Matthews describes the method's application to the navigation of a hedge maze:

When it is impracticable to place marks, or even to use, like Theseus, a clue of thread, it is still possible in the majority of cases to make certain of finding the goal by the simple expedient of placing one hand on the hedge on entering the maze, and consistently following the hedge around, keeping contact all the time with the same hand. Blind turnings present no difficulty, as they will only be traversed in one direction and then in the other. The traveller being guided by his contact with the hedge alone is relieved of all necessity for making a choice of paths when arriving at the nodes. The only case in which this method breaks down is that in which the goal is situated anywhere within a loop. Where this occurs the explorer adopting the method described will discover the fact by finding himself eventually back at the starting-point without having visited the goal.

This method postulates that if the interior and exterior surfaces of a labyrinth are continuous, so that the inner surface inevitably leads back to the outer, then the inner surface can guide one back to the exit, if one can find a way of maintaining the body's orientation in relation to this surface continuity. And that constant orientation of the body is established, of course, by the uninterrupted use of the same hand to trace the surface continuity. Suppose, for example, that on entering a labyrinth we decide to use the wall on our right as the guiding thread into and out of the maze, and that as we begin walking, we guide our progress by keeping our right hand in contact with the wall. We will, as Matthews notes, eventually trace the interior surface of the entire labyrinth and return to the entry point. But the wall that was on our right as we entered, and with which we maintained continuous contact, will as we return be on our left, and the wall which on exiting we touch with the right hand will be the one that had been on our left as we entered. All of which is a way of saying that on returning to the entry point we will be facing the other way, outward from the labyrinth rather than into it.

This rather involved description is necessary to make clear the connection between the structure of the labyrinth and the structure which Poe proposes for the purloined letter by comparing the everting of the letter to the everting of a glove. In everting a glove, its inner and outer surfaces exchange places. This movement reverses not only the gloves handedness, but also the direction

in which its fingers point. Imagine a right-hand glove lying palm downward on a flat surface with its fingers pointing away from us; if we turn it inside out while maintaining its palm-downward orientation, we will have a left-hand glove whose fingers point toward us. In following the interior surface of a labyrinth to its exit, we are exploiting the same topological phenomenon that makes possible the turning of a glove--the fact that inner and outer are two opposing aspects of a single continuous surface. The difference, of course, is that in turning a glove this continuity is traced by the movement of the surface itself, while in navigating a labyrinth the continuity is traced by the movement of a hand along the surface. Nevertheless, the various reversals effected by these movements correspond: as the glove's inner surface becomes its outer, the direction in which its fingers are pointing and its handedness are reversed; and as the labyrinth's inner surface leads us back to the entrance, the direction in which we are facing is reversed, as well as what we might call the handedness of the wall (the wall that was on our right on entering is now on our left).

We must now return to the thread of our argument and to the passage in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" where Dupin explains how a process of logical elimination led him to the broken nail in the window frame at which "terminated the clew." As I suggested earlier, the passage is significant for reasons that go beyond its association of locked room and labyrinth through the image of a threadlike clew leading to an entrance/exit. It marks as well, for example, a crucial moment in the development of the battle of wits between writer and reader in the analytic detective genre. At this point in Poe's first detective story, Dupin is about to reveal the solution to the tale's initial mystery--the locked room--as a prelude to revealing the tale's principal mystery, the identity of the killer. Dupin's method of revelation in both instances is not a sudden announcement of his conclusions but rather a gradual presentation of his train of thought, a retelling of the crime or re-presentation of the scene that indicates and organizes salient points in a way that might, but doesn't, enable the listener--Dupin's unnamed companion--to anticipate the detective's solution. Moreover, it is quite clear that Dupin conceives of this method of revelation as a game played with his friend the narrator, for besides showing him the clues that influenced his own deductions, Dupin gives the narrator added hints--often in the imagery with which he characterizes a situation--that point to the ultimate solution. For example, in describing the reasoning that led him to the nail, he says, "'To use a sporting phrase, I had not been once 'at fault.' The scent had never for an instant been lost I had traced the secret to its ultimate result,--and that result was the ha// here, at this point, terminated the dew.'" Though Dupin is describing how he solved the locked-room problem, the imagery--"a sporting phrase," the "scent" that "had never . . . been lost-- hints at the solution to the larger mystery of the killer's identity, in that it calls to mind the sport of hunting and suggests that the object of Dupin's pursuit is in fact an animal. And since human hunters don't have the olfactory ability to track game by its scent, there is perhaps a hint here as well of an animal quality to Dupin (the traditional image of the sleuth as bloodhound) of which we will have more to say later. Dupin's suggestion that the culprit is nonhuman is reinforced, of course, by the image of the threadlike clew terminating at the nail, for while the clew followed one way in the Theseus myth leads back to the entrance, the clew running the other way marks the track Theseus followed in hunting down the half-human, half-animal Minotaur.

The game Dupin plays with the narrator is at once a part and a figure of the game the author plays with the reader, as Poe suggests by making the terminus of the clew (the problem's solution) a nail, thereby testing the reader's linguistic skill and attention. Dupin is of course French; and though the narrator's nationality is not specified, he does reside in Paris, so we can take it that he is fluent in the language. Consequently, we may assume that Dupin's conversations in English with the narrator represent the tales "translations," as it were, of ones originally conducted in Dupin's native tongue. Now, as we recall, Dupin's account of his solution to the locked-room problem minutely describes the two windows at the rear of the victims' chamber, mentioning again and again the nail inserted in the frame of each window. And, of course, the French word for "nail," the word Dupin would have used so often, is *clou*. Which is simply Poe's way of giving the reader a linguistic clue (hint) that the clew (thread) will ultimately lead to a *clou* (nail) -

though even the most alert reader will probably understand this pun only retrospectively, so that Poe remains one up. But there is more at work here than just a pun, for the structure of this linguistic clue—two words with similar sounds but different meanings (a hidden, a metaphysical difference)—mirrors the structure of the solution to which the threadlike clue leads, two windows apparently "identical in character" but with a hidden difference, a concealed break in the clou imbedded in one of them. (In this connection it is worth noting that in the bilingual pair *clew/clou* with their phonetic similarity and their orthographic and lexical differences, the English half is split and doubled again—*clew/clue*--by an orthographic difference and a phonetic and lexical sameness.) The hidden difference between the windows is hinted at in Dupin's first description of them: "There are two windows in the chamber. One of them is unobstructed by furniture, and is wholly visible. The lower portion of the other is hidden from view by the head of the unwieldy bedstead which is thrust up close against it." The window whose "lower portion . . . is hidden from view by the head" of the bed is, of course, the same window in which the broken, lower portion of the nail is hidden from view by the hall's undamaged head. The language of the subsequent passage in which Dupin recounts his discovery of the break in the nail clearly echoes his earlier description of the windows:

I touched it; and the head, with about a quarter of an inch of the shank, came off in my fingers. The rest of the shank was in the gimlet-hole, where it had been broken off. The fracture was an old one (for its edges were encrusted with rust), and had apparently been accomplished by a blow of a hammer, which had partially imbedded, in the top of the bottom sash, the head portion of the nail. I now carefully replaced the head portion in the indentation whence I had taken it, and the resemblance to a perfect nail was complete--the fissure was invisible. Pressing the spring, I gently raised the sash for a few inches; the head went up with it, remaining firm in its bed. I closed the window, and the semblance of the whole nail was again perfect. The riddle, so far, was now unriddled. (my emphasis)

Clearly, Poe is playing a game of verbal clues with the reader in having the head of the bed conceal the portion of the same window in which the head of the nail, "firm in its bed," conceals the broken shank. Moreover, in the very act of unriddling one riddle, he leads us to another, for he offers a clue not just to the solution of the locked-room problem (the broken clou) but also to a larger pattern of imagery that runs through the entire story and hints at both the identity of the killer and the meaning of the tale—I refer to the tales recurring allusions to decapitation, the separating of a higher portion from a lower portion. The most striking instance is literal, the corpse of Mme. L'Esplanaye. In the words of the newspaper account of the body's discovery:

After a thorough investigation of every portion of the house, without farther discovery, the party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated--the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.

To this horrible mystery there is not as yet, we believe, the slightest clew.

Poe indicates the significance of this head/body separation when he notes that the corpse was so badly mutilated "as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity": that is, in the differential relationship which he sets up between head and body, Poe codes the body as nonhuman (lacking "any semblance of humanity") and thus codes the head as human in opposition--the standard equation of head, mind, rationality, humanity on the one hand and of body, instinct, irrationality, animality on the other. The concluding image of "the clew" links the puzzle of Mme. L'Esplanaye's corpse being found outside the locked room to the nail that is the solution to the locked-room mystery. And this linking of the corpse, whose head has been severed from its body, to the nail, whose head is broken from its shank, reinforces our interpretation of the clew leading-to-the-nail

(i.e., to the entrance) as an echo of the myth of Theseus and the labyrinth. For while one end of Theseus's clew marks the labyrinth's entrance and exit, the other, as we noted, marks the location of the corpse of the labyrinth's inhabitant, a creature itself characterized by a head/body separation. The Minotaur, with its animal head and human torso, symbolizes the destructive reversal of the proper (i.e., master/slave) relationship between mind and body, between the human and animal elements in man, the kind of reversal that occurs, for example, when instinctual ferocity masters reason in the taking of a human life. (As we recall, the Minotaur is killed because it is a mankiller, the slaughterer of the Athenian youths sent to Crete every nine years as tribute.) And this same master/slave reversal is symbolized by the manlike killer-animal of "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," an animal whose cries are mistaken for human speech, whose name "orang-outang" literally means "man of the forest," and whose murderous rampage is triggered by its attempt to mimic a self-reflective action, its master's shaving his face in a mirror.

Dupin does not, of course, engage in a battle of wits with the unthinking killer of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Rather, in the absence of a rational culprit in the first analytic detective story, the mental duel between detective and criminal that will become the genres mainstay is replaced by, or displaced into, Dupin's outwitting of both the apes master and the Prefect of police, Dupin does not himself capture the ape, indeed he never even sees it, so that it is only by outwitting the animal's master through a false newspaper advertisement which lures him to Dupin's lodgings that Dupin is able to verify his theory of the killer's identity. We should also note that when Dupin later reveals the solution to the police, the Prefect reacts to the amateur detective's analytic success as if it were very much a defeat for himself. Unable to "conceal his chagrin at the turn which affairs had taken," he remarks on "the propriety of every person minding his own business." Interestingly enough, Poe's description of the battle of wits between Dupin and the Prefect seems to associate the Prefect with Theseus's opponent in the labyrinth, even to the point of using a head/body separation to characterize the policeman's methods. Dupin says of the Prefect,

I am satisfied with having defeated him in his own castle. Nevertheless, that he failed in the solution of this mystery, is by no means that matter for wonder which he supposes it; for, in truth, our friend the Prefect is somewhat too cunning to be profound. In his wisdom is no stamen. It is all head and no body, like the pictures of the Goddess Laverna,--or, at best, all head and shoulders, like a codfish. But he is a good creature after all.

As Theseus overcame the Minotaur in its own dwelling, so Dupin defeats the Prefect "in his own castle." And as Theseus's opponent was a creature with an animal head and a human body, so Dupin's opponent the Prefect, "a good creature after all," is compared to a mythical being traditionally represented as a head without a body (Laverna, the Roman goddess of thefts) and to an animal that is "all head and shoulders," the codfish. The point of this comparison, which figures the Prefect's reasoning as "cunning" rather than "profound" (Latin profundus, deep, low), higher rather than lower ("all head and no body"), seems to be the same point Dupin makes in "The Purloined Letter"--that the Prefect cannot imagine the workings of a mind substantially different from his own, a rule always true when the level of the other's intellect is above his own "and very usually when it is below." These two extremes are illustrated by the Prefect's failure to comprehend the operations both of a mind (the Minister's) that is almost superhuman in comparison to his own and of a "mind" that is literally subhuman, the apes. That Dupin does recognize in the savagery of the L'Espanaye murders the signature of an animal mind is in some degree a function of Dupin's own doublehess--not that doubleness of the creative and resolvent elements in the self personified as poet and mathematician which Dupin discusses in "The Purloined Letter," but rather a doubleness that makes the detective and the criminal antithetical mirror-images, reciprocals of one another precisely because the impulses that have mastered the criminal are those that have been mastered in the detective. Dupin recognizes the marks of "brutal ferocity" in the deed because it is an animal ferocity, an irrationality that he recognizes within himself as within everyone, an irrationality that grounds rationality as the physical body grounds

the human mind. Summing up the distinctive marks of the criminal--"an agility astounding, a strength superhuman, a ferocity brutal, a butchery without motive, a grotesquerie in horror absolutely' alien from humanity, and a voice foreign in tone to the ears of men of many nations, and devoid of all distinct or intelligible syllabification"-Dupin asks the narrator what this combination of features suggests, and the narrator replies, "A madman ... has done this deed--some raving maniac, escaped from a neighboring Maison de Sante." The response is significant because earlier, in describing his and Dupin's shared style of living as a reflection of "the rather fantastic gloom" of their "common temper," the narrator says, "Had the routine of our life... been known to the world, we should have been regarded as madmen-although, perhaps, as madmen of a harmless nature." The fact that the apes rampage and Dupin's fantastic temperament both suggest madness to the narrator underlines the instinctual, not to say irrational, element shared by the culprit and the detective. Indeed, one might interpret that intellectual power which both Poe and Dupin consider to be the culmination of rational analysis-the power of intuition-as being in large part the rational mind's reliance upon, its translation into consciousness of, the animal instincts of the body in which it is lodged, the kind of physical intuition whose lack prevents the Prefect, with his all-head-and-no-body reasoning, from recognizing and interpreting the signs of "brutal ferocity" in the crime.

What all this ultimately suggests, then, is that in deciding to write a group of stories aimed at analyzing the analytical power, at discovering why, as he says at the start of the first Dupin story, the analytical power should itself be so little susceptible to analysis, Poe attempted to embody in the very structure of the genre the high level of self-consciousness inherent in such a project. As Poe practices it, the detective story is a literary form closely aware of its own formal elements, its antecedents, its associations-indeed, so much so that it subtly thematizes these as part of the textual mystery which the reader must unravel in the tale. And that is why, as we have seen, Poe draws our attention in the very first Dupin story to the word clue and its origin in the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, for what he gives us is a clue not just to the source of a notion that is synonymous with the genre itself but also to the source of the plot with which he chose to originate this genre. In following the thread of allusion wound around the word clue, he allows us to see that Dupin's adventure, with its locked-room puzzle and manlike killer-ape, rewrites Theseus's encounter with the labyrinth and its half-human, mankilling Minotaur, which is to say, precisely that scenario which *Borges* makes explicit in his own rewriting of Poe.

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