

**A Road to Reality:  
How The Violence of Poe Shocks Us To Feel**

Andrew Massa

Media, Art, & Text (MATX), Virginia Commonwealth University

MATX 601: Poe, Texts, and Textuality

Dr. Harrison

December 16, 2021

### Relevance

The pursuit of any advocate within the humanities should be the annihilation of violence; in order to end violence, you must know violence. In her book, *On Violence and On Violence Against Women*, Jacqueline Rose regards violence as “a crime of the deepest thoughtlessness” (2021) which ultimately will require a societal shift of thinking as its only remedy. With this in mind, certain variables are needed to generate Rose’s epistemological consideration. The most significant variable being the willingness to confront that which is violent; the second is the continued creation of media that details the realities of violence. With these two pivotal variables in mind, one could make the case that no other producer of texts has made a more significant contribution to the discourse of violence, needed for the potentiality of thought, than that of Edgar Allan Poe. Poe being one of the most read, or confronted, authors of violent texts.

To consider the mechanisms of violence and their potential consequences, ‘violence’ and ‘violent text’ should be defined. Within the context of this paper, ‘violence’ will be considered as any “destructive force” (Merriam-Webster, 1977), with ‘violent texts’ being the documented representation of said force. Additionally, before we consider the function of violent texts within Poe’s impressive bibliography, we must first consider the function of texts, or media, as a whole. There are four functions of media: to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to transmit culture. These four basic functions will ground this exploration, which attempts to ascertain the potential functionality of three specific violent texts of Poe. The ‘to entertain’ media function will be assumed; Poe is widely published, translated, and adapted because his bibliography is inarguably entertaining to the masses.

Kinna and Whiteley (2020) explore the interconnected relationship between art and politics and how violence within both realms creates a multitude of views within society. They

argue that “artists have long deployed a range of strategies to expose both physical and symbolic violence through representational, performative and interventional means” (p.2). This type of representation then leads to a form of art-activism, where a text is expected to evoke societal change or at the very least consideration. These “scenes or acts of violence {raise} complex aesthetic and ethical issues for both artist and spectator” (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, p.3).

Therefore, do the violent texts of Poe fall within this territory of art-activism? And if so, what are the potential strategies and mechanisms used to accomplish this feat?

### **Content**

The following is an examination of how the violence in Poe’s texts functions and the specific purposes it has to a given narrative. Further, what effects do these violent representations have on the reader? And what questions, if any, are raised from the violent text? There are a plethora of textualized atrocities to choose from when considering Poe’s literary career, but only three texts will be used for this study. Excerpts from “The Black Cat” (1843), “The Murders at the Rue Morgue” (1841), and “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843) will be both collectively and individually assessed. Collectively to determine any correlational motifs that might identify a larger purpose or functionality. Individually to distinguish three victimized entities and explore how the violence done to those entities can potentially propel a given subtextual narrative.

### **Previous Study**

Studying the effects of media violence is useful when considering the evolutionary processes found within societal structures:

Recognizing the permanence of violence helps focus attention on the conditions and mechanisms likely to intensify or diminish its repressive character. In the past, scholars of development have inversely linked structural violence, the violence ‘legitimized by the

prevailing juridical order and sociopolitical and economic institutions’, to levels of equality and disparities of power, wealth, and income. (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, pp.8)

However, generally speaking, within the field of media studies, research surrounding the effects of violent texts is notoriously unclear and in many respects unquantifiable. This opaqueness is furthered by an influx of data derived from ideological institutions with prejudiced intentionality, resulting in mass confusion. Fortunately, one conclusion has been reached repeatedly amongst domains of reputable research, which addresses the concept surrounding the emulation of violent acts after exposure to violent texts. “The issue is not whether depictions of violence increase the likelihood of similar violence among potential perpetrators, but the feelings and reactions that it creates among those who are actual or potential victims of violence” (Barker & Petley, 2001, p.32). For example, women feel less safe, vulnerable, and de-valued when they are frequently depicted as subjects of abuse within violent texts. These feelings and reactions amongst potential victims of violence should be considered, but based on these conclusions, one shouldn’t view Poe’s violent texts as anything other than a non-destructive force in and of itself.

Slavoj Žižek argues “that there is something inherently mystifying in a direct confrontation with {violence} and warns that the overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims inexorably function as ‘*a lure* which prevents us thinking’ (Žižek, 2009)” (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, p.3). This suggests that the over-consumption of violence can have an emotionally neutralizing effect on audiences. This may be true when talking about ineffectual, fictionalized violence. However, I vehemently disagree with Žižek’s argument as it pertains to non-fictional violent representation or highly effectual fictionalized violence. The latter being something that can be attributed to the texts of Poe. In other words, Poe’s violent texts are both brutal in representation and significant in a subtextual sense. These two traits,

specific to Poe, then have the ability to “shock audiences out of their dumb complacency” (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, p.3) when confronted by such effectual representations of violence.

Of further relevance to Poe and his aptitude toward effectual writing, there have been numerous distinctions made in media studies between unrealistic and realistic violent texts. Research has shown that “there is not a particular act which makes something violent, but the context in which they occur” (Barker & Petley, 2001, p.35). Studies have distinguished three different kinds of contextualized violent representation: playful, depicted, and authentic. All three can be attributed to the works of Poe. ‘Playful violence’ is that which is obviously staged and unreal, ‘depicted violence’ is realistic but lacking a real-world and recognizable setting attributed to that of ‘authentic violence’. Concerning contexts and popularity, the texts of Poe should be considered significant when deliberating the consequences of media violence. Confronting Poe’s text can educate the masses through exposure, and allow its readers to empathize with those exposed to violence, thus creating deliberations designed to ameliorate societal maladies.

Poe spoke of this type of contextualized distinction in a letter to Thomas W. White. Regarding the nature of his short story “Berenice” (1835), Poe states that the subject of his narrative is abhorrent, but the nature of it is, “ludicrous heightened into the grotesque; the fearful coloured into the horrible; the witty exaggerated into the burlesque; the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical” (Poe, 2014). Poe neither agrees nor disagrees with White in his conclusion that the quintessence of “Berenice” is in bad taste, instead saying that any deliberation regarding the text’s nature is irrelevant, because “to be appreciated you must be read, and these things are invariably sought after with avidity” (Poe, 2014). Here Poe is directly

speaking to the value of having a text that can grab and maintain a reader's attention, while implicitly addressing the exaggerated and playful nature of violence within the short story.

Furthermore, Taylor conducted research that considers the intersection of comedy and violence within Poe's texts, particularly within the short story "Hop-Frog" (1849), but it pertains to all of Poe's texts. Taylor notes that Poe's narratives often interweave light and dark elements, "to the extent that it becomes difficult to disentangle one from the other" (2019, p.6). This cohesion then creates an "experience of sacrifice or suffering into harmony – or, more likely, collision – with an experience of triumph and uplift... in which death and violence mix freely with and even spawn humor" (Taylor, 2019, p.6). This effect, of mingling humor and violence, functions in encoding "an allegory of the so-called superiority theory of laughter" (Taylor, 2019, p.6). As a result, it is then easier for the viewer to perceive the infirmities of others while reinforcing one's sense of superiority. He then states that "laughter comes from a man's idea of his own superiority and is caused by the sight of another's misfortune" (Taylor, 2019, p.6). I disagree with Taylor's thesis and argue that that type of superiority complex is not typically found within a mature mind. Laughter is instead derived from benign misfortunes, but not those violent representations found within the texts of Poe. When violent representation procures significant consequences for its victims, the result is not laughter, but empathy.

### **The Violent Texts**

**"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." ("The Black Cat")**

**"...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...as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity." ("Murders At the Rue Morgue")**

**“First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye — not even *his* — could have detected anything wrong.” (“The Tell-Tale Heart”)**

Conducting a basic relational analysis of the collective, certain motifs pervade throughout. These motifs may offer some further correlation between the texts themselves and the function they serve. All three denote violence done to the head. The head being the most vital and vulnerable appendage of the human body. Kristeva (2012) in particular notes how the representation of a beheading can prevent real violence. Paraphrasing Lacan, she says, “what is erased from the imagination and symbolism threatens to resurface in reality” (Kristeva, 2012, p.100). Her thesis exerts the idea “that representations of skulls and severed heads both evoke and sublimate our fear of death, particularly as it is related to the maternal body” (Oliver, 2013, p.324). Kristeva further connects representations of violence done to the head as being the most intimate of acts, and capable of liberating one’s mind:

Inversely, the profusion of images and symbols has a chance of thwarting the temptations of real actions. In this sense, and whatever the risks and benefits, the capital visions exhibited here, these graphic economies, these figurations that saturate and exhaust the latent meanings of the capital act, could be regarded as an intimate resistance to the “democracy” of the guillotine. In addition to the cathartic or aesthetic dreams they invite, let us cherish in them this very real effect as well. After all, if art is a transfiguration, it has political consequences. (Kristeva, 2012, p.101-102)

According to Kristeva, artistic representations of beheadings have the ability to stop the desire to behead, both in literal and metaphorical terms. This is achieved by first confronting the texts,

then seeing the consequences of such actions. These consequences, as Kristeva notes, are only the consequences of art and do not have real-world bodily effects, other than the instigation of internal contemplation. The three violent texts of Poe can be viewed as an artistic device designed to shock the reader into a heightened state of consciousness. These texts can offer new perspectives and allow the reader to explore broader and more complex societal issues. Instead of the culprit being Kristeva's guillotine, Poe's violence is perpetrated by deranged humans and an unkept orangutang, but the results are the same.

Kristeva's use of the word 'democracy' is of particular interest; democracy being illustrative of a communal effort. There are modern-day examples that can be used to support Kristeva's usage of this word. "More recently, new interrogations of violence have been stimulated by repeated waves of protest and struggles against unjust and oppressive systems" (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, p.5). I think specifically of the confrontation with the violent 'texts' involving the murder of George Floyd and the democratic response to said texts. After bearing witness to the gruesome video captured by Darnella Frazier, political and societal consequences certainly transpired.

### **Animal Violence in "The Black Cat"**

**"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" (Poe, 2014).**

As previously mentioned, Poe's texts of violence are not simply violent for entertainment's sake, but instead are indexical signposts that demand profound societal deliberation. Americans have a special kinship with dogs and cats, but are brutal unthinking savages towards the Animalia kingdom as a whole. In the United States alone, approximately 25 million animals are slaughtered every day. The delicate perspective, more concerned with the

ensorship of media violence, is less likely to confront this empirical reality. These truly destructive actions, concerning censorship and the lack of confrontation, are the result of an even more insidious mindset found within the average citizen. Through the use of violence within “The Black Cat,” Poe speaks directly to this prevailing paradigm of human treachery.

The violence within “The Black Cat” should be classified as ‘authentic’ because it’s both depicted as real and thrusts the reader into the familiar confines of domestic pet companionship. The violence within the text is brutal because the narrator is violent towards a beloved pet, a construct recognizable to most readers. The desired subtextual narrative would not have had the same emotional impact if the narrator committed a random act of violence on an animal with which he had no relationship with. Direct random acts of violence toward animals have little bearing on reality, as most do not partake in this sociopathic activity. But one can understand the very real relationship the narrator has with his companion animal. This relational reality used by Poe heightens the effect of the violent act. This effect is then used to explore the hieratical domain human animals feel over all other nonhuman animals.

Despite the narrator’s obvious madness, the hierarchy of human and animal {Poe} emphasizes here was long unquestioned, and the cat’s identity as animal remained unexamined. But as a growing, interdisciplinary ecological perspective has challenged such speciesist anthropocentrism, readings of Poe’s long-neglected animal characters have become far more common, with many critics commending Poe for blurring or transgressing the line between humanity and animality. (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p. 83)

What Keetley and Sivils argue correctly here is how “The Black Cat” epitomizes the anti-anthropocentric perspective, one shared by many advocates striving for further empathetic consideration of the world’s most neglected animals. This perspective further diminishes the

counter-argument proposed by critics of violent media viewership. If Poe did not both detail the act, while formulating an understood context, then the message of animal equality could not be ascertained.

This message concerning the brutality of man is further supported when Poe uses the narrator to offer a plea of support regarding his claim of sovereignty, by appealing directly to the reader, “to those who have cherished an affection for a faithful and sagacious dog, I need hardly be at the trouble of explaining the nature or the intensity of the gratification thus derivable” (Poe, 2014). From the reader’s perspective, this plea does not fall on deaf ears, the ‘gratification’ described is a very real feeling and denotes the self-centered nature of our relationship with even our most beloved animals. This self-serving mindset puts “little emphasis on his feelings for the animal itself, let alone any possible mutuality in that relationship” (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p. 86). The narrator’s cherished affection is merely a type of hieratical aggression, “appropriating animals to meet humanity’s needs instead of encountering them on their own terms” (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p. 86).

Alshiban (2019) used “The Black Cat” to conduct a study that examined cruelty to animals and its correlation to the abuse of humans, noting “in 1843, Poe saw the potential significance of cruelty to animals as an early indicator of problems of power and control and acts of retaliation” (p.203). This praise of Poe from an animal advocate’s perspective is warranted and is certainly plausible. Alshiban falls short with her criticism, however, with the distinction made between violent acts done to human and non-human animals, as if one existence has more relevance or worth than the other. She says if “killing animals made {one} feel good, the next logical step for further gratification was humans” (Alshiban, 2019, p.203). Though the statement itself holds validity, this critical distinction plays against the hierarchical structure Poe was

attempting to address within “The Black Cat.” Therefore, the discourse used by Alshiban is confusing and in contradiction with her overall thesis. She’s right to note that the narrators’ “violent acts towards both animals and human[s] are about the sadistic exercise of authority and control over others” (Alshiban, 2019, p.203). As a result, this violence then functions as a paradoxical message to those who “own” a pet companion. I agree with Alshiban’s message and interpretation of Poe’s texts, but the rhetoric she uses should have taken a moment to acknowledge the societal damage that has been done with making the hierarchical distinction between human and non-human animals.

### **Gender Violence in “The Murders at the Rue Morgue”**

**“...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...as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.” (Poe, 2014)**

The idea of Poe using violence to signify a deeper philosophical message is furthered within “The Murders At The Rue Morgue.” The hierarchical domain shifts from the whole of humanity to a civil war amongst the genders, one potentially curated through the patriarchal lens of its creator. Throughout his editorial writing career, Poe made his personal feelings toward women and their servitude towards man clear, “we prepare her, as a wife, to make the home of a good, and wise, and great man, the happiest place to him on earth” (Poe, 2014). But the question then arises, was Poe able to separate his documented prehistoric gender assumptions when he formulated the intended subtextual discourse for this classic text?

One thing is clear, the violence within this narrative is exclusively aimed toward that which is feminine. “Poe often depicts the suppression or annihilation of women who because of overpowering beauty, intellect, or wealth depart from the conventional and threaten man's

superior position” (Church, 2006). Church believes Poe used the ‘Rue’ female victims as antagonist figures. Based on Poe’s personal thoughts and the narrative of the text, it’s easy to make this assumption, “women murdered, men rewarded and going free (the orangutan is a male; the name itself, Malaysian for “man of the woods”)—one suspects the likelihood of misogyny” (Church, 2006). However, I disagree with Church’s claims; narrative violence done to the female victim was and still is common practice. If Poe himself were the central character within ‘Rue’ then perhaps that signpost toward ‘female as subordinate’ can be ascertained. But Dupin is the tale’s central protagonist. Poe was too profound of a thinker to merely be delineating a superficial gender power structure. The question then becomes what subtextual assumptions can be made concerning the brutal dismemberment of the victims?

There have been several interpretations regarding the function of violence within ‘Rue’ that are far more plausible than Church’s ‘misogynist’ claim. Lemay notes how the victim's deaths go mostly unpunished, perhaps then signifying, “the deleterious consequence of modern humankind's sexual repression” (1982). Other critiques have noted the sexual undertones found within the description of the mutilated bodies and their locations within the scene of the crime.

Similarly, Novosat interprets the scene as being one “suggestive of incest, homosexuality, and prostitution, the manner of violence inflicted on the bodies amplifies the compulsory heterosexuality written on the bodies themselves” (2012, p.85). She continues by observing how the highly intellectual and analytic mind of Dupin is incapable of reading the crime scene’s allusions of that which is heterosexual, “the reader can find it conspicuously present in the subtext of his literal observations” (Novosat, 2012, p.87). Dupin’s omission of the heterosexual then becomes an indexical indication of homosexual proclivities. This interpretation is interesting, and there are certainly undertones throughout ‘Rue’ that suggest some subtextual

discourse pertaining to sexuality. Novosat's particular claim regarding the brutality of violence done to the female victims as signifying Dupin and the narrator's homosexuality was not immediately apparent, but it does make sense. I began considering the narrative without the narrator's comprehensive crime scene description. Would this alter Novosat's subtextual claim? I believe it would. With this interpretation in mind, one can then potentially decode the narrator's description of the crime scene as being one propelled by an unconscious sense of bombastic delight.

Further supporting Novosat, Kozaczka (2011) suggests that the main function of the violence done to women within 'Rue' is to mask the 'queer silence' between Dupin and the narrator. The true narrative of the story emerges and expresses itself "through the bodies of the dead woman" (Kozaczka, 2011, p. 59). Poe's use of explicit violence then allows Dupin to detach himself from the sensual world. Kozaczka also finds value in there being two violated women instead of just one, suggesting some inference toward female sexuality as being a hindrance to "male homosocial networks (and by extension, patriarchy)" (2011, p.66).

What do these interpretations mean within a wider realm, and what value do they have when considering the function of violence within this texts? I believe the functionality is dependent upon the perspective of the reader and their personal interpretation of the text. My aim is not to ascertain exactly why Poe used violence, only that the violence was used to function as a means to propel discourse within a given narrative. The numerous gender, sexual, industrial, etc. interpretations by academics on this topic delineate some veracity toward that claim.

### **Body Violence in "The Tell-Tale Heart"**

**"First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the**

**scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye — not even *his* — could have detected anything wrong.” (Poe, 2014)**

Compared with the other two texts, this example of violence from “The Tell-Tale Heart” is more ‘playful’ in nature. The violence bears no semblance to any real, authentic, or relatable scenario to the reader. It is not drawn out, but instead presented in a matter-of-fact way by a narrator who claims to be of a sane mind. Because of its ‘playful’ nature, it may be assumed that the violence is without any subtextual content. However, acts done by and to the body can lead to a myriad of interpretations, and Poe was no stranger to using themes regarding the human body. Within this text, one prominent bodily theme emerges, and that is violence done to and because of the ever-watchful eye.

Tucker (1981) notes the relevance of the eye, which is the impetus of the violent act, noting, “Poe would, nevertheless, not choose a completely arbitrary point on which the madman's rage would be focused” (p.92). He then questions why the old man’s eye would become such a fixation for the narrator, much in the same way Berenice’s teeth became an obsession for Egaeus. Ultimately claiming that the narrator does not reveal any motivations for his obsession and therefore “we are forced to ask why the author chose precisely this object on which to fix the rage in the character of his creation” (Tucker, 1981, p.93). He notes the numerous examples of eyes as being a motif of fascination within Poe’s literature and claims that the single-eye holds relevance, perhaps being a representation of “the watchful Eye of Providence... the triangle {being} a traditional symbol of the Triune God” (Tucker, 1981, p.95). Is Tucker insinuating that the old man’s eye represents the eye of the U.S. government? If so, does the violence done to the man function as a rallying cry to address certain issues within

American culture? Based on his editorial literature, Poe was certainly critical of numerous democratic structures.

I found Tucker's claim regarding the 'Triune God' to be of particular interest, because of the lack of religious content that is found within Poe's writing. Does this lack of content signal that Poe was an atheist? If so, this interpretation could provide relevance to the function of violence; with Poe sending a message to the reader to reject the watchful eye of religious institutions. The delirium of the "sane" man, then signifying how any person, particularly a mentally unbalanced one, would be driven to frenzy if they actually believed in an ever-watchful eye, judge, or father constantly leering upon them. Additionally, "religious art of earlier centuries was replete with depictions of excruciating scenes of physical violence and cruelty" (Kinna & Whiteley, 2020, p.3); perhaps Poe is using this violent text to implicitly counterbalance the domineering imagery of governmental or religious tyranny.

### **Limitations and Ideas for Further Study**

It's glaringly obvious that any study of Poe's cannot be near conclusive with only an examination of three of his texts; Poe was a voracious writer throughout his life and career. There are numerous additional violent texts to consider within Poe's bibliography that could lead to a greater breadth of understanding regarding this topic, "Hop-Frog" (1849), "Berenice" (1835), "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket" (1838), to name just a few. Additionally, studying Poe's non-violent texts can also help us understand certain references used throughout his violent narratives. For example, Poe makes several references to 'eyes' within his poetry. Ascertaining this wider understanding of concurrent motifs could provide further clarity when considering any potential meaning or functionality.

Additionally, having more knowledge of the society in which these texts were published could further reveal any attempt at subtextual discourse. Great art can transcend and be relevant no matter what societal lens it is being viewed under. However, to truly understand Poe's desire to impart a moral message to his reading public, a better understanding of that public's moral fabric should be understood. I can only make assumptions based on the generalities of the time period and any major societal events that occurred; these generalities and events do not speak to the overall milieu of the times.

Finally, the best practice toward understanding how Poe's violent texts function would be to study actual audiences and their responses. This would entail gathering a large dataset of survey questions and/or focus group content designed to explore and determine any progressive leanings before, during, and after exposure to the violent texts of Poe.

### References

- Alshiban, A. S. (2019). Animal cruelty and intimate partner homicide in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat." *Majallat Jāmi'at al-Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz. Ādāb wa-al-'ulūm al-insānīyah*, 27(2), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.4197/Art.27-2.7>
- Ascione, F. R. (1997). The abuse of animals and domestic violence: A national survey of shelters for women who are battered. *Society & Animals*, 5, 205-18.
- Barker, M., & Petley, J. (2001). *Ill effects : the media/violence debate* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Church, J. (2006). "To Make Venus Vanish": Misogyny as motive in Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue." *ATQ*, 20(2), 407–418.
- Coviello, P. (2003). Poe in love: Pedophilia, morbidity, and the logic of slavery. *ELH*, 70(3), 875–901. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029902>
- Dern, J.A. (2015). Iron Poe: The rhetoric of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" in story and song. *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 16(1), 70-82. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/581191>.
- Dern, J. A. (2017). A problem in detection: The rhetoric of murder in Poe's "The Black Cat." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 18(2), 163–182. <https://doi.org/10.5325/edgallpoerev.18.2.0163>
- Goulet, A. (2015). *Legacies of the rue morgue : Science, space, and crime fiction in France*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hayes, T. (2011). Mrs. Gore and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *Notes and Queries*, 58(1), 85–87. <https://doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gjq219>
- Hughes, J. (2001). Poe's resentful soul. *Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism*, 34(1/2), 20–28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45297360>

- Irwin, L. (1992). Reading Poe's mind: Politics, mathematics, and the association of ideas in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *American Literary History*, 4(2), 187–206.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/4.2.187>
- Keetley, D., & Sivils, M. W. (2018). *Ecogothic in nineteenth-century American literature*. Routledge.
- Kennedy, J. G. (1996). The Violence of melancholy: Poe against himself. *American Literary History*, 8(3), 533–551. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.vcu.edu/10.1093/alh/8.3.533>
- Kinna, R., & Whiteley, G. (2020). *Cultures of violence: Visual arts and political violence*. Routledge.
- Kozaczka, E. (2011). Death as truth in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 12(1), 59–71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41506433>
- Kristeva, J. (2012). *The severed head : capital visions* . Columbia University Press.
- Lemay, J. A. (1982). The Psychology of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *American Literature*, 54(2), 165–188. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2926129>
- Merriam-Webster dictionary for large print users*. (1977). G.K. Hall.
- Nadal, M. (2016). Trauma and the uncanny in Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 17(2), 178–192.  
<https://doi.org/10.5325/edgallpoerev.17.2.0178>
- Novosat, C. (2012). Outside Dupin's closet of reason: (Homo)sexual repression and racialized terror in Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." *Poe Studies* (2008), 45(1), 78–106.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-6095.2012.00047.x>
- Oliver, K. (2013). [Review of *The Severed Head: Capital Visions*]. *The Comparatist*, 37, 324–326. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26237350>

- Peterson, J. (2010). The aping apes of Poe and Wright: Race, animality, and mimicry in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and *Native Son*. *New Literary History*, 41(1), 151–171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.0.0141>
- Poe, E. A. (2014). *The Complete Short Stories*. Mysterious Press.
- Reese, S. (2013). Verbal violence and patterns of words: Poe, Bowles, and an alternative American tradition. *Poe Studies: History, Theory, Interpretation*, 46, 78–93.
- Rose, J. (2021). *On Violence and On Violence Against Women*. Macmillian Publishers.
- Taylor, J. (2019). *Laughter, literature, violence, 1840-1930*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tucker, B. 1981. [Review of I Promessi Sposi, The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe — Vol. VIII]. *Literary Criticism* - part 01 (1902), 8:12-19
- Woolf, P. (2006). Prostitutes, Paris, and Poe: The sexual economy of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” *Clues: A Journal of Detection (Taylor & Francis)*, 25(1), 6–19. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.vcu.edu/10.3200/CLUS.25.1.6-19>
- Zimmerman, B. (2009). Poe as amateur psychologist: Flooding, phobias, psychosomatics, and “The Premature Burial.” *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 10(1), 7–19.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41507855>