

Seven of Edgar Allan Poe's tales are herein selected to highlight the author's representation of the intellectual in his fiction; namely, "The Colloquy of Monos and Una", "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion", "The Power of Words", "The Murder in the Rue Morgue", "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt", "The Purloined Letter", and "The Fall of the House of Usher". The intellectuals' appearance, the views they hold, the social functions they fulfil as well as their fate are clarified and analysed. Poe asserted that tales and short stories should not be didactic in the sense of expressing a truth or giving a moral. Their aim should rather be the impression of an effect on the soul of the reader. In order to reach a better estimation of Poe's compliance with his theory of non-didactic tales, or his divergence from it and indulgence in the "didactic fallacy" and in the reflection of his social context, an attempt is made to gauge the influence his career, lifetime and aesthetics have exerted on his literary production. Three domains are selected (religion, politics, and culture) to probe Poe's intellectuals' attitudes towards them and, more importantly, compare these attitudes to Poe's own. To start with, the effect of Poe's alleged "aversion" to religion in his tales is pointed out. First, the attitudes of his fictional characters towards the religious institution and religion as a set of beliefs are determined and then a description of the resulting reaction of those who represent religion in society and of the image they hold of the intellectuals is carried out. This attempt enables us to point out the intellectual-religion relation both in Poe's life and in his fiction and draw parallels or differences between the two. Second, the relation of Poe's intellectual (the detective August Dupin as a case) to power institutions (e.g. the university, journalism and the police) and his leaning to self-distinction within society is explored. The tools he makes use of for the achievement of the targeted elitism are singled out, and special focus is placed on language as a most effective tool of marginalisation and exclusion. The fate of the detective and the extent of his success in his endeavour are then brought to light. Three, because culture is the capital of the intellectual and the field of study he is most concerned and connected with, and because it is subject to evolution and change, the attitude of Poe's intellectual to the cultural domain is analysed. One of the tales (namely "The Fall of the House of Usher") is reinterpreted in order to spot the intellectual's adaptation to, or rebuff of such evolution. Questioning the common belief that Poe's tales are written on the spur of the moment, we also attempt to demonstrate the extent to which they constitute a patchwork entity with little or no connection, or else a solid monolith, i.e. inter-related and reflective of the rest of his oeuvre. In fine, Sartre's conception of the intellectual and of his function in society is applied to Poe's fictional intellectuals. This allows a better understanding of the nature of the latter as well as an evaluation of the validity and completeness of Sartre's categorisation of the intellectual