Notes

The Edgar Poe You Never Knew: a Mere Writer of Horror or a Humanist Master of the Mind

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In this paper I will present a rebuttal to these popular opinions about Poe, that what seems to be Poe’s unhealthy obsession with the criminally insane is in fact an intervention into the mind of his readership.

… is he revealing a part of ourselves that we were not fully conscious of beforehand, and that we MUST be conscious of in order to avoid our own self destruction?

….. Proceedings of the 2013 National Academy of Sciences suggests that forecasting future criminal behaviour could become a reality in the near future. According to their study, they have found the first evidence that brain scans might be used to both predict who will be likely to commit a crime and also how long it will be before that person commits a crime. This prediction is based on the activity in a region of the brain called **the anterior cingulate cortex**.

It was found that criminals couldn’t help but press the button either way, and that they were more impulsive than the average person. From these results, it was concluded that the part of their brain responsible for stopping an action may be deficient, that is, once an impulsive person gets started on a criminal action, even if they realise potential negative consequences, they cannot stop themselves.

Cannot stop themselves! Really think about the consequences of such a statement. If this is true, then there is no “salvation for the damned” so to speak. There is no possibility of redemption and no avoidance of one’s own tragedy. Fate has been selected upon you at birth, and there is nothing you can do to avoid it or change that course. Free will, remorse and forgiveness are almost non-entities in this line of thought.

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Well, it is not that a priori or a posteriori methods have no use, but rather that they were never meant to govern reason and certainly not our conscience. Whether we chose to operate entirely by faith on “self-evident truths” as in the case of a priori thought or depend on our “senses” to dictate to us a reality as in the case of a posteriori thought, we will never be able to discover a governing truth, which can only be known through the act of moral reason… otherwise it is like trying to hit a target in the dark. This act of moral reason is best described by Plato’s discussion of the hypothesis of the higher hypothesis, and in Schiller’s philosophical writings which I will go through in detail in an upcoming paper.

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