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# The Art of Death:

## Murder According to Poe, Hitchcock, and De Quincey

*Jeanine Bee*

Edgar Allan Poe is baffling. He is an author who, despite his immense talent, found himself unable to support his family. He defies the recognized literary boundaries of Romanticism and Classicism, and he wrote everything from poetry to literary criticism to satire. Not to mention the fact that Poe's work heralded the soon-to-become incredibly popular literary forms of the short story and the detective story. At a time when prose was regarded as secondary to poetry, Poe elevated pandering magazine stories to works of art.

Alfred Hitchcock is likewise baffling. Like Poe, Hitchcock's works span decades of change from silent films to "talkies," from black-and-white to color film, and through generations of expectation and taste changes. Also like Poe, Hitchcock found himself working in an art form that was considered inferior to other media. Despite these lowered expectations for the cinema, Hitchcock never denied his artistic instinct, and, after a lifetime of inspired work, Hitchcock will be forever remembered as an artist and his films as works of art.

Perhaps it is because of the low expectations these men encountered and the derogatory glances cast at their chosen art forms that they were drawn to the writings of a man named Thomas De Quincey. De Quincey, a contemporary of Poe's, was well-known in his day for an autobiographical essay entitled

“Confessions of an English Opium-Eater” which was published anonymously in 1821. More relevant to the works of both Poe and Hitchcock, however, is another of De Quincey’s essays entitled “On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts.” Published as two satirical essays and a lengthy postscript, these “Murder” papers can be seen as a source of inspiration for both Poe and Hitchcock: all three of these authors viewed murder as an artistic opportunity.<sup>1</sup> Of course as creators they crafted their murder stories as carefully as a sculptor would mold clay, but this careful attention to artistic detail does not set these men apart from other widely respected authors and film directors. Where Hitchcock’s, Poe’s, and De Quincey’s veneration of murder as a fine art becomes most clear, rather, is in the ways that their characters treat the subject of murder.

Because De Quincey’s two main “Murder” essays are presented as the minutes from a fictional fan club dedicated to the art of homicide, many of his characters are not murderers themselves, but are murder “amateurs”—or aficionados. The first essay is written as a lecture given to the “Society of Connoisseurs in Murder” following the history of murder from Cain to the nineteenth century. The lecturer concludes his speech with some helpful tips on the “principles of murder,” because, as he says, “the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more” (“On Murder” 31). These notes are not given as suggestions for potential murderers but merely as criteria for judging future artistic presentations. The second essay is written about a celebratory dinner party hosted by Toad-in-the-hole, a murder aficionado who had been sorely disappointed by the lack of artistic quality in recent murders, but who is roused from his discontent by a murder that is, by all accounts, “the most superb of the century by many degrees” (“Second Paper” 86). At the dinner party, a round of toasts is offered to various groups of assassins whom De Quincey’s characters greatly admire for their contributions to the historical canon of remarkable murders. These essays are usually read satirically, often with a Kantian philosophy of aesthetics in mind, sometimes with an eye towards “Nietzsche’s full-blown aesthetic critique of morality in general” (Black 16). I would argue, however, that in his “Postscript” to the “Murder” papers, De Quincey reveals his true feelings about murder. Contrary to his first two essays, the “Postscript” is written in De Quincey’s own voice and begins as a defense of his “Murder” essays. Here, he explores what he calls a “universal” fascination with the gruesome details of murder. De Quincey compares this fascination to the irresistible draw of a burning building; upon reaching a fire, “the first impulse is,” he claims, “to

assist in putting it out. But that field of exertion is very limited, and...inevitably, and without restraint, we go on to consider it as a stage spectacle” (“Postscript” 95). According to De Quincey, murders are treated in much the same way. “After the first tribute of sorrow to those who have perished,” he writes, “inevitably the scenical features...of the several murders are reviewed and valued” (“Postscript” 97). He then demonstrates the fact that this universal fascination exists within his own being by writing a detailed, sensationalized account of a series of gruesome murders committed by a man named John Williams in 1811. De Quincey’s “Murder” essays may be hilarious and satirical, “a foam-bubble of gaiety” as he calls them, but lurking beneath the humorous tone is a real admiration for the art of murder.

Once understood as a murder aficionado himself, De Quincey’s “Society of Connoisseurs in Murder” becomes more than a satirical tool—it becomes almost a hopeful dream, in which De Quincey himself might someday participate in such a society of like-minded individuals. Of course, two of those like-minded individuals might very well have been Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Hitchcock.

Poe’s own admiration of murder follows the pattern of De Quincey’s “Postscript,” in which De Quincey uses the clues left behind by Mr. Williams to unravel the manner in which his murders occurred. Poe mirrors this behavior in his own brilliant detective, Dupin, who solves the murder of an elderly woman and her child by reading the clues left behind at the scene of the killing in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.”<sup>2</sup> Poe also seems to agree with De Quincey’s assessment that fascination with gruesome murders is a universal feeling. However, rather than writing a long defense of the aesthetic virtues of murder, Poe defends his viewpoint with his stories; indeed, several of Poe’s dark, murder-centric stories are written as confessions (“The Cask of Amontillado,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” and “The Black Cat,” to name a few). When his audience reads these pieces they are, in effect, receiving the confession of a murderer and, just as a priest who would receive these confessions, the audience is then required to make a judgement. If Poe’s murders are simply gruesome, horrible, sinful acts, the audience will cast its judgement by simply not reading any more of Poe’s stories. However, since Poe’s stories (and others like them) enjoy quite a popular following, even to this day, Poe seems to have proven his theory: everyone is able to appreciate a well-crafted murder.

Hitchcock, likewise, respected a good murder. In fact, in an essay written for the *New York Times* magazine in 1957, he claimed to belong to an actual murder fan club, not unlike De Quincey’s “Society of Connoisseurs in Murder.” The

group, which he says is called simply “Our society,” would meet after particularly fascinating trials, and attendance included “journalists, novelists, playwrights, and even actors,” not to mention the legal representation from the trials and sometimes even the judge (“Murder” 137). In interviews, Hitchcock often ruminated on the best ways to kill a person (for a blonde woman, Hitchcock suggests murder by poison with peroxide), and criticized those artists who fell short in their work. In an article published in 1958, Hitchcock laments that “murder as a fine art...has declined in recent years” (Handman 87). And, of course, Hitchcock’s appreciation for murder can be seen in his films, most notably in his inclusion of characters who, like De Quincey’s murder “amateurs,” share a love of homicide. These murder aficionados are most often ordinary—even loveable—people like Joe and Herb who, through their philosophical exercise of planning the perfect murder, serve to provide a lighthearted backdrop to the much more sinister plotline of *Shadow of a Doubt*. Or the proper society women in *Strangers on a Train*, who can only giggle in tacit agreement when Bruno says almost accusingly, “Everyone’s interested in murder.”

The theme of the murder aficionado, however, comes to a dark pinnacle in Hitchcock’s film, *Rope*. The two main characters in this film, Brandon and Philip, are murder aficionados who decide to make the leap from enthusiast to artist when they strangle their mutual friend, David. Then they hold a dinner party in celebration of their work, inviting a handful of guests, including their old school teacher, Rupert Cadell. As Cadell speaks to the other guests, he reveals his own appreciation for murder as a tool and as an art. He details the proper ways to murder different types of people (like landlords, hotel employees, and tap-dancers), then specifies that “murder is—or should be—an art... and as such the privilege of committing it should be reserved for those few who are really superior individuals.” But, as Cadell explains his theories, a dark truth about the other party guests is exposed; Cadell’s descriptions of the types of murder elicit laughter from the guests, and after he suggests that one might murder a landlord in order to acquire an apartment in New York City, the ever-so-proper Mrs. Atwater declares, “What a divine idea!” Brandon and Philip may be cold-blooded murderers, and Cadell their unsuspecting muse, but it is the ordinary, well-behaved party-goers who reveal that universal tendency of murder appreciation defended by both De Quincey and Poe. We, as the audience, laugh along with Herb and Joe, Bruno’s society women, and the party guests in *Rope*, and in so doing, we are implicated in much the same way that Poe implicates his readers; we—the ordinary, well-mannered, educated people of

the world—must appreciate a well-crafted murder. If we didn't, we wouldn't be laughing along.

Not only do De Quincey, Hitchcock, and Poe use murderer enthusiasts as characters in their works, but they accuse each and every one of their audience members of belonging to the same society. Some might be offended at that suggestion, but there is a difference between appreciating the artistry of a good murder and actually committing one. De Quincey's society lecturer in his first "Murder" paper claims to have toyed with the idea of becoming an artist himself, testing his own mettle by stabbing a cat to death. After the deed however, the lecturer admits that he has been turned off of the idea of murdering any lifeform, and "for the higher departments of the art," he says, "I confess myself to be utterly unfit" ("On Murder" 34). This short rumination might just reveal the greatest mystery in such works as De Quincey's, Poe's, and Hitchcock's, for none of these men can truly say what it is about a person's soul that makes him or her "fit" to commit murder. They can, however, identify what it is about a person's works that makes him or her "fit" to be considered an artist. Here, it is helpful to refer to De Quincey's critical essay about Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, entitled "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*." In this impressive critical reading, De Quincey examines Act II scene iii, in which Lady Macbeth and her husband have just murdered King Duncan and are startled afterwards by a knocking at the castle gate. De Quincey uses this short critical essay to examine his own emotional response to the scene, and to reveal the artistry behind those emotions. The resulting composition reveals the great secret behind great art: its purpose.

In his critical essay, De Quincey writes of Shakespeare's work that it is "to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties" ("Knocking" 7). At the beginning of his essay, De Quincey introduces his motive for examining this particular scene in *Macbeth*. He says, "it reflected back upon the murder a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity: yet, however obstinately I endeavored with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see *why* it should produce such an effect" ("Knocking" 3). He then goes on to encourage readers to abandon their "understanding" when it stands opposed to other faculties, like emotion. De Quincey felt "a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity" when he encountered this scene in *Macbeth*, but his understanding told him there was no reason for those feelings. Instead of abandoning those feelings, though, De Quincey abandoned his understanding. He "submitted his own faculties" to Shakespeare's art and listened instead to the feelings the play

was producing in him. According to De Quincey, then, art does not exist to create understanding, knowledge, or morality. When an artist works in his or her medium, the artist is really working to create emotions.

Both Poe and Hitchcock agree with this assessment. In his "Philosophy of Composition," Poe writes, "A poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul" (667). Hitchcock, likewise, asks in an interview "What is art?" then goes on to answer himself with, "Art is an experience, isn't it?" ("On Style" 293). For both of these men, every other aspect of the art is secondary to creating emotion. In terms of Kantian philosophy, Poe identifies Beauty as the proper way to evoke an emotional response in an audience, as opposed to either Truth (morality) or Reason (intelligence). Truth and Reason, he says, may indeed play a part in a work of art, but "the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem ("The Poetic Principle" 703). Hitchcock uses different words, but presents the same ideas. "I put first and foremost cinematic style before content," he says. "I don't care what the film is about...so long as that audience goes through that emotion!" ("On Style" 292) For Hitchcock, then, Beauty is found in style, and it is the stylistic choices that create emotion in an audience, not the Truth or Reason of the film's content.

In light of this revelation, murder can only be a true art form if its purpose is to create emotion. De Quincey agrees, saying "The final purpose of murder, considered as a fine art, is precisely the same as that of Tragedy, in Aristotle's account of it, viz., 'to cleanse the heart by means of pity and terror'" ("On Murder" 32). He later expands Aristotle's description, saying that the purpose of murder as an art is "to improve and humanize the heart" ("On Murder" 32). An example of this "improvement" can be seen in De Quincey's first murder essay, when the speaker gives an account of a friend who planned to make his debut as an artist by murdering a baker. When he confronts the baker, however, the baker refuses to be killed, and instead challenges the would-be-murderer to a boxing match. The baker is fifty years old and out of shape, but, remarkably, he is able to hold his own for twenty-seven rounds against his assailant. De Quincey writes,

"What an astonishing stimulus to latent talent is contained in any reasonable prospect of being murdered. A pousy, unwieldy, half cataleptic baker...had absolutely fought six-and-twenty rounds with an accomplished English boxer...so greatly was natural genius exalted and sublimed by the genial presence of his murderer" ("On Murder" 29).

In De Quincey's account, the art of murder reveals in the baker a "natural genius" which is awakened by the emotions present at the prospect of being murdered, and which otherwise might have remained undiscovered.

Like De Quincey, Hitchcock's works often allow his murderers to "improve and humanize the heart." For example, in his 1959 thriller, *North by Northwest*, Roger O. Thornhill is the victim of several artistic murder attempts. These attempts culminate in the most iconic scene of the movie: Thornhill is conned into waiting by the side of the road in the middle of a dusty field, where he is attacked by a crop-duster with a mounted machine gun. Why did Thornhill's would-be-murderers make such an effort to craft an artistic murder when they could have much more easily shot him from a passing car? Hitchcock explains his motivation to create this scene as a director, saying, "The sequence is very carefully designed step by step both visually and to some extent in its menace... the menace of its content" ("On Style" 286-287). Hitchcock, as the director of the film, created this scene with his audience's experience in mind. Likewise, Thornhill's creative assailants designed this murder attempt for their audience: Roger Thornhill. The experience of being attacked by a rogue biplane would, of course, effect Thornhill in much the same way that it effects Hitchcock's audience by creating a feeling of menace that works to "humanize" Thornhill's heart. This process of humanization is not complete until Thornhill stages his own death; it is only after this last, "successful" murder that Thornhill is revealed to be a changed man. The menace that builds through a series of artistically attempted murders has a lasting effect on Thornhill's character, finally allowing his heart to be "improved." In the beginning of the film, Thornhill is a simple advertising executive, unsuccessful in love and inordinately attached to his mother. However, after his exposure to the menace of attempted murder Thornhill is improved and humanized. He becomes a brave, take-charge kind of man, finally capable of committing himself not only to save the world, but also to the woman he loves.

Many of Hitchcock's films use murder as a method of "improving" the art's intended audience. For example, Hitchcock's *Psycho* sets up an interesting situation in which the murderer is a subset of the audience's subconscious; when Norman dresses in his mother's clothing and prepares for a murder, his subconscious is creating a kind of artistic performance. And since, as Norman's psychiatrist says, "If [Norman] felt a strong attraction to any other woman, the Mother side of him would go wild," the murders are obviously intended as a kind of chastisement for any feelings of attraction or arousal that Norman feels.

In terms of improving Norman's heart, then, these murders are a kind of performance art that atones for Norman's original sin of killing his own mother. By murdering the girls to whom he was attracted, Norman not only keeps his mother alive, but also improves his own heart in order to become a better, more attentive son, without any distractions from pretty blonde girls.

*Rope* offers a more complicated version of the situation presented in *Psycho*. In *Rope*, three main characters are implicated in a murder: Brandon, Philip, and Rupert Cadell. Of the three murderers, however, Brandon is the only murderer-artist. Cadell is a philosopher who understands the aesthetics of murder, while Philip is a musician who is much more suited to his piano performances than to the act of murder. But Brandon is the true artist, saying immediately after the murder, "I've always wished for more artistic talent. Well, murder can be an art, too. The power to kill can be just as satisfying as the power to create." Brandon plans the entire murder, including the party afterwards, while Philip tags along as a nervous and, at times, unwilling accomplice.

After understanding that Brandon is the murderer-artist, the question arises: who is his intended audience? Whose heart is to be "improved and humanized" by this encounter? I would posit that Brandon plans the murder in order to improve the hearts of Cadell, Philip, and himself. Brandon meticulously plans every aspect of his art down to the smallest of details. However the artistry of his murder is not complete until a party has been thrown. "The party," he says, "is...the signature of the artist." And since the party stands as a "signature" to his murderous artwork, he has planned it just as thoroughly as he planned the actual deed of killing their friend. Cadell mentions Brandon's fastidious attention to detail when he asks, "Something gone wrong, Brandon? . . . You always plan your parties so well; it's odd to have anything go wrong." Of course, since Brandon did plan this particular party so thoroughly, nothing did go wrong; every detail was planned, including Cadell's return afterwards. Cadell returns to the apartment under the guise of a lost cigarette case, then asks if he might stay for a drink. Brandon and Philip have a reasonable excuse to say no: they are supposed to be leaving for the country that night, so it would have been acceptable to politely refuse Cadell's request because they must start driving immediately. Brandon, however, not only invites Cadell to stay for a drink, but then plays a game of deduction with Cadell, asking a series of leading questions and finally revealing the murder. This revelation is no accident. Philip understands this fact when he stands opposed to Brandon at the end of the film, saying "This is what you wanted, isn't it? Somebody else to know. Somebody

else to see how brilliant you are.” Indeed, Brandon intended for his crime to be discovered so that it would reach its entire audience: Brandon, Philip, and Rupert Cadell. Once the murder had spoken to its intended audience, it could begin to affect that audience in a way that would improve their characters, at least, according to Brandon. He explains his philosophical understanding of the art of murder during his dinner party, saying, “The few [who should be allowed to commit murder] are those of such intellectual and moral superiority that they’re above traditional moral concepts.” Brandon believes, then, that he is one of the few superior allowed to commit murder. But somehow, he is not confident in that fact until after he has actually carried out the deed. Immediately after the murder, Brandon states how “exhilarated” and “alive” he feels, as if he was less human before the murder than he is after. So it is only by actually committing the perfect murder that Brandon can prove that he deserves to be one of “the few.” By sharing the experience with Philip and revealing Cadell’s part in the plan as an inspiring muse, Brandon hopes to share the improving effect of his art with his friends, inducting them, along with himself, into the society of the superior few.

Poe’s murderers tend toward a slightly different audience than Hitchcock’s. For example, in Poe’s “The Cask of Amontillado,” Montresor tells the story of a murder that he committed fifty years earlier. He plans his murder carefully and waits patiently for just the right time to quietly lead his victim—the drunken Fortunato—down to his family crypt under the pretense of sharing some fine Amontillado wine. Unfortunately for Fortunato, though, there is no Amontillado. Instead, Montresor chains Fortunato to a wall and erects a new stone wall, trapping his victim and condemning him to death. In this case, Montresor plans his murder to be a secret to all, except for his victim. For Fortunato, the murder is planned to be “a spectacle of execution so that the victim knows who kills him” (Barban 56). Likewise, every minute detail of this murder is planned to coordinate with the wrongs that Fortunato has committed, creating an artistic quality that Poe termed “Unity” (Moldenhauer, 290). In “Amontillado,” Montresor creates unity in his artistic murder through parallels: since Fortunato treated Montresor as an inferior man, Montresor would force Fortunato to tour his family’s crypt, reminding him of the family’s storied history. Since Montresor sees Fortunato as a fool, he chooses to murder him during Carnival, at which time Fortunato and other people of high class would traditionally be dressed as “peasants, servants, or fools” (Barban 54). Even the Amontillado plays a role in Montresor’s unified artwork: “Amontillado” is, of

course, a kind of wine, but it can also be rendered to mean “collected in a pile,” which, according to Elena Barban, can refer to either the pile of stones that Montresor uses to trap Fortunato inside the wall or to the “pile of bones” that Fortunato would soon become (56).

Montresor’s detailed planning allows him to construct an artistic murder that is meaningful for his victim and audience, Fortunato. Since the murder is planned as a revenge killing, Montresor no doubt hopes to see Fortunato’s heart “improved and humanized” by feelings of remorse and contrition. Although no indication of remorse is given by Fortunato except for “a jingling of the bells [on his fool’s cap],” Montresor finishes his story with the words “In pace requiescat!” (“Amontillado” 421), a Latin phrase (meaning “May he rest in peace”). This phrase is normally used by a priest to absolve a dying person of his or her sins. In this case though, Barban asserts (and I agree) that these words are spoken by Montresor in regards to Fortunato, and that they prove that Montresor feels “that he has merely avenged himself for the wrong that Fortunato afflicted upon him fifty years ago” (Barban 57). I would also assert that these final words show that Montresor believes that his art has been successful; all of his work to create unity and originality has inflicted terror in Fortunato’s heart and, thereby, humanized his heart. The emotional artwork that Montresor creates leaves Fortunato a changed person, worthy of Montresor’s forgiveness.

Poe’s final short story, written the same year that he died, is another examination of a murderer-artist, this one named Hop-Frog. In “Hop-Frog; or, The Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs,” Poe tells the story of a king who is quite fond of parties and practical jokes. The king keeps in his employment a disabled dwarf who he calls “Hop-Frog,” because the dwarf’s disfigured legs only allow him to get around by “something between a leap and a wiggle” (“Hop-Frog” 422). The king also employs as a dancer a dwarf girl named Trippetta. Trippetta and Hop-Frog become close friends, and trusted entertainers of the king. So when the king decides to hold a masquerade, he summons Hop-Frog and Trippetta to help him make plans. Hop-Frog and Trippetta arrive at the king’s court and find their king to be upset and a little drunk. He forces Hop-Frog to drink some wine, despite Hop-Frog’s insistence wine makes him feel ill. When Hop-Frog, delirious with wine, cannot think of a good costume for the king to wear to his masquerade, the king forces him to drink more wine. Finally, Trippetta falls in front of the king and begs him to stop. The king pushes Trippetta down and throws a goblet of wine in her face. At this point, Hop-Frog presents a plan for the king’s masquerade—the king and his advisers will dress as escaped

orangutans, and when they enter the ballroom, the guests will be thrown into a panic. The king loves this idea and allows Hop-Frog to dress him and his advisers in furs and feathers then chain them together to make the illusion more realistic. On the night of the party, the king and his counsellors rush into the ballroom, frightening his guests with their wild behavior. Hop-Frog, a torch in hand, rushes around the orangutans, playing as a narrator for the crowd. “I shall soon find out who they are!” he shouts, hopping about the room (“Hop-Frog” 427). Then, in one quick movement, Hop-Frog attaches a chandelier chain to the chain that is holding the men together, hoists them into the air, and uses his torch to light their costumes on fire. He then climbs the chain to the ceiling and out the skylight, where Trippetta waits for him, and the two disappear into the night.

Because Hop-Frog intends for his homicide to be a revenge killing, it might make sense that, like Montresor, his intended audience is his victim. Many of the details of the murder even work to support this idea. For example, the king spends much of his time making a joke out of poor Hop-Frog, so in terms of revenge, it is only right that he dies as the punch line to one of Hop-Frog’s own jokes. And, just like Montresor luring Fortunato into his crypt with the promise of fine wine, Hop-Frog uses situations with which the king is comfortable—the promise of a party and a cruel practical joke—to lure the king into his trap. However, after all of this planning and detail, the costumes that Hop-Frog had designed “instantly burst into a sheet of vivid flame,” and his victims are dead in less than thirty seconds. If Hop-Frog had intended for his victims to benefit from his art, he certainly did not leave them enough time to do so. However, after the murder, I believe that the true audience is revealed: Hop-Frog himself. He uses his artistic murder as a way of “improving” his own heart, and lifting himself above his station. Just as Poe sees his own art as a way of “elevating” the soul and exposing it to “brief and indeterminate glimpses” of god-like ecstasy (Moldenhauer 288), Hop-Frog uses his art as a way of escaping the painful world in which he is trapped. He climbs the chain in the “domed ballroom (an architectural symbol of the arts)” (Bryant 45), elevating his own soul to a place of art and beauty. While Hop-Frog begins his story as a court jester, he finishes it as a changed artist.

This brief survey of their narrative works shows that both Hitchcock and Poe depict murder as an art in much the same way that De Quincey does in his “Murder” essays. All three men demonstrate ways in which murder might be used to evoke emotions and change characters. Additionally, they create

murder aficionados in their characters while, at the same time, accusing their audiences of harboring a like fascination. However, despite De Quincey's best efforts, not to mention Poe's long list of highly-esteemed stories and Hitchcock's lasting impression on pop and sophisticated culture, murder is still not universally respected as an art form. Still, artists and aficionados should take heart; after all, Poe's gothic tales were, for many years, seen as the ravings of a mind addled by alcohol and tragedy. Similarly, Hitchcock's films have only relatively recently garnered serious critical attention. Not only did Poe and Hitchcock demonstrate the artistic side of murder, but they were able to use De Quincey's ideas about the aesthetics of murder to elevate their chosen art forms. They used the emotions inherent in an artistic murder to inspire emotions in their own audiences, through their own mediums. Without the murder, there would be no Poe stories or Hitchcock films. No Montresor or Norman Bates or "Tell-Tale Heart" or *Vertigo*. Without the murder, there would be no art.

## Endnotes

1. Jan Olsson contends that Hitchcock does not care for De Quincey's artistic view of murder, saying, "The aesthetic approach to the art of murder was, however, not at the core of Hitchcock's macabre spiels. His murder advocacy was rather on the cozy side, homely acts of kindness and consideration as opposed to De Quincey's theatrical slitting of throats. Hitchcock's preferred methods for homicide were strangulation and poisoning." While Hitchcock's fascination with strangulation and poisoning cannot be denied in light of his films, I disagree with the idea that strangulation and poisoning cannot be an artistic means of murder, and I will show that in the remainder of my analysis.
2. De Quincey's "Confessions" has also been connected to Poe's Dupin and his short story, "The Masque of the Red Death." For a more thorough examination of either of these connections, see "Poe's De Quincey, Poe's Dupin," by Robert Morrison, or "A De Quinceyan Source for Poe's 'The Masque of the Red Death,'" by Robert Lance Snyder.

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