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Fear of the In-Between:
Interstitial Space in Edgar Allen Poe's "William Wilson"

by

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EAR OF THE IN-BETWEEN
INTERSTITIAL SPACE IN EDGAR ALLAN POE'S "WILLIAM WALKER"

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Master of Architecture
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ABSTRACT

Fear of the In-Between: Interstitial Space in Edgar Allen Poe’s “William Wilson”

by

Christopher Joseph Gerrick

“You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead - dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist - and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself.”


This quote marks a moment of palpable horror as the reader discovers that an apparent murder is actually a suicide. “William Wilson” is a story about boundaries: the distinction between the self and the other, between William Wilson and his doppelgänger, but also in the way these boundaries break down. In many of Poe’s stories, such as “The Tell-Tale Heart,” we are enthralled by the building of suspense until the repressed becomes revealed.

The vehicle of study will be a re-presentation/re-construction of “William Wilson” the text/character. This architectonic double suggests multiple readings of the interstitial spaces, events, sounds, characters, and objects featured in “William Wilson.” The product of this investigation cannot be divorced from a process of production which explores the concept of doubling - such as printing, xeroxing, photography, casting - and what the ramifications of these methods have for the design of space.
INDEX

Background and Analysis of "William Wilson" 1

Series of Sections, Version One
  Design Journal 17

Split Text of "William Wilson" 20

Series of Sections, Version Two 31

Series of Sections, Version Three 36

Grid Prints 88

Grid Drawings 102

Fifty-Two Drawings of "William Wilson" 109

Sketchbook 161

Bibliography 174

P.S. 176
The story of “William Wilson” portrays a conflict between a man who calls himself William Wilson and his double, a character that emerges as he matures in childhood. Whenever Wilson disobeys the rules of the school or plays a prank on a classmate, his doppelgänger appears, berating Wilson for his transgressions. This mysterious shadow becomes a source of continual irritation. Eventually his constant meddling reaches a boiling point as Wilson finally decides to kill his double. At the end of the story Wilson murders his other, but realizes after looking into a mirror that he has actually killed himself. Or did he? In the opening pages of the tale Wilson contemplates his impending death and expresses regret towards his morally reprehensible actions. During these final moments of life he remembers the events that led up to and caused his downfall. But if Wilson killed himself, who could be narrating the story? Could this entire story have been told by a dying person? “William Wilson” leaves all of these questions open to interpretation by the reader.

Poe’s “William Wilson” is an example of the doppelgänger leitmotif, finding expression not only in modern literature but also in modern psychology. Sigmund Freud studied the double through the psyche, postulating conscious/sub-conscious and ego/superego oppositions. His concept of the superego as a self-disciplinary mechanism emerging in adolescence mirrors the struggle at the center of Poe’s story. Yet “William Wilson” was published in 1839, nearly a half century before Freud wrote about the subject. In fact, the theme of the double can be found in many other early 19th century works of literature. Poe found the inspiration for
“William Wilson” from Washington Irving’s “An Unwritten Drama of Lord Bryon,” another story about a man pursued by his conscience. A classic portrayal of the internal turmoil between the law-abiding and the transgressive can be found in Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.”

Another critical theme in “William Wilson” exists on an architectonic level through the appearance of the labyrinth. The maze-like space of Wilson’s schoolhouse is a doubled construct that resides in-between fixed physical space and dynamic perceived space:

There was really no end to its windings - to its incomprehensible subdivisions...our most exact ideas in regard to the whole mansion were not very different from those with which we pondered upon infinity.¹

Labyrinths engender confusion and expose the inability of memory to comprehend the entire construct. Its space is one of interiority; one cannot “get outside” to map its organization.

Other writers of modern fiction attempted to navigate the space of the labyrinth through the idea of the double. Franz Kafka explored these themes in "The Burrow," creating a tale about a gopher-like creature that creates a labyrinthian interior realm while simultaneously acknowledging an fearfully undetermined exterior one. Jorge Luis Borges also looked at the theme of the double in many stories with the appearance of mirrors reflecting labyrinths into infinity. Like a deck of cards, each sectional "hand" would describe a different series of spaces; out of double came the multiple.

“William Wilson” featured key concepts that implicated certain architectonic methods and processes. These concepts generated the groundwork for working in the design studio.

Building upon the initial textual research through specific design studio exercises, I began to modify early assumptions about the text. A continuous dialogue emerged between observations of the text and the studio work, each challenging assumptions I previously held about the other.
First I conducted a thorough analysis of the text. Before I looked at content I noticed Poe's use of language, specifically his heavy use of alliteration. He uses certain words and sounds in the story to reinforce the larger theme of the double, the multiple, and repetition. Alliteration works predominantly on the level of speech; it is less effective when read to one's self. Often poetry utilizing alliteration has an almost lyrical quality. In this sense, language potentially challenges a private reading of the text in favor of a more public one. Consider this

Later I began to look at the text as a physical material, one that had passage (a favorite when read out loud in studio): “I had always felt aversion to my uncourteously a defined structure, one that could be added to or removed. I cre-patronymic, and its very common, if not plebian praenomen.” In all, I counted nearly seventy ated another reading of the text by creating a double - a “split text” similar instances of alliteration in the text.

that would, like Poe's alliteration, shed light on the myriad themes of

In addition to the repetition of similar sounds, Poe strengthens the idea of the double, the story, or multiple, through certain words and phrases. Examine the passage where William Wilson describes the “misty-looking village” of his youth:

In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town. At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight, at the deep hollow note of the church bell, breaking, each hour, with sullen and sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded and asleep.³

More important than Poe's description of the physical attributes of the village is his choice of words: “dream-like...deeply-shadowed...” Again he uses alliteration, but the words have double, or multiple, meanings. Dream states and shadows allude to the larger themes of the text, dealing with doubles and others. These multiple readings allow the reader to see the text operating on different, yet simultaneous levels; e.g. is this story real or part of a dream, or both?

Another level of linguistic analysis examined the origins and meanings of foreign
phrases that Wilson uses: the "other" language in this case being French. Similar to Poe's usage of alliteration, these phrases augment the concepts of the double and the interstitial:

You are, beyond doubt, uninformed of the true character of the person who has to-night won at écarté a large sum of money from Lord Glendinning.4

écarté
Nom masculin
(a) space, gap, distance between objects, interval, gap between dates, difference between numbers, opinions; à l'~ isolated, remote, out-of-the-way; à l'~ de well away from; ~ de conduite misdemeanour; ~ d'inflation inflation differential; ~ de langage strong language, bad language; ~ type standard deviation
(b) (Cards) discard

The use of the term écarté has a double meaning. It is both the name of the card game that Wilson cheats at to exploit his opponent and a term that describes the in-between, sharing the same definition as the word “interstitial.”

In the lining of my sleeve were found all the court cards essential in écarté, and, in the pockets of my wrapper, a number of packs, fac-similes of those used at our sittings, with the single exception that mine were of the species called, technically, arrondées; the honours being slightly convex at the ends, the lower cards slightly convex at the sides. In this disposition, the dupe who cuts, as customary, at the length of the pack, will invariably find that he cuts his antagonist an honor; while the gambler, cutting at the breadth, will, as certainly, cut nothing for his victim which may count in the records of the game.5

arrondir
Verbe transitif
(a) to round an edge, make an object round; (fig) ~ les angles to smooth things over
(b) (more fig) to fill out the waist, supplement, enlarge one's income; (fig) to polish, round off speech
(c) (Maths etc) to round, round off a number; ~ le prix à la troisième décimale to round the price off to three decimal places
(d) (Ling) to round, make a vowel round

Like écarté, arrondir takes on a double meaning. The cards used to cheat in écarté are termed arrondées, a conjugation of the verb arrondir, which describes another in-between condition. If
Like écarné, arroûdir takes on a double meaning. The cards used to cheat in écarné are termed arroûdées, a conjugation of the verb arroûdir, which describes another in-between condition. If one considers the mathematical definition of the verb, arroûdir alludes to an operation that eliminates an in-between condition; a fractional quantity, in-between two whole numbers. Over the duration of a single card game, Poe manages to both initialize and eliminate the concept of the interstitial. Shuffling is a critical action in Wilson’s cheating; like a mis-direction play in This tactic was applied in the design process to a series of photo- football, where one play disguises the emergence of another, the shuffling of the deck eliminates graphs with varied exposure levels. By shuffling the photographs one any suspicion on the part of his fellow gamers. could generate conflicting sections. Through the juxtaposition of one Poe duplicates this strategy of concealment during the masquerade at the end of the photo over another, an unexpected third image emerged; out of story. Wilson eventually realizes that although his double has interfered with his affairs multiple conflict came discovery. times, each encounter occurred in total darkness, or in the case of the masquerade, under the cover of fabric:

I had also been forced to notice that my tormentor, for a very long period of time, (while scrupulously and with miraculous dexterity maintaining his whim of and identity of apparel with myself) had so contrived it, in the execution of his varied interference with my will, that I saw not, at any moment the features of his face.⁶

The most shocking and horrific moments in the text are when the boundaries of darkness or fabric are removed and Wilson is able to clearly see the face of his twin. At the conclusion of the story, Wilson removes his antagonist’s black silk mask (a death shroud?), exposing the fact that Wilson is his antagonist. The meeting at night in Wilson’s bedroom is the other exception to the encounters in darkness, second only to the conclusion in the feeling of horror:
I looked; - and a numbness, an iciness of feeling instantly pervaded my frame. My breast heaved, my knees tottered, my whole spirit became possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror. Gasping for breath, I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face. Were these - these the lineaments of William Wilson?  

It is not clear what or whom Wilson sees that night when he finally gets to see his double, but it is clear that Wilson does not recognize himself in this figure. One probable explanation is that this is the only time when Wilson's shadow is actually asleep. If Wilson's conscience is figuratively asleep, then is Wilson asleep as well? Was this encounter part of an elaborate dream sequence? These mysteries echo the questions developed earlier in response to Poe's use of language, asking us to re-consider the nature of the narrative.  

Apart from the relationship between the Wilsons, there exists in the story a series of relationships to third parties that form another kind of doubling. The first character is Dr. Bransby, the principal of Wilson's schoolhouse. Described as both a draconian disciplinarian and a benevolent pastor, Bransby's own condition mirrors Wilson's. In certain cases, the third party figure represents some form of authority. At Eton, Bransby is such a figure. Later at Oxford, it is Mr. Preston. Only at the conclusion of the story is there a lack of authority, or an institutionally-enforcing representative; it is also the only instance when Wilson is able to finally kill his double. Sometimes, the third character provokes Wilson's transgressions. At Oxford, Wilsons preys upon Lord Glendinning, and at the masquerade, on the wife of Duke DiBroglio.  

Another key issue of the text is the narration. Why is Wilson telling this story? Is it a warning to others? Is he trying to remember what caused his own demise? Who is William Wilson, exactly? "William Wilson" is mostly comprised of Wilson's selective memories, believing that certain details "utterly trivial, and even ridiculous in themselves, assume, to my fancy,
adventitious importance, as connected with a period and a locality when and where I recognise the first ambiguous monitions of the destiny which afterwards so fully overshadowed me. Let me then remember." Is Wilson telling this story for the benefit of himself, or for the reader? We are confronted with the act of remembrance facilitated by repetition of experience. Like an actor attempting to remember his or her lines, repetition becomes a critical pre-requisite for storage in long-term memory. Wilson's memories never paint a complete picture; observations are distorted, left out, exaggerated. His memories of a schoolhouse with large, intimidating figures and objects are those of a child's, not a fully grown adult's. One gets lost in the labyrinthian space of the schoolhouse - it is impossible to remember where one was, or were, in the vast, complex space.

Two passages in the text begin to suggest that the story presented here is not a single event in space and time, but rather, one of many in a larger cycle. Wilson's memory is not a fixed collection of thoughts, but rather a dynamic entity that shifts, re-creates, and re-cycles:

I discovered, or fancied I discovered, in his accent, his air, and general appearance, a something which first started, and then deeply interested me, by bringing to mind dim visions of my earliest infancy - wild, confused and thronging memories of a time when memory herself was yet unborn. I cannot better describe the sensation which oppressed me than by saying that I could with difficulty shake off the belief of my having been acquainted with the being who stood before me, at some epoch very long ago - some point of the past even infinitely remote.  

This description makes one wonder if this story is one of many, perhaps hundreds, of "William Wilsons". Did these encounters happen before the story began? Did Wilson die multiple deaths? The feeling of *déjà vu* that Wilson harbors describes a lapse in memory, an otherness emerging within the seamless fabric of remembrance. Memory becomes associated with the
infinite, just like Wilson’s perception of the schoolhouse. Memory becomes conflated with space. Later in the story the cautionary whisper of the dopplegänger activates Wilson’s mind:

It was the pregnancy of solemn admonition in the singular, low, hissing utterance; and, above all, it was the character, the tone, the key, of those few, simple, and familiar, yet whispered syllables, which came with a thousand thronging memories of by-gone days, and struck upon my soul with the shock of a galvanic battery.9

Here we read about the shocking revelation of the past, of Wilson’s “thousand thronging memo-

Early studio production dealt with the idea of the double and the labyrinth. The first ries.” Memory in this instance takes on an over-powering quality, triggered by a subtle source.

set of drawings consisted of a series of sections with voids. These sections could be rear-

Again we are reminded of a conflict that goes beyond the limited confines of this short story, to ranged in multiple configurations to delineate a seemingly infinite space, much like the one much larger, reaching deep into the past. Rifts like these continually puncture the smooth-schoolhouse. The language of solid and void was also explored through manipulations per-

formed on the text. Much like the plywood, the text itself was comprised of laminations that could be voided out. The textual manipulations were done through a process of masking,

using white tape to selectively delete parts of the text. I created a “split text,” dividing the story into two separate parts. One text was similar to the original story, but with selectively removed words. These words emphasized the larger themes of the story through instances of alliteration (repetition) or concept (dreams, shadows, etc.). Although parts of the text were voided, its grammatical structure remained intact. The other half of the “split text” revealed the removed words, but voided out the larger narrative of the story.

After the first review, I re-examined the initial series of sections by exploring the solid and void theme through the use of plywood, a material that exhibited a similar “doubled” quality through its two directions of lamination. I created another series of sections, this time using strips of plywood attached by a threaded rod armature. The placement of the strips
was changeable; each strip had two holes to accommodate the rods. I also made prints as a way of incorporating the double into the process of making. Unlike the first set of sections which were rendered with marker over a grid template, the second series was printed directly from the model template.

After the second series of prints, I examined the double through another level of materiality by working with a series of castings. This working method became more three-dimensional, dealing with the thickness of material and construction of formwork. The model template developed for the second series of drawings served as a prototype for the formwork structure; the strips of formwork could be re-arranged after each casting, allowing for variation to occur over multiple castings. I also removed layers from the plywood with the dado blade on the table saw to reveal the dual-layered quality of plywood. The castings would make apparent the doubled nature of the formwork through the resulting surface texture.

Formwork strips were designed so that they could be rotated to create a doubled surface. When casting, the strips could be rotated so the casting agent would not pour out of the dado slots. When printing, the strips could be rotated to capture the end grain laminations. I developed this "doubled process" through the construction of a series of casts and another series of sections created by making prints of the formwork.

Polyurethane rubber was used in the early casting attempts, an excellent material for reproducing the formwork surface texture. The first pour leaked out of holes that were placed in the strips to accommodate the different threaded rod positions. Later I switched to using wax for economic reasons. Wax brought a certain awareness of time to the casting
process. It solidified much faster than rubber, and depending on when the wax was poured, one achieved different surface finishes. Much like the first series of sections, the casted wax panels could be re-arranged to create multiple configurations. With the early iterations I poured the wax directly after it liquified in the boiler. Often the wax would pour out of the formwork through small gaps, but unlike the rubber, the excess could be scraped up and re-used in subsequent pours. In later castings I allowed the wax to cool a bit before pouring so that it would congeal faster resulting in less spillage. Breaking open the formwork, the panel “encounter.” Just as Wilson remembered each encounter in the short-term, he also had persistent feelings of *déjà vu*, remembering not only configuration. The two major formwork panels used in the casting were identical; however, the last encounter but those from times “infinitely remote.” Each panel had a “front” and a “back” with different void positions. After making a print of the two formwork panels I poured another wax cast. Repeated casting began to wear down the formwork, which began to crack and split. Ink that was used to make the prints started to repel the wax, and after a few days, one could find the ink on the wax still wet. As the ink began to build up on the formwork, the wax castings became easier to remove. A new kind of figure/ground quality emerged in the series of sectional prints. Since the wax stuck to the formwork, it was more difficult to make prints of the wood structure; subsequent prints reproduced wax fragments as well as the uneven wood surface texture.

The voids of the formwork started to bleed into the space of the paper. In the final prints, the position of the voids in the formwork were almost indiscernable. By the end of the 12th casting or so, parts of the formwork broke apart. The wax pours were unpredictable in later casting attempts, often flowing out of gaps created in the broken strips. To compensate,
I would wait for the wax to become cool and murky, but still fluid enough to pour. By the time the pour reached the top of the formwork air pockets would begin to form, and the wax, already thick and cool, solidified within a matter of seconds. The final wax castings often had hollow cavities. Stringing the panels together along four threaded rods, one could see how each pour changed the formwork, thereby changing subsequent castings. This cataclysmic effect that pushed the narrator towards the decision to murder his twin; resulting in a systematic failure, where the accumulation created an unexpected logic that diverged from the initial conditions.

I wondered if such a process might be used to introduce variation into an existing repetitive ordering system. I chose to work with a grid, hoping to apply this process to "open up" its closed, defined, and repetitive structure. I constructed another series of sections from a plastic grid sheet with voided areas. After the midterm review I realized this working method was too similar to the first series of sections and didn't allow for the emergence of a fluid, non-fixed system, like the one suggested by the wax castings. I made more prints of the grid material, experimenting with ink application and multiple prints. I also began to incorporate mechanical reproduction through the use of a xerox machine to examine the prints in multiple scales. Some images when enlarged hundreds of times began to suggest new kinds of systems that were less defined and rigid than the original grid. I studied moiré effects that arose from placing grids over another and slightly shifting them. Later these effects were studied three-dimensionally through the construction of a deep structural grid. I took some photographs of the model in different positions, isolating the significant moiré effects that
emerged in the structure. After importing the images into Photoshop I realized that the intricate play of shadows within the grid introduced another layer of complexity to the system. I studied the interplay between shadow and structure through the Photoshop “Threshold” command. The tool makes elements that are visually or materially different appear the same; it breaks down an image into a spectrum of shadows. After modifying a few images with this tool, I discovered that it produced similar results to the wax castings I had developed earlier. At a low exposure the deep grid structure appeared as a few light, delicate lines in space. As I increased the exposure, the shadows began to emerge and fluctuate, eventually bleeding into the grid structure. Much like the wax casting, this “attrition of shadow” generated an entirely different product than the original defined grid structure. I captured these variations through a series of constructed drawings. I drew over each exposure, converting the zones of shadow into zones of lines. Thinking back to the layered grid prints I made before, I thought that by layering different exposures I might achieve a different and complex third construct. I continued to study the concept of attrition, but also in the way that one might disrupt the chronology of such a process. The series of wax casts, which were strung together in a chronological sequence, was actually an open system that could be re-shuffled to generate a different sequence each time, much like the very first set of sectional drawings. An interesting technique, then, would be to bypass the gradual sequence in favor of a more shocking juxtaposition. In other words, placing the first and last section in the series next to one another - jumping from the clearly defined to the more randomly fluid.
I looked for spaces that were suggested by these drawings. At first, I constructed Wilson shuffled the deck of cards to conceal his transgressions. The drawings that were extrusions of the original exposed line drawings. Later I realized a more operation, however, was done within the actual rule set of the game, complex and varied condition could be described through the layering of different exposures. concealing an ulterior motive lurking in the shadows. He accom-
Emploving the strategy outlined above, I placed a low exposure line drawing over a high one plished subversion by manipulating the game from within.
and drew the resulting “in-between” space. This drawing described an entirely new and different condition with an incredible complexity. I made a series of “in-between” diagrams by working with different grid exposures, eventually arriving to a two different systems. One was more cellular and compartmentalized, the other more linear. I began to read these “in-
between” diagrams as a way of re-presenting the text, but not through a literal translation or illustration of the story. Instead, the diagrams employed the mechanics of the text, i.e. the doubling, the chase, and the continual conflict resulting in self-destruction, in a process that could be applied in multiple situations and under different conditions. The fundamental idea underpinning the entire investigation was the concept of the multiple arising out of the double or the negative. The text of “William Wilson” would provide a way of interpreting the “in-between” diagrams, much like the way that Walter Benjamin believed captions would provide a way of reading a photograph.

For the final review I demonstrated how the results of this process could be inter-
preted in a vast number of ways. Returning to the idea of the card game, I made fifty-two drawings that interpreted the “in-between” diagrams relative to specific moments in the text.
The diagrams would suggest things like Wilson’s whisper, the labyrinthian space of the schoolhouse, worn and weathered desks, the stabbing motion of a sword, etc. I also considered how
the drawings might begin to suggest spaces beyond the confines of the story. Looking at
Anderson Hall as a double to that of William Wilson's schoolhouse, the search for the interpre-
itive drawings could be re-shuffled as an act of mis-direction, but would not undermine the essential concepts of the text, which
found many small, un-noticed, and residual spaces in Anderson that reminded me of those in
were emphasized by Poe more so than the actual chronology. This
the story. I treated the interpretive drawings as a form of architectural graffiti, where the
"deck of drawings" also had a pair of jokers: the two abstract drawings
drawings had one level of meaning relative to the story, but also to the actual physical spaces
which were used as underlays for each of the fifty-two constructions.
in which they were placed. Mirrors, closets, podiums, bookshelves, desks, doors, and bathroom
stalls were all used as sites for the "in-between." Looking at the story through the lens of
these interpretations would suggest another reading of the text. Instead of a chronological
reading, it would be a thematic and conceptual one, fostering a new understanding of
"William Wilson," both the character and the story.

In the final presentation I organized the drawings in space according to a layout
suggested by one of the "in-between" diagrams. Observers negotiated an irregular field of
drawings, hung at different heights suspended by nearly invisible string. A strange kind of
paranoia resulted, with people afraid to entangle their ankles or necks on the lines. The oral
presentation of the thesis alternated between readings of selected passages in "William
Wilson," and an explanation of the work on display.
NOTES


2. Ibid., 165.

3. Ibid., 159.

4. Ibid., 173.

5. Ibid., 174.

6. Ibid., 176.

7. Ibid., 168.

8. Ibid., 167.

9. Ibid., 170.
That in my path?

CHAMBERLAYNE'S Pharronida

The fair page now lying before me need not be sullied with my real appellation. This has been already too much an object for the scorn— for the horror— for the detestation of my race. To the uttermost regions of the globe have not the indignant winds bruited its unparalleled infamy? most abandoned!— to the earth art thou not forever dead? to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden aspirations?

I would not, if I could, here or to-day, embody a record of my later years. This epoch— these later years— took unto themselves a sudden elevation in turpitude, whose origin alone it is my present purpose to assign. Men usually grow base by degrees. From me, in an instant, all virtue dropped. From comparatively trivial wickedness I passed, with the stride of a giant, into more

one event brought this evil thing to pass, bear with me while I relate. Death approaches;

I long, in passing through the dim valley, for the sympathy— I had nearly said for the pity— of my fellow men. I would fain have them believe that I have been,

beyond human control. I would wish them to seek out for me, in the details I am about to give, some little oasis of fatality amid a wilderness of error. I would have them allow—

158
William Wilson

What say of it? what say [of] CONSCIENCE grim, spectre

LET me call myself, for the present, William Wilson.

Oh, outcast of all outcasts

– and a cloud, dense, dismal, and limitless, does it not hang eternally between thy hopes and heaven?

of unspeakable misery, and unpardonable crime.

bodily as a mantle.

than the enormities of an Elah-Gabalus. What chance

– what

and the shadow which foreruns him has thrown a softening influence over my spirit.

in some measure, the slave of circumstances
And am I not now dying a victim to the horror and the mystery of the wildest of all sublunary visions? I am the descendant of a race whose imaginative temperament has at all times gave evidence of having fully inherited the family character. As I advanced in years it was more strongly developed; becoming, for many reasons, a cause of serious disquietude to my friends, and of positive injury to myself. I grew self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions. Weak-minded, and beset with constitutional infirmities akin to my own, my parents could do but little to check the evil propensities which distinguished me. Some feeble and ill-directed efforts resulted in complete failure on their part, and, of course, on mine. Thenceforward my voice was a household law; I was left to the guidance of my own will,

My earliest recollections of a school-life, are connected with a large, rambling, house, in a misty-looking village where were a vast number of trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient. In truth, it was a venerable old town. At this moment, the refreshing chilliness of its avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew at the deep hollow note of the church each hour, with roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere

It gives me, perhaps, as much of pleasure as I can now in any manner experience, to dwell upon minute recollections of the school and its concerns.
that, although temptation may have erewhile existed as great, man was never thus, at least, tempted before — certainly, never thus fell. And is it therefore that he has never thus suffered? Have I not indeed been living in a dream?

and easily rendered them remarkable; and, in my earliest infancy, I

in total triumph and at an age when few children have abandoned their leading-strings, and became, in all but name, the master of my own actions.

Elizabethan gigantic and gnarled dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that in fancy, I feel deeply-shadowed with undefinable delight, bell, breaking, sullen and sudden in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded and asleep.

Steeped in misery as I am — misery,
Tales

alas! only too real—I shall be pardoned for seeking relief, however slight and temporary, in the weakness of a few rambling details. These, moreover, utterly trivial, and even ridiculous in themselves, assume, to my fancy, adventitious importance, as connected with a period and a locality when and where I recognise the first monitions of the destiny

Let me then remember.

The house, I have said, was old and irregular. The grounds were extensive, and a high and solid brick wall, topped with a bed of mortar and broken glass, encompassed the whole. This prison-like rampart formed the limit of our domain; beyond it we saw once every Saturday afternoon, when, attended we were permitted to take brief walks in a body through some of the neighbouring fields—and during Sunday, when we were paraded in the same formal manner in the one church of the village. Of this church the principal of our school was pastor. With how deep was I wont to regard him from our remote pew in the gallery, as, he ascended the pulpit! This reverend man, with countenance so demurely benign,

—could this be he who, of late, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian laws of the academy? Oh, too utterly monstrous for solution!

At an angle of the wall frowned a gate. It was riveted and studded with bolts, and surmounted with jagged spikes. What awe did it inspire! It was never opened save for the three periodical egressions and ingressions already mentioned; then, in every creak of its mighty hinges, we found a plenitude of mystery—a world of remark, or meditation.

The extensive enclosure was irregular in form, having many capacious recesses. Of these, three or four of the largest constituted the play-ground. It was level, and covered with fine hard gravel. I well remember it had no trees, nor benches, nor any—
TALES

ambiguous

wards so fully overshadowed me.

which afterwards

but thrice a week
twice

by two ushers,
to the morning and evening service

a spirit of wonder and perplexity

solemn and slow,

with step

with robes so glossy and

so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid

with sour visage, and

and so vast,
in snuffy habiliments,

Gigantic paradox,

ponderous wall frowned a more ponderous

iron

iron

impressions of deep

three

matter for solemn

for more solemn
thing similar within it. Of course it was in the rear of the house. In front lay a small parterre, planted with box and other shrubs; but through this we passed only upon rare occasions indeed—such as a first advent to school or final departure thence, or perhaps, when a parent or friend having called for us, we joyfully took our way home for the Christmas or Midsummer holy-days.

But the house!—how quaint an old building was this!—to me how veritably a palace of enchantment! There was really no end. It was difficult, at any given time, to say with certainty upon which of its stories one happened to be. From each room to every other there were sure to be found steps.

Then the lateral branches were returning in upon themselves, that our most exact ideas in regard to the whole mansion were not very far different from those.

During the five years of my residence here, I was never able to ascertain with precision,

myself and some other scholars.

The school-room was the largest— I could not help thinking. It was very long, narrow, and dismal low, with pointed Gothic windows and a ceiling of oak. In a remote and terror-inspiring angle was a enclosure of feet, comprising the sanctum, 'during hours,' of our Dr Bransby. It was a solid structure, with massy door, sooner than open which in the absence of the 'Dominie,' we would all have willingly perished by the peine forte et dure. In other angles were other similar boxes, far less reverenced, indeed, but still greatly matters of awe. One of these was the pulpit

Interspersed about the room, were innumerable benches and desks, black, ancient, and time-worn, piled desperately

names at full length, grotesque figures, and other
sacred division

to its windings — to its incomprehensible subdivisions.

with which we pondered upon infinity.

in what remote locality lay the little
sleeping apartment assigned to eight or
twenty
in the house

square

eight or ten
principal, the Reverend

two

of the 'classical' usher, one of the 'English
and mathematical.' crossing and
recrossing in endless irregularity,

with
much-bethumbed books, and so beseamed with initial letters,
multiplied
efforts of the knife, as to have entirely lost what little of original form might have been their portion in days long departed.

Encompassed by the massy walls of this venerable academy, I passed, yet not in tedium or disgust, the years of the lustrum of my life. The teeming brain of childhood requires no external world of incident to occupy or amuse it; and the apparently dismal monotony of a school was replete with more intense excitement than my riper youth has derived from luxury, or my full manhood from crime. Yet I must believe that my first mental development had in it much of the uncommon — even much of the outré. Upon mankind at large the events of very early existence rarely leave in mature age

With me this is not so. In childhood I must have felt with the energy of a man what I now find in lines of the Carthaginian medals.

Yet the world's view — how little was there to remember! The bed; the connings, the recitations; the periodical half-holidays, and perambulations; the play-ground, with its broils, its pastimes, its intrigues; — these, by a mental sorcery long forgotten, were made to involve a wilderness a world an universe ‘Oh, le bon temps, que ce siècle de fer!’

In truth, the ardor, the enthusiasm, and the imperiousness of my disposition, soon rendered me a marked character among my schoolmates, and by slow, but natural gradations, gave me an ascendancy over all not greatly older than myself; — over all with a single exception. This exception was found in the person of a scholar, who, although no relation, bore the same as myself; — a circumstance, in fact, little remarkable; for, notwithstanding a noble descent, mine was one of

162
those everyday appellations which seem, by prescriptive right, to have been, time out of mind, the common property of the mob. In this narrative I have therefore designated myself as namesake alone, of those who in school phraseology constituted 'our set,' presumed to compete with me in the studies of the class — in the sports and broils of the playground — to refuse implicit belief in my assertions, and submission to my will — indeed, to interfere with my arbitrary dictation in any respect whatsoever. If there is on earth a supreme and unqualified despotism, it is the despotism of a master mind in boyhood over the less energetic companions.

Wilson's rebellion was to me a source of the greatest embarrassment; — the more so as, in spite of the bravado with which in public I made a point of treating him and his pretensions, I secretly felt that I feared him, and could not help thinking the equality which he maintained so easily with myself, a proof of his true superiority; since not to be overcome cost me a perpetual struggle. Yet this superiority was in truth acknowledged by no one but myself; our associates, by some unaccountable blindness, seemed not even to suspect it. He appeared to be destitute alike of the ambition which urged, and of the passionate energy of mind which enabled me to excel. In his rivalry he might have been supposed actuated solely by himself; although there were times when I could not help observing, with a feeling that he mingled with a certain manner. I arise from the vulgar airs of this latter trait with our identity of name, and the mere accident of our having entered the school upon the same day, which set afloat the notion
WILLIAM WILSON

William Wilson, — a fictitious title not very dissimilar to the real. My namesake alone, of those who in school phraseology constituted

spirits of its

— even this equality —

Indeed, his competition, his resistance, and especially his impertinent and dogged interference with my purposes, were not more pointed than private.

a whimsical desire to thwart, astonish, or mortify

made up of wonder, abasement, and pique,
his injuries, his insults, or his contradictions,
most inappropriate, and assuredly most unwelcome affectionateness of could only conceive this singular behavior to a consummate self-conceit assuming patronage and protection.
Perhaps it was in Wilson's conduct, conjoined
a misty-looking village

depth-
darkened crease

dream-like and ephemeral.
And then I scrutinized, with a minute scrutiny, the forms, and the methods, and the leading traits of his impertinent supervision. But even here there was very little upon which to base a conjecture.
At this moment I
felt a light hand placed upon my shoulder and that ever
remembered, how大厦 described sensation of joy.
"Gentlemen," he cried, in a low, distinct, and never-to-be-forgotten whisper which thrilled to the very marrow of my bones.
My louder tones were, of course, unattempted, but then the key, it was identical.

and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own.
- my rival had a weakness in the
  control of gestural organs, which precluded him from raising his
  voice at any time.

above a very low whisper.
mercy, plunged my sword, with both forces repeatedly through
and through his bosom.
whispered the words

'William Wilson! in my ear.

I grew perfectly sober in an instant.
Death approaches; and the shadow which foreruns him has thrown a softening influence over my spirit.
I do not wish, however, to trace the course of my miserable profanity here—a profanity which set at defiance the laws, while it eluded the vigilance of the institution.
Gasping for breath, I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face.

Were these—these the lineaments of William Wilson?
Awestricken, and with a creeping shudder, I extinguished the lamp, passed silently from the chamber, and left at once, the halls of that old academy, never to enter them again.
wig so minutely powdered,

so rigid

and so vast.
Schoolhouse
- labyrinthian quality - interactivity
- each room to every other room 3 or 4 steps in + or -
- rule-based system of movement
- "placemat of voids?"
- thinking of voids as stars?
- sense of rhythm:
- |||| |||| |||| |||| ...
- making one section of an endless series
- figure/ground relationships. (1:1?)
- if about challenging then there should be no distinction/give.
- ratio of solid to void 1:1
- thinking of blocks a solid stratified medium.
- Voids should be crimson.

Kafka's Barrow.
sublim: scale.
struggle with adrift.
played out: vehicle.

- Complete text: more intensity.
- Add to text: array in a sequence.
- less important
- another set of erasures.
- different direction? literally?
- Close reading.
- Film/literature.

"Close readings" & buildings.

Memes:

Read:
"Age of the Me: Repressed."

Houston: Begin system. End me.
Tschenz: Architecture and its Double
Architectural Design 50 n. 11-12 (1980): 22

Modeling space vs. text vs. event:

   number-narrative sequence of experiences
   jarring context.

2) Not "3" but "2" implying a third.
   idea of lev removed from others and
   seen by a third party.
   anxiety - doubled as well.

3) Read Poe's Tell tale Heart

4) Learn to summarize their story
   quickly - define relationship to story -
   how is it used?

5) Mark moments of confrontation -
    fear-fear-jarring
   void disappears - conflict - sense of loss?
9/18

DISCIPLINE

- Below & nut & ext.
  components.
- Top = 1/4" plex
  sides = 1/8" plex.
- Top = 2"?
- Fixed cotton panel.
- ~3/4" (actually ~1/6")

\[
\frac{10}{10} = \frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}
\]

- Data slot adjustable
  for adjustable
  side panels.
- 3/4" gap.
  1/8 or 1/4" plex
Lolita: doubt is a Poe change has something she, objective of desire: Lolita, objective: remaining active, Poe: meeting the other

Internalization of authority
point of internalization has there always outside. Civilization and its Dicenter not completely internalized.

Chase: continually played.
Evolution
2 drives: authority
interest in spaces: internal center
needs more motivation.
Direction of movement
Played out - another meld.
energy: cleaning
board and ruler made of a put a model

envisioning not as a single other - printing process
accumulation.
Similar process.
We are adders.

Yohji Yamamoto.

consistent - consistent - whole thing
+ the part
decomposing the text. idea of presence?
displacement - does it go away?

One strategy: question of architect
as adding? or...

was kind: subtracting?


Albert - church - Greek temple.

Santos et al discuss cultural figures instead (art).  
Tempio - Albert: church being built... unfinished?

France - Older - restony bridge.

Supposed to look like a ruin.

Final Roman site in Rome?

Roman bridge: arches on side
building existed.

Erasure: [drawing]

So, course:

* The ways: schoolhouse.

duplicating machine
Factory - Schoolhouse

rindabk ngm

wumpen: multiplication

keyly getting to: making buildling's

aerial thing's necessary for making: tools

grace ear 2: to certain concrete
difference between two:

uninteresting what happens to formulae?

formula has a life

tall-up concrete buildling

holes in buildling:

tools integrated into buildling:

formula:

recommend: atalunr - threaded rod

also using - context - distance

italian v - structure - hinges - other

methods of making.

Calvos: Bonnet Barn in the Trees.

Read first chapter: dark sister of Alice.

1933 C. Tolkien.

animation of Alice in Wonderland.

video -?

learn Carroll: Mathematician at Cambridge.

giving them the wall.
start out with openings.
begins as design - process
multiple - process of doubling
prints used - random cut outs
day one - square.
product of process - raised relief method - voids broken up.
openings - plans? development
marks remain as section
differentiation of material
find ways & indy cut outs
operating within limit.

*discovery of spaces in text.
different scale - within indy double
zoom into units of material
combination of process
different center / school
near but also different
differences between...
Suppress...
Calvin Ingalls 10 yrs. old.
- space of the line
  very space inside the line
- possibility: proposal full-scale bldg.
leap ahead: area of thinking
tilt-up bldg. on concrete
fit into: ___________ powered 2
           top of one
          another
Technology:
Scheduler LA  - tilt-up - altering
House: ___________ perfection accumulation of thought.

Construction system:
tilt-up: plan becomes section
these project: Sci Arc
  fully  Rome Prize
  feasible: form into - place

program: definite cut  - story - site
  habit of the city
  definite cut.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


From: "Christopher Gerrick" <cgerrick@rice.edu>
To: "Nana Last" <nanalast@hydrant.ruf.rice.edu>
Subject: Thesis Change
Date: Friday, August 30, 2002 9:23 AM

Nana,

Before you get to reading my notes on the sublime, I would like to propose (after much deliberation) a change in the direction of my thesis. However, I think you will find that this new proposal is not a significant departure from the existing one, instead a "re-framing."

It was actually through reading Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden* that I saw a distinct similarity between Marx's interpretation of *Moby-Dick* to that of Charles Olson. In Olson's *Call Me Ishmael*, the Pequod is likened to a machine that navigates the space of America. I found this same reading in Marx, and began to think about a thesis framed under the context of literature, not landscape.

In Olson's introduction, he makes a comparison between Edgar Allen Poe and Herman Melville that has always intrigued me. In it, he discusses the idea of America in terms of its SPACE (he capitalizes it to reflect its scale and vastness): "Some men ride on such space, others have to fasten themselves like a tent stake to survive. As I see it Poe dug in and Melville mounted. They are the alternatives."

I never really understood what Poe "digging in" or Melville "mounting" meant. But I was captivated by this distinction. I would venture that Melville's "mounting" was expressed in Ahab's desire to conquer Nature through the Pequod machine, which provided him with the mobility to seek revenge, but ultimately, also carry him to his doom.

But that doesn't explain Poe's "digging." Through this revised thesis, I would like to explore what this could mean. Although the sublime as a concept still interests me, I realized after reading Marx that my interest was not in the rhetoric of landscape, but rather in the way that we view our surroundings - and they way these surroundings affect us. I've discovered this relationship re-presented in fiction.

Following is an abstract of the new thesis. It borrows from Vidler's *Architectural Uncanny*, although the promise of this proposition lies within a specific design project. It also builds on research that I've been doing since undergrad in the grotesque, as well as an interest in cross-disciplinary work. I consulted with Dr. Harter last semester, whom I took a course here at Rice with on Modern Short Fiction, and she said that she would be willing to be on the committee.

There is also a link to a website featuring a text by Poe, "William Wilson," that will be used as the starting point. I will make a hard copy of the story and place it in your mailbox this weekend, along with a new bibliography.

Chris