



PSA Newsletter

POE Studies Association Newsletter

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PSA AT 25

In December 1997, the Poe Studies Association will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary as a scholarly organization. Conceived at a meeting of the Modern Language Association in New York on 30 December 1972, the PSA was among the first author societies to achieve allied organization status in the MLA. A tentative statement of purpose was read at the first meeting:

In general, to further exchange of information and ideas related to research in Poe biography and criticism. More specifically, to encourage cooperative effort in establishing a sense of community among Poe scholars in this country and abroad, in avoiding duplication of scholarly work, in the use of major repositories of Poe manuscripts, and in initiating and sponsoring new research and publication. The purposes will be served by means of a Newsletter and the affiliated journal *Poe Studies*, by annual gathering of members and friends in conjunction with the MLA meetings, by special conferences, and by cooperation with several Poe societies and libraries.

In May 1973, the first issue of the *PSA Newsletter* was published under the editorship of Eric W. Carlson and John E. Reilly. Among other items in the newsletter was a section devoted to queries. In the next issue of this newsletter, the editor hopes to revive this section. Queries should be sent to the editor or by hitting "suggestions" at the website <http://www.an.psu.edu/bac7/poe.html>.

CONFERENCES

MLA

On Sunday, December 28, 3:30-4:45 p.m., Richard Kopley, Penn State DuBois, will chair a panel in the Quebec Room of the Royal York Hotel—"Apocalypse Now: Poe's Sense of an Ending"—with the following participants: Diana York Blaine, University of North Texas, "Bringing Down the House: The Deadly Feminine in Poe's 'Usher,'" Kenneth Alan Hovey, University of Texas, San Antonio, "The End of the World and the End of Dreams: 'The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion,'" Armida J. Gilbert, Kent State University, "Apocalypse as Revelation: The Ambiguous Conclusion of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*," and David F. Pagano, University of California, Irvine, "The Space of Apocalypse in 'The Masque of the Red Death.'"

On Tuesday, December 30, noon-1:15 p.m., J. Gerald Kennedy, Louisiana State University, will chair a panel in 205A of the Toronto Convention Centre—"The Poetics and Politics of the Sensational"—with the following participants: David Leverenz, University of Florida, "Bodies that Splatter: Poe's Sensational Nobodies as Spectres of Capitalist Exchange;" Teresa Goddu, Vanderbilt University, "Poe, Sensationalism, and Slavery;" Kenneth Dauber, SUNY Buffalo, "Sensational Epistemology;" and James Werner, Graduate Center, CUNY, "Neither in nor out of *Blackwood*: Poe's *Flânerie* and the Tale of Sensation."

International Poe Conference

Honoring the sesquicentennial of Poe's death, The International Edgar Allan Poe Conference will be held October 7-10, 1999, at the Jefferson Hotel (please note change) in Richmond. A block of rooms has been reserved for conference attendees at special rates (single/double—\$145; triple—\$155; quad—\$165). To make reservations, call (800) 424-8014. The call for papers will go out in early 1998. Early submissions may be sent to Richard Kopley at Penn State DuBois, College Place, DuBois, PA 15801. The Poe conference is sponsored by the PSA; the Edgar Allan Poe Museum of Richmond will be involved with the event, as well.

The ALA Renaissance Conference

The ALA American Renaissance Conference will be held in Cancun, Mexico, December 11-14, 1997 and will feature a Poe session, "Edgar Allan Poe: Books, Patents, Codes." The speakers are Kevin Hayes (University of Central Oklahoma), "Poe's College Reading;" Deborah Lovely (Penn State Altoona College), "'His Actions Cannot Implicate Him, His Words May': Mechanical Ingenuity and U. S. Patents in Poe's 'Maelzel's Chess-Player' and 'The Premature Burial,'" and David Ketterer (Concordia University), "'Shudder': A Cryptogram in 'The Fall of the House of Usher.'" Two additional papers on Poe in other sessions include: Kenneth Alan Hovey (University of Texas, San Antonio), "The Gods of Place and Time in Poe's *Pym* and Longfellow's *Hyperion*" and William Crisman (Penn State Altoona College), "The Comedy of Being Buried Alive: Washington Irving's 'Legend of the Role of the Alhambra' and Poe's 'Premature Burial.'"

Min Tanaka's *The Poe Project* (*Stormy Membrane*)

Opening the fall season at PS 122 to sold-out crowds, Min Tanaka, choreographer, director and designer of *The Poe Project* (*Stormy Membrane*), moved through Poe's work with a cast of eight U.S.-based dancers (Nuria Divi, Zack Fuller, Dana Iovacchini, Darrell Jones, Nia Love, Milvia Martinez, Dillon Paul and Nathan Whiting) in an evening-long performance. From the program notes, we learn that Susan Sontag wrote the libretto and suggested that Tanaka "draw on the images and themes of the great American writer Edgar Allan Poe. She knew Poe is very well known in Japan and that there is some affinity between his work and the Japanese sensibility." The dance itself was created during a rehearsal residency in Hakushu, a rural community outside of Tokyo. Through a series of translations—from Poe to Sontag to Tanaka, from nineteenth to twentieth century, from text to dance—*The Poe Project* "pays tribute to Poe's themes with fragments of images and anecdotes taken from a number of Poe stories," including chapters 7 and 24 of *Pym*, "The Assniation," "The Man of the Crowd," "William Wilson," "The Tell Tale Heart," and others, as noted below in the description of Tanaka's performance.

On a river, in a black mist, shadows move slowly behind a black curtain. When the curtain opens, the shadows transform into beings: Min Tanaka stands dressed in a trench coat and fedora next to a woman similarly dressed who carries a pole to direct their imaginary raft along the river. The sound of a heart-beat fills the theater. Tanaka dances a solo—Butoh-based movements and timeless agitated gestures. The mood is dark, disturbed yet subdued. A man walks by wearing a bustle. Other figures pass. Tanaka moves into the audience, takes a seat in the center, slouches down and observes from beneath his hat. The woman from the raft (Nia Love) seems to be following Tanaka's traces, investigating his absence, dancing the exact paths he had danced just before, until another curtain is drawn back to reveal a line of characters dressed in nineteenth-century costume. They watch her looking for him. When Tanaka returns to the stage, he and Love dance a slow motion chase scene, trying to discern criminal from spectator. Nothing is discovered. All the while, characters pass by, enter and exit, pass and re-pass.

A more theatrical scene ensues: possibly a mother, daughter and a male figure dance with gestures literal enough to suggest a rape and a murder ["Murders in the Rue Morgue"]. The next scene filters in, and the lighting shifts so that the audience begins to notice the silhouette of several murderous scenes. Engrossed in the slow onslaught of a strangler in one scenario, the audience finds itself suddenly distracted by a loud noise in a far corner. Looking towards the noise, the audience sees nothing; looking back to the scene of the crime, disappointment ensues: the victim is dead, the killer, gone. This series of deaths in shadow is offset by a pair of men on stage who dance a defunct strip tease of sorts in which they seem as much dog as man, and the struggle to undress is as atrocious as it may be delightful. When they're finished, three dancers take their places sitting on a cloth at the center of downstage, looking innocently at a bowl of meringue. Each character finds a different use for the fluffy white substance. Perhaps the most provocative is a young woman who savors it beneath the filmy veil of her blouse.

Again the scene changes and dancers enter the stage carrying long bamboo poles ["A Descent into the Maelstrom"]. They are coupled around their poles, and as the entrances accumulate, we recognize that each pair shares very different relationships to its pole. With the first couple, each vies for control, obviously representing a phallic struggle to obtain power; the man and woman fight. In the scenario of the second couple, the pole seems to overwhelm them both, twisting and hurling them relentlessly about the stage. The third couple seems to have devised a rather patient system of cooperation; together they are able to use the pole's momentum so that, by the end of the set, as the remaining couples continue to flail and struggle, the young woman (played by Milvia Martinez) has managed to clamber to the top of the pole, steadied by the efforts of her partner. The resonance of this couple's accomplishment also generates the most "beautiful" dance: their movements are fluid, concise, productive. In fact, the gorgeousness of Martinez' ascent, the clarity and serenity of her perch, mark this as a moment of climax.

After this scene, a light comes up again on Tanaka's seat in the audience. He stands and replays the early solo, this time without the hat. This dance is more vulnerable, and a howling comes from behind the curtains. Dancers enter solo, once again with the poles, which, depending on the dancer's grip, continually transform, becoming at once a pointing finger to accuse Tanaka, a gun, a flag, a symbol of entrapment, a handcuff to make the dancers' ankles drag, the blade of a guillotine, a tool for harvest, a street lamp, a drum stick, a whip, a circular sweeping broom, a sand-writing instrument. This frenzy is interrupted by the sudden glare of an institutional light that marks the bright rectangular figure of a door seeming to have opened from behind the audience. A dance of confession follows ["The Imp of the Perverse"]. Tanaka condemns himself to the slow lyrical strains of some unnamed classical music. The lights fade, as if to end (this would be a very natural place for an American audience to expect an end. The confession made, what else is necessary?), but there is a surprise yet to come: a gloriously gentle return-of-lost-love scene where dancers approach, kiss and depart from one another in the sweetest slow motion ["A Dream within a Dream"]. Is this the heaven which follows condemnation and expulsion of evil? Indeed, it's hard to come to any conclusion about the story behind Tanaka's work, which remains, above all, fragmented and purposefully puzzling.

Tanaka has constructed a collage in which temporality is permanently skewed, and evidence is often unreadable. Though it is possible to discern citations from Poe's work, the more significant effect of Tanaka's composition is the conflation of collage. His choreography leads the spectator to relinquish the role of decipherer, so that he must, instead, take pleasure in an aesthetics of struggle, contortion and the frustration of partial truths, and, in accepting this movement of partial truths, the dance suggests what cannot be said subtly enough with words. Mixing the Japanese movement tradition of Butoh with the inspiration of Poe's work, Tanaka leads his audience through the horrific and into the sublime. The result is utterly satisfying.

The Poe Project will continue its tour throughout the United States to finish with a performance in Tokyo.

Liz Claire
NYU, Tisch School of the Arts



From left to right: Susan Jaffe Tane, John P. C. Moon, Dr. W. D. Taylor.

The Susan Jaffe Tane Collection at The Poe Museum

On the eve commemorating Poe's death and in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum in Richmond, Dr. W. D. Taylor, President of the Poe Foundation, along with Susan Jaffe Tane, "the world's foremost private Poe collector," and Patricia Cornwell, Richmond's own detective fiction writer and winner of the Edgar Award, hosted the opening of "Quoth the Raven," "one of the largest and richest exhibitions of *Poeana* ever mounted." The exhibit, featuring over five dozen items from the Tane collection, is complemented by an exquisite catalogue prepared by Stephan Loewentheil and Thomas Edsall, published in a limited edition of five hundred.

On that warm night, over one hundred guests walked through the "old house," into the garden and through the reception line before entering the intimate exhibit space where glass-encased first editions and Poe memorabilia (including Poe's off-white satin vest and a wood fragment from Poe's coffin) are displayed. Included are *The Gift for 1845* with Poe's "The Purloined Letter;" *Tamberlane and Other Poems* (1827), one of twelve extant copies and one of two in private collections; an autograph manuscript of "The Spirits of the Dead" (1828), "the earliest Poe manuscript in private hands;" and Poe's first contribution to *Graham's Magazine* (then also called *The Casket*), "The Man of the Crowd." Filled with the awe of such an experience, visitors wound their way through another courtyard to a block-long open air tent where a reception was held. The night was warm and the liquor flowed; guests enjoyed luscious food, a string duo and discussion—"The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure."

About an hour after the event began, Dr. Taylor and Patricia Cornwell formally introduced Susan Jaffe Tane and acknowledged her generosity in sharing this exceptional collection with the world. Taking the podium, Ms. Tane spoke engagingly of her fascination with Poe's work beginning with her youthful admiration of "The Raven." Coming upon *The Raven and Other Poems* (1845) — ("Price, Thirty-one Cents") at a New York City antiques show years later, Tane realized that she could actually own such a treasure; she bought it and was "hooked." Her fascination with Poe grew to an almost dangerous level: she told a story of getting a ticket for speeding 80 mph on the

Taconic Parkway, lost in the grip of a taped version of "The Pit and the Pendulum."

Completely drawn into the world of Poe's "dream within a dream" and with the help of Poe enthusiast and owner of The 19th Century Bookshop in Baltimore, Stephan Loewentheil, Ms. Tane described her absorbing quest to buy "the best material available." Her present favorites include Poe's last annotated edition of *Eureka*, including a final paragraph in penciled hand, and a 12 October 1839 letter from Poe to Washington Irving (a facsimile can be seen in the catalogue) requesting his assistance in promoting "William Wilson." As we all know, such written requests for financial help and promotion were not unusual for Poe. Ms. Tane aptly suggested that, in addition to being the founder of the detective story, Poe was also the originator of the "form letter."

The exhibit officially runs through January 19, 1998, but it may spend a whole year at the museum, ending in October 1998. For more information call (804) 648-5523 or visit the website: <http://poemuseum.org>.

PSA Members:

Are you linked to our listserve? If you're not and you'd like to be, send your e-mail address to the editor.

Poe Everywhere

Poe in PA

Homage to Poe in PA: "The Master of the Macabre Returns to Mt. Hope"—"Edgar Allan Poe Weekends at Skytop Lodge." You, too, could have spent a weekend away in Skytop, PA attending "Prospero's Ball" and "Poe's Freakish Feast" followed by enactments of Poe's tales. Or traveled to Cornwall to attend "Poe Evermore," a twelve-year tradition, performed in the "Theater in the Mansion," scheduled for Halloween and the two weeks that follow. A quote from "Shadow" introduces the often sold-out performances in the newsletter announcement. For more information: www.parenaisancefaire.com.

Or you could have traveled to Bellefonte to see The Pennsylvania Dance Theatre's "The Raven and Other Mysterious Tales" at the Garman Opera House on October 25, 31, or November 1. Featured pieces included "William Wilson," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "Dreamland," "The Power of Words," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Raven," and "The Bells."

Poe in Africa

Dan Hoffman, while lecturing in London, chanced upon this review in *Time Out* (17 May 1997) of a film shot in South Africa "based on 'a poor amalgam of several Edgar Allan Poe stories'" — *Buried Alive*, directed by Gerard Kilcoine, 1990, SA with Robert Vaughn, Donald Pleasence, Karen Witter and John Carradine. "A sad farewell to John Carradine in his final role," notes the reviewer.

Poe in Scotland

From Robert Brill we read an article in the "Local News" section of the *Greenock Telegraph* (20 May 1997): "American fans of horror writer Edgar Allan Poe could soon be flocking to Greenock as part of a pilgrimage . . . [tracking] Poe's visit to the town with his Scots born foster father John Allan who emigrated to the States from Irvine." Brill and a colleague, Grace Kenmotsu, traveled to Scotland in May to research a possible genealogical link between John Allan and Robert Burns. (continued on page 8)

Reviews

A Companion to Poe Studies, ed. Eric W. Carlson.
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996. 604 pp. \$99.50.

This reference volume is designed as a guide to Poe studies for the scholar, the student, and the common reader. Several of its twenty-five chapters put Poe and his writings center stage with secondary criticism called upon to support the central arguments. Among the strongest chapters in this regard are Kenneth A. Hovey's placement of Poe in the tradition of Epicurean philosophy, Richard P. Benton's discussion of the early tales (1831-35), and David Halliburton's exploration of the role of experience in Poe's aesthetics. These three essays bid to establish new critical standards on their chosen subjects. The student or non-specialist may find several other chapters heavy going, since they read more like surveys of Poe criticism. Wary that critical controversy or disagreement may obscure a focus on the tales, poems, and essays themselves, those readers may find Frank's and Magistrale's *The Poe Encyclopedia* (Greenwood, 1997) a more congenial or friendly companion than Carlson's volume.

Carlson's introduction promises a "pluralistic" approach to Poe studies, and various theoretical approaches (irony, poststructuralism, feminism, cultural studies) do receive attention. Given his predilections, however, it is not surprising that Poe's "psychal transcendentalism," designated a "critical mainstream," receives particularly ample treatment. One might quarrel with Carlson's emphasis, but a more serious question might be raised about the volume's comprehensiveness. Though the two chapters on Poe's poetry are informative, I wish more attention had been paid to his prosody and metrics. Two chapters on "Poe's Life and Times" offer fine overviews of sources and advances in interpretation, but several pivotal episodes in Poe's career attract minimal attention. The circumstances attending his notorious appearance at the Boston Lyceum receive passing reference (22) and his lecturing activities brief discussion. Notwithstanding the useful chapter on "Poe and the World of Books," additional guidance on Poe papers and manuscripts would have been useful. Benton's discussion of seriocomic possibilities in the Folio Club tales is authoritative and Stuart and Susan Levine's informal (even conversational) notes on his later satires are suggestive, but should there have been a separate chapter on Poe's humor? No volume of this nature can fulfill the objective of covering all relevant subjects, but further investigation of Poe's engagement with social movements such as freemasonry and temperance is warranted. (With regard to the issues of slavery and race, the promised "new" information on the authorship of the "Paulding-Drayton Review" is essentially a one paragraph summary of portions of Terence Whalen's forthcoming book, *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses*, 305-6).

Since a reference volume invites repeated use, accuracy, consistency, and editorial exactitude should be at a premium. Unfortunately, a number of errors surface in this reader's companion. Poe did not lecture on "The Universe" in Lowell, Providence, and Richmond (323). His Lowell lecture was "The Poets and Poetry of America," and his Providence and Richmond lectures addressed "The Poetic Principle." If he did expound on "The Universe" in Richmond, the informal setting was a tavern. (The source cited is the somewhat unreliable Hervey Allen, 340.) This reader also encountered problems with proper names and titles in a number of categories: titles of Poe's own works (e.g., "A Descent into the Maelstrom" is called "The Descent," 180; "The Man That Was Used Up" is "The

Man Who Was Used Up," 180-81; "Von Kempelen and His Discovery" is "Von Kempelen's Discovery," 548); Poe's relatives or contemporaries (e.g., Henry Herring is called Heering, 259; New York editor Lawrence Labree is called Leonard Labaree, 316); characters or historical personages (e.g., Jeremy Diddler is called Jeremy Diddle, 137; Contessa Guiccioli, Lord Byron's paramour, is Quiccioli, 120); critical works (e.g., *Affidavits of Genius* is *Affidavit*, 87; John Irwin's *The Mystery to a Solution* is *The Mystery of a Solution*, 168); and Poe critics (erroneous names or initials for G. R. Thompson, 174; Roy P. Basler, 177; I. M. Walker, 199; M. Thomas Inge, 492). And the dissolute German university setting ("G--n" in "Mystification") should have been identified as Gottingen (130). An inveterate user of works of reference and erudition, Poe knew that readers often consult such volumes for obscure names or titles. In the cases adduced above as well as others, names well known to scholars may pose challenges for less experienced readers of *A Companion to Poe Studies*. This problem may be compounded by references to critics who do not appear in the end of chapter bibliographies, the general bibliography, or the index (e.g., Martindale, Saliba, Stein, Spaulding, Bachiner, 206).

A Companion to Poe Studies provides entry to a number of important aspects of Poe studies, including his links to popular culture, the arts, and foreign literatures. Despite its flaws, it will be widely used, perhaps alongside *The Poe Encyclopedia*. With both volumes, the wary user may still want to check occasional details against the notes in standard editions and sources.

Kent P. Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

The Poe Encyclopedia, eds. Frederick S. Frank and Anthony Magistrale. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997. 453 pp. \$99.50.

This volume, ambitious in objective and scope, contains a chronology of Poe's life, a brief introduction to Poe's writings in a variety of genres, and an alphabetized list of entries on a broad range of topics. According to the authors, the individual entries aim to "cover everything that Poe wrote" (x), including unsigned pieces. Among the items identified in this listing are literary and personal acquaintances, family members, places where Poe lived, books he read, characters in his works, and writers and artists influenced by him. There are several topical headings (e.g., mesmerism, military service, mythology), and a couple of Poe scholars (T. O. Mabbott and Burton R. Pollin) make the list.

The beginning student will probably find the *Poe Encyclopedia* more user-friendly than the *Companion to Poe Studies*. The alphabetized format has the virtue of simplicity, but as Poe noted, a simple conception has potentially infinite ramifications. Numerous entries are cross-referenced to other relevant items. For individual tales and poems, the authors provide more than synopsis or mere summary. In addition to giving the form or flavor of a work under discussion, commentary addresses possible critical approaches to an individual title. A brief provenance for tales, poems, and critical essays is accompanied by selected items of research that could be pursued for more detailed discussion. Some entries on Poe's contemporaries (e.g., the paragraph on Washington Irving) are models of clarity and conciseness: the authors identify Irving, note that his "Unwritten Drama of Lord Byron" was the primary source for "William Wilson," that Poe used Irving's comments to promote his own works, and that he offered mixed evaluations of Irving in critical essays and the "Autography."

Reviews (continued)

The Companion to Poe Studies contains chapters on Poe as a world author and his place in popular culture and the arts, but the *Encyclopedia* contains a remarkable number of entries that chart Poe's influence on individual writers and artists (e.g., Asimov, Bellow, Breton, Capote, Claudel, Dreiser, Hansson, Hardy, Hawkes, Housman, Howells, Joyce, King, Lovecraft, Mencken, Moore, Oates, O'Connor, O'Neill, Pound, Proust, Rilke, Tate, Wells, Wolfe, and Wright). I looked in vain for a paragraph on John Gardner, who modelled *The King's Indian* on *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, but I did encounter an entry on the popular musician Alan Parsons, who produced an album entitled *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. Frank and Magistrale, in charting Poe's expansive influence, clearly extend their reach into popular forms in the media.

An ardent reader, borrower, and even plagiarist from encyclopedic works of erudition such as D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, Bielfeld's *Universal Erudition*, and Jacob Bryant's *Mythology*, Poe, in all likelihood, would be fascinated and amused that he is the object of such an ambitious work. Sensing that his "Pinakidia" and "Marginalia," ostentatious displays of reading and learning, could devolve into "farragos" of miscellaneous or confused items, he was sensitive to the conceptual and organizational patterns in such works, their claims to comprehensiveness, and their potential applications. He was aware that nuggets of information could be creatively transformed by the resourceful user, but as a "paragraphist" for the periodicals on which he toiled in his role as "poor devil" author-editor, he was keenly sensitive to the exactitude required in such work.

For the experienced Poe scholar, the *Encyclopedia* may be wanting on a number of these scores. Aiming to cover everything Poe wrote, Frank and Magistrale rely on the Harrison edition for the canon of Poe's reviews. This choice causes them to include the notorious "Paulding-Drayton Review," a defense of slavery in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, its authorship by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker established long ago by William Doyle Hull. Their entry on Irving notwithstanding, Frank and Magistrale also attribute to Poe a review of *The Crayon Miscellany* in the July 1835 issue of the *Messenger*, but Robert Jacobs establishes that the entire critical content of that issue of the magazine was the work of E. V. Sparhawk. Poe did eventually review a later number of *The Crayon Miscellany* in December 1835. Listing reviews Poe did not write, Frank and Magistrale also admit selections not in Harrison that G. R. Thompson includes in his Library of America collection of *Essays and Reviews: An Account of the United States' Exploring Expedition*, J. F. Cooper's *History of the Navy*, and George Jones' *Ancient America*. The compilers call an item in the 6 September 1845 *Broadway Journal* a "review" of Arthur Cleveland Coxe's *Saul, A Mystery* (84). Poe acknowledged that he had "not found time to read the poem," and *Saul* was reviewed in the *Broadway Journal* by Charles Briggs on 10 May 1845; thus the item is somewhat misleading. It would be more accurate to label Poe's comment a periodical filler—similar to the breezy, random, desultory jottings that make up the "Marginalia." In fact, Poe recast the comic squib on Coxe for a later entry in the "Marginalia." With regard to short occasional pieces composed for periodicals, it would have been helpful to include Poe's self-promotional pieces: his own review of his *Tales* in the *Aristidean*, his Baltimore newspaper puffs for his own pieces in the *Messenger*, and his unsigned defense of the "Autography" in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* in 1841.

With regard to arch-enemy Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Poe's review of *The Waif* in the January 13-14 *New York Evening Mirror* does not attract a separate entry, though it is mentioned (164). Longfellow's prose works, *Hyperion* and *Outre-Mer*, are incorrectly identified as poems (171, 265). An object of debate between Poe and his adversaries during the "little Longfellow war" of 1845, Richard Henry Dana, Sr.'s "The Dying Raven," is incorrectly identified as a poem by William Cullen Bryant, a mistaken attribution by Poe repeated by the compilers (173). At another point, the compilers identify what appears to be an accusation of plagiarism by Poe: that "The Dying Raven," here attributed to Dana, was "pirated" from Paul Allen (90). Actually, a Poe adversary during the Longfellow war—Outis—had made the claim by quoting John Neal, identified as "John Clay Neal" by the compilers (252).

As these errors suggest, imprecision and inaccuracy, especially regarding specific figures and proper names, plague the *Encyclopedia*. Popular novelist Timothy Shay Arthur is called Timothy Shea Arthur (25), scholar Sidney Moss is called Sydney (72), and veteran Poe critic Eric W. Carlson is confused with the author of an article on mesmerism at one point (232) and with Thomas C. Carlson at another (279). E. P. Whipple and Poe were not "sworn enemies," nor was the New England critic "mocked" in the "Autography" (372). Whipple did object to the severity and dogmatism of several attacks by Poe, but in 1841, he was in his early 20s, nearly unknown, and his strictures against the "Autography" in the *Boston Daily Times* and *Boston Notion* appeared unsigned. Poe, moreover, offered qualified praise of Whipple in columns in the *Broadway Journal*. George H. Calvert, author of the wording "not of Germany, but of the age," died in 1889, not 1899 (62). There could have been more attention to specific authors (e.g., John Neal, Mordecai Noah) who were satiric targets in the Folio Club collection.

The criticism on individual authors and works is selective, and in my view, outdated in a significant number of cases. Lest my review itself become encyclopedic in length, I will not enumerate those instances here, though followers of Poe criticism over the past decade will note the most obvious omissions. Had the compilers world enough and time, their listings of criticism could have been more complete and current, but as Poe himself noted in the introduction to his "Marginalia," a "circumscription of space," imposes a discipline on the compiler. In culling information from a vast diversity of sources, the compilers may have lost precise "contexts" for some of the gathered materials. The beginning student, nevertheless, will be grateful for a large body of material brought together in a manageable and accessible format.

Kent P. Ljungquist
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During the period of the PSA's formation, helpful advice was received from many individuals, including Hennig Cohen, then secretary of the Melville Society. We are saddened to hear of the death of Professor Cohen on 12 December 1996 at the age of 77. A tribute to Hennig Cohen appears in *Melville Society Extracts* (March 1997).—KL

Reviews (continued)

Michael Connelly. *The Poet*. New York: Warner Books, 1997. 512 pp. \$6.99 paper.

A recent, best-selling work of detective fiction by Michael Connelly suggests two striking antecedents for his use of literary metamorphosis. In 1987, the newly published novel by Saul Bellow, *More Die of Heartbreak*, ingeniously uses Poe's short poem, "To Helen," as a weathervane to signal changing attitudes toward women. More than eleven allusions to phrases or themes in the poem highlight developments in Bellow's book—testifying to the richly connotative cultural status of this "anthology piece." Another poem by Poe becomes similarly intrinsic to the plot and character development of the anguished and desperate heroine in Stephen King's first major realistic novel, *Gerald's Game*. Like Poe's bound victim in "The Pit and the Pendulum," Jessie wins her release and escape from a new set of horrors through a growing willpower and fortitude, manifested by her exclamations and thoughts of variants on the refrain of "nevermore," consciously drawn from "The Raven." This integrative device marks the high point in a long series of Poe usages by King.

And now it becomes suitable for Poe "fanciers" to note, and perhaps savor, the clever and extensive use of a series of Poe quotations and biographical data by veteran author of detective-fiction, Michael Connelly, to develop and interlace his ingenious and up-to-date narrative about a perverted killer of youths whose police-pursuers are sequentially murdered by the same F.B.I. officer who tauntingly signs each victim-corpse with a Poe line of despair or melancholy. Surely the success of *The Poet* owes much to the aura of Poe, remembered by most Americans for his sorrowful or morbid poems; half a dozen are tellingly cited, along with biographical data from Poe's life. One reviewer, in the *Los Angeles Times* of December 29, 1996, even rashly opines that this, as one of the year's "Best Books," may end up on the "literature" shelves next to Poe. At the start of the year, the *Washington Post* praised it as "The Ultimate Inside Scoop" and notes the use of Poe's works. More tributary is the *Chicago Tribune* reviewer who commends Connelly's use of Poe's "poetry and personality" to "propel and deepen the narrative." In *The New York Times*, the reviewer cites "Poe's bleak poetry" and his "poetic cues" as part of the "intellectual charge" of the book. The result of these laudations representing widespread reader interest was that "consummation" in early 1997 that Poe himself always wished for and never achieved: a second edition, in paper back, which at once held sway on the best-seller lists for the five weeks of January and into February.

For students of Poe this fictional account raises interesting questions of textual blending that Poe would have enjoyed considering. How much of the shaping of the plot can be traced to the very works of prose and poetry absorbed by Connelly before or during the gestation and development of the narrative, and how much of the reader's pleasure can be related to these highlighted citations from the works and biographies? Even a major plot device, the hypnotizing by the F.B.I. man of each victim before inducing him to write his self-incriminating Poe-note, may owe much to the tale of "Valdemar." Consider the bare plot: Jack McEvoy, a crime reporter, seeks and finds evidence that the suicide of his twin brother, a detective, morose after failing to solve a gruesome child-killing is really a camouflaged murder. The scrawled last message, "Out of space. Out of time" (Poe's "Dream-Land"), leads him to a string of parallel policeman

"suicides" (the victims sodomized just prior to death) with self-inscribed Poe-source death-messages: "Through the Pale Door" ("Haunted Palace"); "[I am] haunted by ill angels" ("Dream-Land" again); "Sadly, I know I am shorn of my strength" and likewise, "The fever called 'Living' is conquered at last"—both from "For Annie;" I dwell [sic] alone [/] In a world of moan" ("Eulalie"); and "Lord Help my poor soul"—Poe's imputed last words, as a variant.

Jack's investigation includes his study of Poe's life and works, and the novel entails pertinent references to his personality and experiences. Jack's attempt to work with the F.B.I. for these nationwide murders excitingly involves love-trysts with one agent, who saves him from an imminent death as the last victim of the "cop-killer"—proving to be her chief in the F.B.I. service. He had been exploiting the unwitting "bait" of the sadist-murderer especially of children, both a tormentor and also an internet-seller of gory pedophile pictures. Surely, Poe, who had vaunted the narrative convenience of technological advances in "Hans Pfaall" and "Scheherezade," would approve the use of electronic devices, drug ministrations, and psychotic aberrations. Nor would he object to using the well-chosen, poetic words of doom and melancholy to furnish atmosphere and plot development to a work of detective fiction.

Burton R. Pollin
Professor Emeritus, CUNY

Rosamond Smith. *You Can't Catch Me*. New York: Dutton, 1995. 193 pp. \$19.95 cloth.

In *Haunted: Tales of the Grotesque* (1994), Joyce Carol Oates explores the continuing influence of Poe in her "Afterword," resurrecting both wife and cat in her short story, "The White Cat." Now, under her pseudonym Rosamond Smith, Oates has published a macabre tale of doubles and confused identities, *You Can't Catch Me*.

Visiting Philadelphia from Richmond, the last living member of a distinguished Virginia family, Tristram Heade, begins to take on the problems and even the characteristics of his apparent double, Angus T. Markham. A timid bibliophile not unlike a "polar bear" in appearance (11), Tristram stumbles into a stunning young woman tattooed with strange hieroglyphs and afflicted with two personalities. Can he help her escape her fiendish husband? Or is her husband the victim of a fiendish wife? Although Tristram has never liked reading mysteries, particularly in the form "descended from Poe," for "they seemed to whip up complications and horrors, with no end other than that of entertainment: effect was all, significance null" (31), Tristram gets caught up in this one. Students of Poe will enjoy identifying allusions and unraveling the tangled roles of detective, murderer, and victim in this Poe-inspired mystery.

Jacqueline Doyle
California State University, Hayward

Acknowledgements

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Recent Dissertations

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- Randall Clack, "The Phoenix Rising: Alchemical Imagination in the Works of Edward Taylor, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne," DAI 55.12 (1994): 3842A.
- William L. Jernigan, "Memory's Uncertain: Mourning and Doubt in Three Tales by Edgar Allan Poe," DAI 56.11 (1994): 4398A.
- Chris F. Kearns, "Four Keys to the Door of Poe's Detective: Poe, Benjamin, Bakhtin, and Cavell," DAI 56.2 (1994): 542A.
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- Rosanne Welker, "Housetelling: Rendering the American Dream House in American Literature, 1840-1930," DAI 56.9 (1995): 3587A.

Treasurer's Report

Membership in the PSA as of April 1997 was 189, including 32 new members since the beginning of the year. Income during 1996 of \$1,120 roughly matched expenses. During 1996 Worcester Polytechnic Institute continued to support production and mailing costs of one issue of the newsletter. The balance in the PSA checking account as of April 15, 1997 was \$6,529.87. The balance in the organization's investment account as of March 15, 1997 was \$2,829, with dividends from 1996 amounting to \$130.72. As of Fall 1997, Penn State will cover the cost of publishing both issues of the newsletter.

The Ravens Fly to Memphis

The Baltimore Ravens "soar" in Memphis, according to the sports headlines of the September 22, 1997 Memphis *Commercial Appeal*. This daily newspaper of a river-front city on the Mississippi then proceeds to describe in vivid language how the Ravens (formerly the Cleveland Browns) soundly defeated the Tennessee Oilers (formerly the Houston Oilers) 36-10 on a warm, lazy September afternoon.

It had been several years since my wife and I had attended a professional football game played on the grass field of Memphis' Liberty Bowl Stadium. The crowd was sparse, but T-shirts of the Tennessee Oilers could be seen nearly everywhere along with other Oiler souvenirs. But no Raven banner or T-shirt could be bought by any Raven supporter; even the local high school marching band donned uniforms of the bright blue often worn by the Oilers. Recorded rock music blared forth in rhythmic pounding, obviously intended to arouse crowd support for the Oilers. To no avail, however.

It was evident from the beginning that the purple-jerseyed Ravens would dominate the game. Their defensive team appeared to cover the playing field with an impenetrable purple curtain, as if drawing Poe's purple curtain that imprisons the narrator of "The Raven." Poe's Montresor of "The Cask of Amontillado" would have admired how the Raven quarterback, Vinny Testaverde, cut through the Oiler passing defense with his rapier-like passing. I wondered as I left the stadium at the final whistle, how many around me knew the origin of the winged insignia on the purple jerseys worn by the visiting team?

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University of Memphis

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The *Poe Studies Association Newsletter* provides a forum for the scholarly and informal exchange of information on Edgar Allan Poe, his life, works, and influence. We will consider scholarly or newsworthy notes, which bear relevance to the PSA membership. Send materials to Barbara Cantalupo, 442 High Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018, or e-mail bac7@psu.edu, or contact via a vis website: <http://www.an.psu.edu/bac7/poe.html>. We welcome suggestions designed to make the newsletter a more stimulating and useful publication.

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Poe in Chicago (continued from page 3)

From *The Chicago Tribune* (15 August 1997) a review of "Edgar Allan Poe—Once upon a midnight," a one-man play at the Mercury Theater directed by Alan Berger, written by Paul Day Clemens and Ron Magid with John Astin as Poe: "In their eagerness to prove that Poe was indeed a genius, Astin and the writers of this biographical drama . . . concentrate the final portion of the second act on Poe's 'Eureka,' his long, mystic prose-poem on the individual soul and the general consciousness . . . go[ing] over the edge in celebrating their subject."

Because this play received "lukewarm reviews and mediocre crowds, [notes Janie Gabbett-Lee in "Did Poe Show at Chicago Seance?" Reuters, 9 October 1997], publicists hoped to spark some interest with an appearance by the writer himself at the stroke of midnight on the 148th anniversary of Poe's death. Enter psychic [Karen Uchima], an astrologer [Grant Wylie], a hypnotist [Ferne Szulc] and a crystal ball. A seance was in the making . . . Did Poe visit Chicago's Mercury Theater? . . . Some who were there believe he did."

Poe in NYC

From *The New York Times*, excerpts from reviews of two performances at PS 122, one theater (25 June 1997) and one dance (25 August 1997) adapted from Poe's works:

• " 'Tell-tale,' a high-energy sendup of Edgar Allan Poe, B-movie thrillers and drag queens . . . a campy mix of sultriness and schlock, is enhanced by Basil Twist's puppets and visual effects, which include a victimized raven . . . Theater Couture can [certainly] take a conventional form and spin it in new directions. The director, Joshua D. Rosenzweig, keeps things suitably loose, but it's the ingenuity of Mr. Twist and the work of Mr. Levy and Mr. Beat that levitate this show above the commonplace." • "Poe Project," a dance performance by Min Tanaka and Company reviewed for *The New York Times* at Jacob's Pillow, but performed as well at PS 122 did not get such positive acclaim by dance critic, Jennifer Dunning. "Mr. Tanaka's piece comes to seem like a fast-forward flight through Poe's horrific tales of murder and the supernatural. But not fast enough." *PSA Newsletter* reviewer has another perspective. (See review on page 2.)

In October at The Greenwich Street Theatre, Bulldog Theatre Company presented Edgar Allan Poe's "The Mystery of Mary Rogers," a new adaptation by Christopher Bailey that was advertised as "not only dramatiz[ing] the *actual solution to the crime*, but also solv[ing] the mystery of *why Poe got it wrong*." Bailey suggests in the playbill's introduction that "because the story is 'weaker' than most [of Poe's] others, there could be an opportunity for more artistic freedom within the story while avoiding accusations of tinkering with a 'masterpiece.' Most importantly, although not as luridly grisly as 'Rue Morgue' or as analytically brilliant as 'The Purloined Letter,' 'Marie Roget' offers a real opportunity to explore the New York of Poe's day . . . and [to] offer an alternative solution to the true mystery of what happened to the historical Mary Rogers."

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"The Raven" Yet Again . . . and Again . . . and evermore?

From somewhere in cyberspace we find this anonymous "ravin'":

Once upon a midnight dreary,
fingers cramped and vision bleary,
System manuals piled high and wasted paper on the floor,
Longing for the warmth of bedsheets,
Still I sat there, doing spreadsheets;

Having reached the bottom line, I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand, I then invoked the SAVE command
and waited for the disk to store,
Only this—and nothing more.

Deep into the monitor peering,
long I sat there wond'ring, fearing,
Doubting, while the disk kept churning, turning yet to churn some more.
"Save!" I said, "You cursed xxxxx! Save my data from before!"
One thing did the phosphors answer, only this and nothing more,
Just, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

Was this some occult illusion?
Some maniacal intrusion?
These were choices undesired, ones I'd never faced before.
Carefully, I weighed the choices
as the disk made monstrous noises.
The cursor flashed, insistent, waiting, baiting me to type some more.
Clearly I must press a key, choosing one and nothing more,
From "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

With my fingers pale and trembling,
Slowly toward the keyboard bending,
Longing for a happy ending, hoping all would be restored,
Praying for some guarantee
Timidly I pressed a key.
But on the screen there still persisted, words appearing as before.
Ghastly grim they blinked and taunted, haunted, as my patience wore,
Saying "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

I tried to catch the chips off-guard;
I pressed again, but twice as hard.
I pleaded with the cursed machine. I begged and cried and then I swore.
Then I tried in desperation,
sev'ral random combinations,
Still there came the incantation, just as senseless as before.
Cursor blinking, mocking, winking, flashing nonsense as before.
Reading "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

There I sat, distraught, exhausted;
by my own machine accosted
Getting up I turned away and paced across the office floor.
And then I saw a dreadful sight:
a lightning bolt cut through the night.
A gasp of horror overtook me, shook me to my very core.
The lightning zapped my pervious data, lost and gone forevermore.
Not even, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

To this day I do not know
The place to which lost data goes.
What demonic nether world is wrought where data will be stored,
Beyond the reach of mortal souls,
beyond the ether, in black holes?

But sure as there's a C, Pascal, Lotus, Ashton-Tate and more,
You will one day be left to wander, lost on some Plutonian shore,
Pleading, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

Author Unknown

And one from the *New York Times* (10 December 1995) by Jeff MacGregor with lines such as these:

"Once upon a broadcast dreary, while reporting market theory,
Over a quaint and curious pie graph depicting tax-abatement lore,
I was wrapping, just recapping, when suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my newsroom door,
'Tis our pollster,' I concluded, 'tapping at my newsroom door,
only this and nothing more.'"