



NEWSLETTER

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POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION MEETING

Houston, Texas
December 29, 1980

The annual meeting for 1980, during the MLA convention, will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Arbor 1, on Dec. 29, from 1:45 to 3:00 p.m. In addition to a brief business meeting, three papers will be read: Bruce Weiner (St. Lawrence University), "Mystery as Metaphysics in Poe's Tales"; Dennis Eddings (Oregon College of Education), "Poe, Dupin, and the Reader"; and Stanton Garner (University of Texas at Arlington), "Poe's Dupin, From Here to Eternity."

NORTHEAST MLA (NEMLA)

Laval University, Quebec City, Quebec
April 9-11, 1981

As usual, there will be a Poe section, with papers by John Conron (Clark University), "Poe's Paintings"; A. William Pett (University of Rhode Island), "Poe's Approach to Modern Art: Proto-Expressionism in the Tales"; and John Reilly (College of the Holy Cross), "Poe in Drama: Versions of the Man."

CONFERENCE ON THE FANTASTIC

Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida
March 10-21, 1981

A section on "The Fantastic in the Works of Poe" will be chaired by Richard Kopley (SUNY/Buffalo). Last year's inaugural conference included a session on "The Human Image in Poe," with papers by Kopley, Jules Zanger, Hal Blythe, and Charles Sweet.

RECENT DISSERTATIONS

(June 1979 through June 1980)

Carol R. Arenberg, "The Double as Initiation Rite: A Study of Chamisso, Hoffmann, Poe, and Dostoevski," *DAI*, 40(1979), 834A-835A; Richard M. Glatzer, "Truth in Detail: Essays on American Detective Fiction," *DAI*, 40(1979), 850A-851A; Clifford B. Hallam, "The Double as Incomplete Self: Studies in Poe, Melville, and Conrad," *DAI*, 40(1980), 4026A-4027; Beverly R. Voloshin, "The Lockean Tradition in the Gothic Fiction of Brown, Poe, and Melville," *DAI*, 40(1980), 4047A; Lawrence G. Dotolo, "Edgar Allan Poe's Quest for Supernal Beauty,"

DAI, 40(1980), 5054A-5055A; Phoebe J. Sokolowski, "Voices and Visions: Narrators and Their Points of View in the Short Story in France and the United States, 1830-1850," *DAI* 40(1980), 5435A; Ronald J. Black, "The Paradoxical Structure of the Sea Quest in Dana, Poe, Cooper, London, and Hemingway," *DAI*, 40(1980), 5862A-5863A; Amy Tucker, "America's Gothic Landscape," *DAI*, 40(1980), 5868A.

POE HOUSES RESTORED

The Edgar Allan Poe Cottage at Fordham, in the Bronx, has been put on the National Register of Historic Places, according to Kathleen A. McAuley. The Bronx County Historical Society, administrator of the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, announces the inclusion (in a tour of this landmark structure) of a 20-minute slide and sound presentation of the final years of Poe at Fordham.

The Cottage is open to the public as an historic house museum, with period furnishings, including Virginia's bed and Poe's rocking chair. The hours are Wed.-Fri., 1-5 p.m.; Sat., 10-4 p.m.; and Sun., 1-5 p.m. Admission is 75¢ per person, children under 12 free. For further information contact Kathleen A. McAuley, Manager, Poe Cottage, The Bronx County Historical Society, 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, New York 10467; or call (212) 881-8900.

In September we were informed that the restoration of the Amity Street Poe House in Baltimore is complete, and that after a reopening ceremony, it will be open to the public Wed. through Sun., 1-4 p.m.

The restoration of the Poe House in Philadelphia, also an historical landmark, will probably be completed in November, with a reopening then or shortly thereafter.

Poe Studies Association Newsletter

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The PSA Newsletter is distributed by the Department of English, Memphis State University. Copies are available upon request.

PUBLICATIONS

The Gordian reprint of *Selections from the Critical Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by F. C. Prescott, with introduction, ix-li, and notes, 1909, is scheduled to appear in early 1980. A new preface and an introduction by J. Lasley Dameron and Eric W. Carlson are included. Gordian Press (85 Tompkins Street, Staten Island, N.Y. 10304) is well known for its quality reprints of scholarly editions and studies, including the 1966 two-volume Ostrom edition of *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe* (with new foreword and supplementary chapter).

J. Lasley Dameron's 1979 Baltimore lecture, "Popular Literature: Poe's Not-So-Forgotten Lore," has been published. 14 pp. \$2.50. Copies may be had from the Edgar Allan Poe Society, 402 E. Gittings Ave., Baltimore, MD 21212.

Maureen Cobb Mabbott's *Mabbott as Poe Scholar: The Early Years* is now available (Baltimore: The Enoch Pratt Free Library, The Edgar Allan Poe Society, and the Library of the University of Baltimore, 1980), 36 pp. \$3.50. This account of the late *doyen* among Poe scholars, Thomas Ollive Mabbott, by his widow, herself a recognized Poe scholar, provides delightful information concerning the early career of a professor of true Humane Letters.

REVIEWS

John Carl Miller, ed. *Poe's Helen Remembers*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979. \$24.95.

In this second study in a proposed series on the life work of Poe's British biographer J. H. Ingram, the late John C. Miller has ably edited the extensive correspondence between Ingram and the Providence poetess Sarah Helen Whitman. In addition to a brief introduction on the Ingram-Whitman relationship, Miller has also reprinted ten of Ingram's essays on Poe, published between 1874 and 1878. Because Miller is reticent about Ingram's motives in championing Poe, a full portrait does not emerge of the man whom Whitman deemed "Poe's too ambitious champion." Nevertheless, this volume provides interesting perspectives on Poe's critical reception in the 1870's.

Kent Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Bernhardt J. Hurwood. *My Savage Muse: The Story of My Life Edgar Allan Poe—An Imaginative Work*. New York: Everest House, 1980. \$11.95.

The intriguing idea of writing a fictional autobiography with Poe as narrator fails in Hurwood's hands. Adopting the role of a Poe-esque editor who has discovered a personal record, Hurwood traces Poe's doom-struck career up to the death of Virginia in 1847. Important sides of Poe's personality receive short shrift: his lucid critical intelligence, satirical wit, and deductive skill. As Hurwood regales us with the maundering confessions of a guilt-ridden, death-driven soul, we encounter along the way such laughable episodes as Poe's orgasmic embrace of Jane Stanard's corpse and

his accidental murder of a prostitute-poetess named Ligeia Morelli. The influence of Marie Bonaparte bulks large in the text as well as in Hurwood's "scholarly" notes. Although occasional passages are compelling (Hurwood nearly avoids making John Allan the stereotyped penurious wretch), the Grand Guignol style and effects recall Mr. Blackwood Blackwood.

Kent Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Carl Fehrman. *Poetic Creation: Inspiration or Craft*. Trans. by Karin Petherick. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980. \$20.

In this fine study, Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" is viewed as the antithesis to Coleridge's writing of "Kubla Khan," these two accounts comprising a dialectical chain, of which the final link is Paul Valéry's description of how he composed *Le Cimetière marin*. Readers familiar with T. S. Eliot's "From Poe to Valéry" (1949) will find Fehrman's chapter on Poe an interesting and enlightening sequel. Placing Poe's essay in the context of European conceptions of the creative process, Fehrman (of Lund University) considers the views of Diderot, Carl Maria von Weber, Reimann (17th-century German author of a poetic handbook), Hugo Friedrich, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry, Gottfried Benn ("Problem der Lyrik," 1951 lecture), Marie Bonaparte, and the Swedish aesthetic tradition. Fehrman concludes that though Poe objected to the stereotyped romantic concept of inspiration, he shared the romantic belief in the poet as an exceptional individual endowed with special gifts—for Poe, the thirst for "supernal beauty" and the power of "invention" and "imagination." Simply because Poe developed a theory of *effect* and believed in "the aesthetic philosophy of work" (partly as a response to the American puritan heritage), he did not banish the idea of inspiration. But Fehrman does not analyze Poe's essay closely enough to detect evidence of moments of intuitive, uncalculated choice (of, e.g., the refrain). In the "Concluding Unscientific Postscript" he does emphasize the fact that every writer invents within a linguistic tradition, a system of rules and conventions; in short, "all literary activity takes place between the poles of rules and chance, of technique and impulse" (200). Two of the ten chapters deal with genre transformations as represented by the writing of Ibsen's *Brand*, which began as an epic poem, and Selma Lagerlöf's *Gösta Berlings saga*, which passed from poem to play to novel. Chapters eight and nine examine periodicity, the stages of literary creativity, and the creative process as described by Graham Wallas. Throughout Fehrman draws effectively on key studies and statements by French, German, English, and Scandinavian writers and aestheticians. The source notes and index are excellent.

Eric W. Carlson, *Professor Emeritus*
University of Connecticut

John T. Irwin. *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980. \$19.50.

This major scholarly work may not radically alter our thinking about nineteenth-century American literature,

but it is certain to provoke a good deal of thoughtful reexamining. The Preface furnishes an outline:

The present book begins by examining the impact of the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics on nineteenth-century American literature, and then, ranging back and forth over literary history, practical criticism of individual works, and speculative criticism, it relates the image of the hieroglyphics to the larger reciprocal questions of the origin and limits of symbolization and the symbolization or origins and ends.

Irwin's "ranging" carries him over Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville, but his principal interest (eleven of the book's sixteen "sections," or 195 of its 350-odd pages) is Poe. As Irwin sees it, one of Poe's principal motifs is the journey to the threshold of creation and/or annihilation of being in terms of the quest for the origins and limits of language. The specific works Irwin examines include "Autography," "The Balloon-Hoax," "A Descent into the Maelström," "Fall of the House of Usher," "MS. Found in a Bottle," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "Some Words with a Mummy," "Sonnet—Silence," "Hans Pfaall," and *Eureka*. But it is upon *Pym* that Irwin lavishes most of his attention, for he is especially interested in the significance of the chasms and wall markings in the Tsalal episodes, the "shrouded human figure" at the close of the narrative, and "some remarks" on the chasms and markings in the note which Poe appended. Though it would be futile even to attempt to trace Irwin's intricate, and sometimes convoluted, argument, here is the point to which he carries his readers, no small number of whom will, no doubt, not be taken this far without considerable kicking and screaming:

As readers [of *Pym*], as survivors of the textural journey to the vor-textual abyss, our standpoint is the uncertain ground of the closing note where, as necrology turns back into philology and the historical oscillations of interpretation, we see the quest for fixed certainty, that univocal sense which is the linguistic equivalent of *Eureka's* primal Oneness, for what it is—a death wish.

John E. Reilly
College of the Holy Cross

Burton R. Pollin. *Poe, Creator of Words*. Revised and Augmented Edition. Bronxville, N.Y.: Nicholas T. Smith, 1980. \$11.

In this new edition, the introduction is slightly revised (e.g. pp. 6, 17, 18) and the listing of Poe coinages augmented by an appendix of eight pages, along with an updating of Pollin's listed publications concerning Poe. A random comparison with the 1974 edition also reveals a conscientious correction of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or source attribution in some of the original entries. All told, this publication does indeed provide "insight into Poe's mind and linguistic habits," and suggests the need to "reconsider the whole question of Poe's sense of style and linguistic aims" (14). Pollin's interesting and scholarly introduction, which deserves a careful reading by every serious student of Poe, suggests certain areas for further study: Poe as a critic of language, his language-making, his contributions to the "semantics of criticism," his views of diction and style, and the distinctive qualities of his own style. Especially needed are studies of "his various levels of style, his nuances of diction, his theories of word-formation, and his recognition of the need for an ever-expanding vocabulary to keep pace not only with technology but also with the complexity of new trends in philosophic discourse" (15). Here Pollin leads the way with germinal observations on Poe's views of dictionaries, of terseness, varieties of compounds, critical and scientific terms, and "the power of words." The selected examples of Poe's "nice discrimination" in word usage and rhetoric (8) and of his humorous and satirical coinages (12) will induce other readers to relish their own choices of Poe's striking capacity for precision, wit, satire, parody, and word play. Sources are identified as Harrison, Mabbott's *Poems*, Ostrom's *Letters*, Varner, Brigham, Spannuth-Mabbott, and the 1845 *BJ*. The task was complicated by the discovery that the O.E.D. citations from Poe are based on three volumes only of (probably) the Redfield edition, with all entries therefrom simply dated "1849."

Eric W. Carlson, Professor Emeritus
University of Connecticut

Anne Edwards. *Child of Night*. New York: Popular Library, 1978. \$1.75.

The least we can expect of a mass-market paperback

The Poe Studies Association and its *Newsletter* are independent of the journal *Poe Studies*, published at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99163, subscription \$3 per year (two issues, June, December).

NEW MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FOR 1981

I wish _____, do not wish _____ to continue receiving *PSA Newsletter* (May, November).
(Check one)

Enclosed is my \$4 check for dues and subscription for the calendar year 1981. (Check should be made out to "Poe Studies Association" and mailed to Joseph M. DeFalco, Dept. of English, Marquette University, 635 North Thirteenth St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233).

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novel that claims to be inspired by the life and art of Edgar Allan Poe is a good gothic thriller, something appreciative of Poe's own skillful exploitation of popular occult themes. But Anne Edwards' *Child of Night* is not even good gothic. It makes Poe's life the vehicle of a shallow and tepid tale of reincarnation and rape. The novel tells the story of Eddie Polk, orphan and aspiring writer, who turns up mysteriously at the Richmond home of his aunt, Marianna Clemons. Polk believes he is the reincarnation of Poe and has come to claim his thirteen-year-old cousin, Ginny Sue Clemons, as his bride. Polk and Ginny alternate as narrators and we are led to expect by Ginny's account of her own affinity for Poe an occult union with Polk. But Eddie embodies the mythical Poe—drug addict, sexual deviant, madman—and he makes Ginny a victim of seduction rather than a soulmate. *Child of Night* is intended as a tale of terror, but it produces more laughs than fearful shudders, as when a graveyard rendezvous climaxes with the image of Kentucky-fried chicken spewed "like an offering on an adjacent grave," or when Eddie takes up jogging as part of his plan to spirit Ginny away. If you must read everything that pertains to Poe, then *Child of Night* might fill a leisure hour. Otherwise, read the best books first and forget about this one.

Bruce Ira Weiner
St. Lawrence University

Arlin Turner. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. \$20.00.

Fittingly, the name of Killis Campbell heads the acknowledgments, his standards of "responsible literary research and effective writing" being unmistakable in this book. Sanity and balanced vision of his subject are Turner's admirable qualities as a biographer. The image of Hawthorne among his contemporaries, most notably Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, and Alcott, as well as many others not chiefly "literary" but important figures nonetheless, is high-

highlighted. The PSA readership will be especially interested in the account of Hawthorne's early, abortive attempts to produce a frame-narrative collection, so like Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club*. The clouded authorial method caused by publication of detached tales dogged both authors. Neither gained adequate recognition or income from these ventures, although Hawthorne fared better than Poe. Poe the writer of tales elicited greater admiration from Hawthorne than Poe the critic, and Turner's discernment of Poe's figure and the Poesque in "The Hall of Fantasy" and "P.'s Correspondence" is notably keen. In Hawthorne biography the "life" is never far from "the works." This book supersedes the older biography by Randall Stewart, and will be the standard biography for our generation.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
The University of Mississippi

ARLIN TURNER (1909-1980)

Our organization will miss the counsel and support of this Honorary Member, whose last professional paper, on Poe and Hawthorne, was delivered at our annual meeting in San Francisco on December 29, 1979. Professor Turner took great pleasure in knowing that among the speakers to our group in recent years were many of his former students, including the current Vice-President and President. Although Arlin Turner has been more widely known as a specialist in Hawthorne and Southern Literature, his graduate work with Killis Campbell, his own publications, and the dissertations he directed kept him close to the Poe world. American Letters overall sustain a great loss in the passing of Arlin, a gentleman and scholar in every respect.

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