



NEWSLETTER

Volume X
Number 2
Fall, 1982

Published at Memphis State University
Memphis, TN 38152

Index to PSA Newsletter 1973-82

The editors of the *PSA Newsletter* wish to thank Mr. Richard Fusco, now a graduate student at Duke University, for compiling the enclosed index to the *PSA Newsletter* since its first issue in May 1973. We hope our readers will find it useful.

TENTH ANNUAL MEETING: POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Los Angeles, December 28, 1982
Bonaventure Hotel, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

After a brief business session, the tenth annual PSA meeting will include the following papers:

"In Defense of Beauty: E.C. Stedman's Advocacy of Poe,"

Robert Scholnick, College of William and Mary

"Another Look at *Pym*," Harrison T. Meserole,
Pennsylvania State Univ.

"Poe's *Pym*-esque 'A Tale of the Ragged Mountains,'"

Richard Kopley, Illinois State Univ.

"Allegory, Metaphor, and the Problem of Narration,"

Liliane Weissberg, Harvard Univ.

In observance of its tenth anniversary, the PSA will sponsor a second session, "Poe: His Poetry and Music," on December 29, 7:15-8:30 P.M. in the San Fernando Room of the Bonaventure. Noted composer and musicologist David P. McKay's "To One in Paradise," a song cycle for solo voice and piano, will have its world premiere. McKay is co-author of *William Billings of Boston* and has published over forty musical compositions, including a chamber opera version of "The Devil in the Belfry." The theme of next year's meeting will be "Pedagogy and Criticism: Poe in the Classroom." Send proposals and papers to Kent Ljungquist (Worcester Polytechnic Institute).

NEMLA, 1983

Poe Studies Section, Allegheny College, Erie, PA
April 15, 2:30-4:00 P.M.

The Poe session of the Northeast MLA will include the following papers:

"Henry James and Poe: The Question of Maturity,"

James W. Gargano, Washington and Jefferson College

"The Poem as Felony," George Monteiro, Brown Univ.

"Linguistic Impotence in 'The Fall of the House of Usher,'"

James Kerry Grant, St. Lawrence Univ.

POE IN BALTIMORE, RICHMOND, AND THE BRONX

On May 7, at the University of Baltimore, the Poe Society celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, with Maureen Cobb Mabbott as key speaker. Her talk, "Reading *The Raven*, by Poe and Others," was followed by Sergei Troubetzkoy's slide presentation, "Poe: Catalyst for the Visual Arts" and by Benjamin Fisher's reading of "The Raven."

Kent Ljungquist delivered the sixtieth annual Edgar Allan Poe lecture at the October 3, 1982, meeting of the Baltimore Poe Society. His lecture, "The Grand and the Fair: Poe in the American Landscape," will be published by the Poe Society, the Enoch Pratt Library, and the Library of the Univ. of Baltimore. Vice President of the Baltimore Poe Society, Richard Hart, spoke on "Poe at the Other Place" on November 10, 1982, at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis MD.

The commemorative lectures from 1975 to 1981 are still available, including Donald Barlow Stauffer's "The Merry Mood: Poe's Uses of Humor." *The History of the Poe Society 1923-1982* is available at \$30.00 by writing to its author, Alexander G. Rose III, at 402 E. Gittings Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21212. The Westminster Preservation Trust will sponsor several Poe-related activities at the renovated Westminster Hall, including a lecture "The Ruin of the House of Poe" by Daniel Hoffman (Univ. of Pennsylvania) on April 5, 1983. "An Evening with Poe" by the Reader's Theatre, Essex Community College, will occur on April 12, 1983.

On April 24, the Poe Society of Richmond (the Poe Foundation) marked its "Diamond Jubilee" year, the Museum having been opened for the first time in April of 1922. A number of restored paintings, including that of Jane Scott MacKenzie, were on display for the first time. Prof. Burton R. Pollin presented his illustrated lecture on "The Works of Edgar A. Poe as Interpreted by Artists of the

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World." Further interesting details of this and other activities may be found in *The Poe Messenger*, Summer 1982 (The Poe Museum, 1914 East Main St., Richmond, VA 23223, \$1).

Kathleen A. McAuley, manager of the Poe Cottage at Fordham in the Bronx, invites each of us to become a "Friend of Poe Cottage" through a tax-deductible membership donation, thus helping the Bronx County Historical Society to maintain the Cottage and to continue its program on Poe-publications, lectures, readings, film festivals, theatrical and musical performances. Members will receive EUREKA! a quarterly newsletter. Address: 3266 Bainbridge Ave., The Bronx, N.Y. 10476.

RECENT DISSERTATIONS

Patricia Fulton Teague, "Borges, Hawthorne, and Poe: A Study of Significant Parallels in Their Theories and Methods of Short Story Writing," *DAI*, 40 (April 1980), 5461A; Kay Stripling Perdue, "Poe, Simms, and the Call for a Southern Literature," *DAI*, 42 (Dec. 1981), 2678A. Dissertations which touch on Poe are: Brian Atteberry, "America and the Materials of Fantasy," *DAI*, 40 (May 1980), 5862A; George E. Haggerty, "Gothic Fiction from Walpole to James: A Study of Formal Development," *DAI*, 40 (Jan. 1980), 4036A; Grace Farrell Lee, "The Grotesque: A Demonic Tradition," *DAI*, 40 (Jan. 1980), 4012A; and John A. Andola, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Use of Mesmerism in Four Major Works," *DAI*, 42 (Oct. 1981), 1631A-1632A.

PUBLICATIONS

ATQ: American Transcendental Quarterly, Issue No. 44, Fall 1979, contains three articles each on Melville and Hawthorne and one on Poe, "The Writer in the Crowd: Poe's Urban Vision," by Linda P. Miller.

"The Daguerreotypes of Edgar Allan Poe Taken in New England in 1848" by Ichigoro Uchida has been reprinted from *Collected Essays* (Kyoritsu Women's Junior College), No. 25, February 1982, pp. 1-15.

"Poe's England and the Divided Self" appears as chapter 5 (pp. 69-96) in *Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981) by Benjamin Lease (Northeastern Illinois Univ.). Lease discusses Poe's transforming of tales in *Blackwood's* that served as models for "The Pit and the Pendulum" and "William Wilson," as well as for his satire of "How to Write a Blackwood Article." The account of the meetings and affinities between Poe and Dickens is especially interesting.

Melvin Zimmerman calls attention to his "Baudelaire, Rousseau et Poe" in *Baudelaire, Rousseau et Hugo* in the collection *Langages*, vol. IX of *Etudes Baudelairiennes* (Nouvelle Série I), Neuchâtel, A la Baconnière, 1981, 31-71. This study compares the childhood memories of William Wilson to those of Jean-Jacques, and overall, Baudelaire's sympathetic-emphatic identification with each.

Edgar Allan Poe. *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. Illustrated by Harry Clarke. Birmingham, Alabama: Oxmoor House, Inc., 1982. \$40. Privately printed for the Southern Classics Library, this deluxe reprint is based on the first American edition (Tudor Publishing Co., 1933), the original being published in 1919 by George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., London. The twenty-nine tales are accompanied by 32 illustrations, eight of them in color, strikingly arabesque and symbolic. Bound in leather, gold-embossed, and printed in large type on heavy paper, this luxury edition is itself a work of art.

REVIEWS

J.R. Hammond. *An Edgar Allan Poe Companion*. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981. 205 pp. \$27.50.

What is it that causes yet another British writer to offer a comprehensive work on Poe without being familiar with the

field of Poe studies, without having the benefit of Poe-knowledgeable editors or consultants and readers, and without doing the necessary spade work? This is the fifth such volume since 1977, when David Sinclair's *Edgar Allan Poe* appeared, followed in 1978 by Wolf Mankowitz's *The Extraordinary Mr. Poe*. Julian Symons' *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and *The Edgar Allan Poe Scrapbook*, ed. Peter Haining—all four reviewed unfavorably in this newsletter. Of course, American writers, both academic and journalistic, have also been known to let their misguided theories and ego-fixations about Poe blind them to what Poe actually wrote and meant as revealed by the consensus of competent Poe scholars and critics. In general, however, on this side of the Atlantic, personal enthusiasm and idiosyncrasy seem less frequently to interfere with presenting "a balanced and detached view of Poe. . . a dispassionate appraisal," which is Hammond's stated goal here. Such an appraisal, it seems, is "extraordinarily difficult," and can be achieved only by steering one's way through "a labyrinth of critical and biographical works. . ." Not deterred by that fact, Hammond "aims to re-assess Poe in the light of modern scholarship and enable the reader to study and enjoy his works with keener appreciation" by placing his work against the background of his life and times and the forces which shaped him as man and artist. But in the next breath Hammond states that "amidst so much about Poe of an ephemeral or uncritical nature," in writing this *Companion* he has kept "constantly at my side" four sources of "reliability" and "balance": Hervey Allen's *Israfel*, David Sinclair's *Poe*, William Bittner's *Poe*, and the Viking Portable *Poe*. The dated and sadly limited view of Poe and Poe criticism implied by this list is confirmed by the author's later comments on Allen as "generally reliable—solid and perceptive," on Sinclair as "wholly excellent and perceptive," on A.H. Quinn's Poe biography as "outstanding" but "lacks objectivity," etc.

Is this the way to re-assess Poe "in the light of modern scholarship"? Of the six titles under Bibliography—Criticism recommended to the reader, in his main text Hammond makes only passing reference to a few articles in the Carlson and Regan anthologies of criticism. The other four, chosen as the most valuable from "an immense literature of critical works on Poe," are Lewis Chase's *Poe and His Poetry* (London, 1913) and the book-length studies by Fagin, Rans, Pollin, and Hoffman, the last-named being "marred by its excessive egotism." There is no mention anywhere of Richard Wilbur and Allen Tate as Poe critics. No bibliographies of criticism, such as Dameron and Cauthen's, are listed.

Hammond is identified as a lecturer, the founder and secretary of the H.G. Wells Society, and author of *An H.G. Wells Companion*. Presumably, one good companion deserves another. On occasion he points to suggestive similarities between stories by Poe and Wells. His statement that Poe was "an intensely serious literary artist" promises far more than is fulfilled, for by this phrase Hammond seems to mean Poe's skill as a writer, editor, and critic dedicated to the highest standards, rather than Poe's ability imaginatively to convey his philosophic perspective and psychological insights. Lacking an adequate knowledge of Poe's perspective and symbolism, not to mention symbolism, Hammond tends to read Poe on a literal and biographical level. Though in the introductory twenty pages on Poe's life—a cogent, readable, but neither original nor especially noteworthy essay—the promise of showing the influence, on the works, of Poe's stay in England and Scotland and of his Anglo-Irish ancestry remains undeveloped. Instead, the next segment, on Poe's literary reputation, attributes the popularity of Poe's tales to the theme of the "outsider," Poe himself having been an outcast, and to the detached, acute vision which, under the Gothic nightmarish journeys, illuminated the hidden depths of the psyche, "the maelstrom

of the mind." All this for what? Simply to give the reader a vicarious experience of guilt, terror, violence, cruelty, claustrophobia, etc. The poems also, we are told, "convey deep emotion" as products of a "tortured, divided personality." Where the commentary rises above this preoccupation with Poe's demonic self and his escape-addiction to opium and alcohol (according to Hammond) I detect uncredited echoes of my own published views of "Ulalume," "Annabel Lee," and "Eldorado."

The longer section (61-112) on the short stories is particularly disappointing in that, for lack of interpretation, the entries mainly consist of synopses, subject matter descriptions, and biographical readings. In "Berenice" and "Morella," for instance, Poe is said to give "fictional expression to the fascination he felt for his cousin Virginia and which he had earlier felt for his mother Elizabeth Arnold." "William Wilson" is considered Poe's most autobiographical story—in spite of Hammond's earlier distinction between *persona* and author, with credit to Gargano's article on Poe's narrators. "The Pit and the Pendulum" is held to reflect Poe's struggles against adversity, "The Tell-Tale Heart" Poe's heart condition and his fears of disease and insanity, and "Ligeia" Poe's addiction to opium. Taken as a whole, the comments on "Ligeia" and "Usher" are longer and more perceptive, whereas most of the Tales of Terror and the Tales of Ratiocination receive only superficial appraisal. Hammond's best insights into Poe's satiric purpose and style may be found in the analyses, overbrief though they are, of four "Swiftian" satires: "King Pest," "Some Words with a Mummy," "Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether," and "Mellonta Tauta." In the section on "The Romances," Poe is hailed as "the father" and "the first theoretician" of science fiction, as illustrated by "Hans Pfaal," *Pym*, and "The Balloon-Hoax," each praised for its authenticity and immediacy of factual detail, its brilliantly imagined episodes, its lucid yet vivid style, etc. Rich in allegorical and satirical undertones, the balloon voyages in particular foreshadow "the tale of scientific anticipation" or science fiction, as it came to be known; these are not simply ingenious hoaxes but first sketches of a new genre.

Section V deals with four of Poe's major critical essays, three reviews, and three other essays (including "Arnheim" and *Eureka*). The commentaries are sound enough as far as they go, but the limits of space preclude any but familiar generalizations. Section VII consists of a dictionary of characters and locations in the fiction (45 tales)—a useful

series of factual identifications. The Appendix that follows contains a list of principal film adaptations of Poe stories from 1909 to 1974, including all the Corman-Vincent Price movies, and a descriptive list of five volumes of fiction based on Poe stories, published between 1952 and 1978. No explanation is offered for the omission of other fictional treatments, of poems on Poe, of poems set to music, of dance versions of his work, etc. Recorded readings of Poe's works are noted here and there, but again without regard to the much larger number of such recordings or their relative quality. In addition to source notes and index, a Select Bibliography is included: the Works, mostly British editions, Letters, Biography, Bibliography, and Criticism. Section II, *An Edgar Allan Poe Dictionary*, an annotated listing of tales, poems, and essays published in book form, might have been placed here in the handbook section, along with the short list of book reviews—without sources! All told, this attractive, overpriced *Companion* can be recommended only as a handbook of basic information; as a guide to understanding Poe it is of questionable value and, for the reasons outlined in this review, should be used with caution and discrimination.

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David R. Saliba. *A Psychology of Fear: The Nightmare Formula of Edgar Allan Poe*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1980. \$10.25.

Barton Levi St. Armand and Martin Bickman have demonstrated the possible applications of Jungian psychology to the works of Poe. Adding to the secondary literature on "the Jungian Poe," David R. Saliba focuses on selected tales as rough equivalents of dreams or nightmares. In a provocative discussion of the theme of metamorphosis in the *Blackwood* satires, "Ligeia," and "Usher," Saliba makes telling points about reader response to tales of terror that partake of Poe's "nightmare formula." According to Saliba, the reader participates in a metamorphic process whereby Poe's words approximate the reader's psychological experiences. This formula, initiated in 1831 and perfected in 1838, consists of four stages: (1) the isolation of the reader; (2) the stunning of the reader's sensibility; (3) the victimization of the reader's emotions; and (4) the premature

The Poe Studies Association and its *Newsletter* are independent of the journal *Poe Studies*, published at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99163, subscription \$4 per year (two issues, June, December).

NEW MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FOR 1983

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burial of the reader's reason. Although this reduction of art to formula may seem too pat, Saliba does help to bridge the gap from character reaction to reader response.

Of particular interest is discussion of Poe's typical narrator as a figure of "decomposition" whose loss of memory reflects a fear of ego dissolution. The narrator's fear is induced by a troubling oscillation between control and loss of control. This awful dread finds expression in the genre of the "literary nightmare," a mechanism of psychic defense and self-preservation in which internal threats are often seen as external. Saliba buttresses his Jungian approach by invoking Rudolf Otto and Edmund Burke, his citation of the latter lacking relevant acknowledgement of the role "self-preservation" plays in the sublime.

Crucial to Saliba's thesis is a close identification between narrator and reader. For the perfection of Poe's unique literary form, narrator and reader should merge in sharing nightmarish experience. Although this coalescence of narrative and reader perspectives works well for Saliba's analyses of "MS. Found in a Bottle," "Ligeia," and "The Pit and the Pendulum," his formulaic approach pays fewer dividends where narrative and authorial points of view are clearly distinct. Examples of Poe's ironic detachment from his narrators, as in "The Black Cat," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Cask of Amontillado," receive less than cursory discussion here.

The book is not without flaws found in revised dissertations: blocky quotations; excessive citation of secondary sources; stylistic awkwardness; and tendency toward running commentary, especially on "Usher." The

handling of psychological discourse becomes burdensome when Saliba relies too heavily on his own shorthand: secondary characters are reduced to "id-aspects" and "ego-aspects." Despite these shortcomings, this study lays a foundation upon which other reader-response critics should build.

Kent Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Frederick Dannay (1905-1982)

The death of Frederick Dannay, one of our Honorary Members, in late September closes one of the most distinguished careers in the mystery-detection field. With his cousin, Manfred Lee, Dannay brought out many mysteries under the "Ellery Queen" name. Ever attentive to Poe's preeminence as the progenitor of modern detective fiction, these men have contributed much to Poe's renown in essays, introductions, and addresses. The vitality of Poe has continued unabated during the more than forty years over which *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* has appeared, with reprintings of his tales, notes relating to his practices and aims, and stories featuring Poe or Poesque themes. Mr. Dannay's interest in the PSA and his gratitude for being designated Honorary Member have been evident in letters to the president over the years.

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