



# NEWSLETTER

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## ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING: POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION

New York, December 29, 1983  
Petit Trianon, Hilton 10:15-12:15 P.M.

The eleventh annual meeting of the Poe Studies Association, to be held during the MLA Convention, will focus on the topic "Poe in the Classroom" and will include the following papers:

"Poe's Symbolic Language," Eric W. Carlson, *Professor Emeritus*, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs.

"Poe and the Will," April Selley, Brown Univ.

"Subverting Interpretation: The Lesson of Poe's Geometry in 'The Pit and the Pendulum,'" Alexander Hammond, Washington State Univ.

Respondent: Joan C. Dayan, Yale Univ.

President Benjamin Fisher IV, PSA President, will preside, and Kent Ljungquist, Vice-President, will present the program.

## Poe Session at NEMLA

April 15, 1983

Nearly thirty people crowded into a small room at the Hilton Hotel in Erie, PA, to hear three papers on Poe at this year's NEMLA meeting. James W. Gargano (Washington and Jefferson College) reexamined Henry James's disparaging remarks about Poe, attributing them to a fundamental difference in the writers' views of reality and its representation in fiction. Attempting to account for Poe's deconstruction of his own art in "The Philosophy of Composition," George Monteiro (Brown University) reflected on the motives of poet-critic Daniel Hoffman in writing *Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe* (Garden City, 1973). James K. Grant (St. Lawrence University) argued that the terror in "Usher" derives largely from the narrator's "linguistic impotence," his inability to express and therefore understand his experience. Bruce I. Weiner (St. Lawrence University) presided and Benjamin F. Fisher (University of Mississippi) acted as respondent. Chairing next year's meeting in Philadelphia will be Donald B. Stauffer (SUNY, Albany), who has received papers, critical or biographical, on the topic of "Poe and the City."

## REVIEWS

*Poe-Purri: Edgar Allan Poe Issue of The University of Mississippi Studies in English*, ed. Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, n. s. 3 (1982), Pp. xii + 199. \$5.00.

Aptly titled, this special issue of *UMSE* contains fourteen essays on Poe, representing a variety of critical interests and approaches. The collection is framed by Richard P. Benton's introductory remarks on "Poe and His Critics" and Benjamin F. Fisher's closing comments on the last ten years of "Poe Books." These essays highlight past and recent developments in Poe studies, updating the inventory of editions, biography, and criticism and indicating what

still needs to be done. Heading the list of contributors to *Poe-Purri* is Richard Wilbur, who attempts to remove the "obstacles" to our grasping the "suggested meaning" in several poems and tales. He unravels Poe's combination of "erotic words or images with inhibitory ideas" in "Israfel," identifies vague and sometimes misleading allusions in "Annabel Lee" and "The Tell-Tale Heart," and follows the resonance of key words and images in "Sonnet—To Science," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Usher," "The Power of Words," "The Masque of the Red Death," and the Dupin stories. These "modes of suggestion," Wilbur contends, are the work of a rebellious imagination, at once desirous and fearful of divorcing itself from earthly attachments. Wilbur's thesis is born out to some extent by David H. Hirsch's discussion of psychological themes in "Metzengerstein" and James W. Gargano's study of apocalyptic vision in "Usher." Hirsch illuminates the significance of Poe's equestrian image in "Metzengerstein" by recognizing its archetype in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Unlike Plato's charioteer of the soul (reason), who must keep a tight rein on a rebellious horse (irrational impulse) to achieve psychic harmony, Poe's Metzengerstein suffers an "eclipse of reason" and the "unadulterate terror of man's vulnerability to forces within himself that he can neither understand nor control . . ." Gargano draws out the apocalyptic implications of Roderick Usher's demise by tracing its echo in "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," published almost concurrently with "Usher." Whereas Eiros and Charmion have the advantage of hindsight, the characters in "Usher" confront the end of the world "from an unenlightened, tremulous human perspective," unaware of "the supernal order that manifests itself—however fearfully—in the doom of humanity."

Poe's landscape art is the subject of essays by Kent Ljungquist and Joan Dayan. Drawing on the criticism and "Autography" series, Ljungquist defines Poe's idea of the "picturesque"—a careful management of detail to suggest visual ambiguity and psychic derangement—and shows it

### Poe Studies Association Newsletter

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at work in "Usher." Dayan takes a post-structuralist approach to "Landor's Cottage," arguing that Poe deconstructs "the *donnés* supplied by conventional grammar and picturesque assumptions" to create a discourse on his own fictional methods. In a similar vein, Dennis W. Eddings argues that the Dupin stories are "paradigms of how to read Poe," providing analogies in Dupin's sleuthing to methods required to resolve Poe's "duplicitous texts." John E. Reilly suggests that Poe's texts were no mystery to Sarah Helen Whitman, who saw expressed in them "an intrinsically skeptical soul . . . born in an inherently skeptical age." Poe's reading of woman writers is examined by Ashby Bland Crowder, who disputes the popular opinion that Poe abandoned his critical objectivity and standards when reviewing his female contemporaries.

*Poe-Purri* is interestingly spiced by Neda M. Westlake's reminiscence of Arthur Hobson Quinn, Maureen Cobb Mabbott's notes on Poe's reading of "The Raven," Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet's linking of "Berenice" and the Cadmus myth, Dwight Thomas's informative study of Poe's relationship with William Burton, and W. T. Bandy's solution to the mystery of Poe's controversy with William Duane, Jr. In addition, Sheng Ning and Donald B. Stauffer make a major contribution to our knowledge of Poe's influence in China. Although diverse in scope and method, the essays in *Poe-Purri* are the product of mature scholarship and provide much food for thought.

Bruce I. Weiner  
St. Lawrence University

Roscoe Brown Fisher, ed. *The James Carling Illustrations of Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven*. Statesville, N.C.: Fisher Publications, 1982. 151 pp. \$16.95.

Dr. Roscoe Brown Fisher, editor of this fascinating volume of the thirty Raven sketches still reproducible, is one of several who contribute helpfully to our understanding of the circumstances governing James Carling's (1857-1887) attempt to rival Gustave Doré as illustrator of "The Raven." Evidently, for over twenty years Dr. Fisher has been planning this book, most of which (pp. 33-117) is devoted to the full-page pictures, each with its accompanying page set aside for the line-illustrated and stimulating comments of Dr. Bruce K. B. Laughton, once of the London Courtauld Institute, now professor in the Canadian Queen's University. The rest is given over to essays by the following: (1) Roscoe Brown Fisher, about his motivation and his search in Liverpool and here in America for Carling family members with indispensable pictures, manuscripts, and reminiscences; (2) George F. Scheer, who redacted his Richmond *Times-Dispatch* article of 2 May 1937 on Carling; (3) T. O. Mabbott, who helped with suggestions and just managed to proofread his essay on "The Writing of The Raven"—which is a charmingly different wording of much of the Preface to the poem in his 1969 volume; (4) Raymond W. Adams, on different publications of the poem—an essay now superseded by the Harvard edition ancillary material; (5) Mr. Fisher's chronology of Poe, which too often shows a lack of thoroughgoing Poe expertise; and (6) Floyd Stovall, writer of a gracious conclusion. A fourteen-page Appendix consists of useful photographs and documents, such as the Niblo's Garden playbill for "The Black Crook" in which Carling appeared as "the Boy Caricaturist in his lightning sketches," excerpts from Carling's 1884 "book" (Chicago) of memoirs and appalling poetry, pages from a manuscript autobiography in orotund prose, and excerpts from letters provided by the family. There is nothing here, however, to interest an outside reader save for its bearing on the "Raven" sketches.

James Carling grew up in a Liverpool slum environment, earning a few coins daily by drawing sketches on city sidewalk paving stones; his father was a laborer and

"balladeer" of Irish descent. Five of his sketches were reproduced in the June 1977 souvenir book for the opera, *The Voyage of . . . Poe*, by Dominick Argento, when it was presented in Baltimore (pp. 36-37). Earlier, after George Scheer's newspaper article, revamped for the present volume, Leland Schubert published a study of Carling in the 1942 *Southern Literary Messenger* (4:173-181), but this handsome volume presents all the "new" material that is ever likely to reach print. As a matter of fact, the illustrations are appealing and informative chiefly as an expression of Victorian popular taste emanating from a deprived, somewhat immature, conventionally imaginative youth.

Certainly he had talent—as Poe would say, "of a lofty order" — but it was often directed to illustrated magazine adventure stories (plates 17-18, 24-26), theatrical melodrama and morbidity (8-10, 16, 21), and crude lustfulness (6, 26-27, 31). The plates, mostly full page in size, are generally well reproduced on the glossy paper (although the frontispiece is clearer than its "identical" version, plate 3) which "accepts" well the purposeful photographs of Carling and others. Bruce Laughton's comments and his summarizing essay are full of keen insights into various strains entering the illustrations. He is right about touches of Delacroix, Odilon Redon, and James Ensor here and there, but he might have pointed out the common origin of these in popular symbolism and Gothic fiction (e.g., floors of skulls, armies of phantoms, skies of lightning spears and omens).

The book is well made and handsome in format, with a good dustjacket illustrated from the book's contents. The end papers are ingeniously decorated with some of the numerous ravens in Carling's sketches, causing one to wonder about his having seen Manet's famous "fleuron" of 1875. Considering the long delay in production, we wonder at a number of typos still left: *indispensible, similiar, light(n)ing, Literi, consumated, be be* (pp. 14, 74, 114, 129, 147). But this is carping; can anyone interested in Poe fail to purchase a gallery of naive, pointed, specific, and ardent "Raven" interpretations?

Burton R. Pollin  
Professor Emeritus, CUNY

Hyatt H. Waggoner. *American Visionary Poetry*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. 226 pp. \$14.95.

This study attempts to define "visionary poetry" as a special poetic genre in descriptive, not normative, terms. The root word *vision*, figurative and ambiguous in meaning, is viewed as both subjective and objective; visionary poetry regards man's relation to the world as one of participation, not alienation, escape, or solipsism. Separate chapters are devoted to Whitman, the greatest of our visionary poets, Hart Crane, William Carlos Williams, Theodore Roethke, A. H. Ammons, and David Wagoner. An appended chapter briefly explains why Dickinson, Frost, Stevens, and Eliot are excluded from this category. Of the only half dozen references to Poe, this passage suggests the author's view of Poe's poetry: "If we choose to call the poetry of the deep image 'visionary,' we are using that word in a sense that applies better to Poe than to Whitman. Such poetry seems to me to widen the gap between 'to see' and 'to envision,' not to narrow it, with the result that perception becomes not a mode of discovery but in effect a mode of escape." For Waggoner, the test of truly visionary poetry is whether it finds "meaning and value in concrete personal experience of the way things are, or what they are, or may be seen to be." But it does so by reminding us that "mystery remains regarding all that is most important to us in life . . ." The visionary mode of seeing transforms the actual (the *seen*) through metaphor (the *seen as*) into realization (the *seen that*). When discovery occurs, "the previously unseen dawns

on us and illuminates some aspect of the world." Such statements leave this reviewer puzzled over how this definition helps distinguish Poe's poetry from Whitman's, and how it justifies the omission of Poe as a major American visionary poet.

Eric W. Carlson  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Connecticut

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

*ATQ: The American Transcendental Quarterly: A Journal of New England Writers. Issues 45-51.*

Issues 45-46, published in 1982, is a special issue entitled "The Hawthorne-Melville Relationship: An Annotated Bibliography" by James C. Wilson. (It is also available as a monograph of 79 pages, \$8.00 postpaid. Make checks payable to ATQ, Department of English, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R. I. 02881.) The bibliography is subdivided into Biography, General Studies, and Articles. An Essay in Bibliography treats biography, mutual influence, and literary reflections of the relationship, parallel readings, and generic and theoretical approaches. The annotations summarize and abstract but rarely evaluate the criticism, which is not limited to biographical aspects of the "relationship."

Issue No. 47-48 (Summer-Fall 1980), is a special issue published in 1982, on seven nineteenth-century American women authors: Edna Dow Cheney, Rebecca Rush, Rose Terry Cooke, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Stoddard, Louise Imogen Guiney, and Marietta Holley, followed by a concluding bibliography of nineteenth-century women writers in Rhode Island by Karen Call.

Issue No. 49 (Winter 1981), published in 1982, consists of three articles on Emerson: his poetry, his "poetry of mind" (contrasting Emerson and Jung), and his literary theory; mental perception in *Walden*; and the influence of Margaret Fuller's "Canova" on Hawthorne's "Drowne."

Issue No. 50 (Spring 1981), contains "A Transcendentalist Aesthetic of Imperfection" and studies of Hawthorne, Melville (3) and Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim."

Issue No. 51 (Summer 1981) includes articles on Henry James' *The Sacred Fount* as a literary joke aimed at Poe and Hawthorne; on *Moby-Dick*; Hawthorne's "The Old Manse"; Whitman's *Drum-Taps*; and Thoreau's influence on Melville's "My Chimney and I."

*Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, by Edgar Allan Poe. Illustrated by Harry Clarke. Birmingham, Alabama: Oxmoor House, Inc., 1982. \$40.00. 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 29 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.

*Critical essays on American Transcendentalism*, ed. by Philip F. Gura and Joel Myerson (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), 638 pp. \$60.00. Described as consisting of "over fifty important documents on Transcendentalism" by such authors as Dickens, Carlyle, Poe, Santayana, René Wellek, Perry Miller, Lawrence Buell, and Joel Porte, to name only a few, this compilation is indeed impressive, not only in the wide range of selections but also in the forty-page interpretive and bibliographic introduction. Students of Poe, however, will be disappointed to find Poe represented by only a paragraph on "the tone transcendental" from "How to write a Blackwood Article," and nothing indicative of Poe's Neoplatonic and "psychal" transcendentalisms as defined in "The Poetic Principle," "Mesmeric Revelation," *Eureka*, and his Marginalia essay on "psychal fancies," not to mention his transcendental tales "Morella" and "Ligeia." [Cf. "Poe's Vision of Man" in *Papers on Poe* (Springfield, Ohio: Chantry Music Press, 1972).]

Nathaniel Hawthorne. *Tales and Sketches*, ed. by Roy Harvey Pearce (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1982), 1504 pp. \$25.00. Subscription price, \$19.95. Arranging the stories in the order of periodical publication, this volume includes everything from *Twice-Told Tales*, *The Snow-Image*, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *A Wonder Book*, and *Tanglewood Tales*, plus sixteen other stories. The selections, notes on the text (the Centenary Edition), and chronology are the work of the editor. Textual notes are limited to ten pages of allusions elucidated. Other volumes now published in this Library of America series, distributed by Viking Press, are those of the works of Whitman, Melville, and Stowe.

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## NEW MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FOR 1984

I wish \_\_\_\_\_, do not wish \_\_\_\_\_ to continue receiving *PSA Newsletter* (Spring, Fall).  
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Enclosed is my \$5 check for dues and subscription for the calendar year 1984. (Check should be made out to "Poe Studies Association" and mailed to Thomas H. Brown, Poe Studies Association, Box 994, University, Mississippi 38677).

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## MISCELLANEOUS

Corrections: The editors regret that the following errors occurred in the Spring 1983 issue: (1) In the review of *The Unknown Poe* the concluding two sentences were intended as concluding sentences to *Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism* in the right-hand column. The review of *The Unknown Poe* as submitted ended with this sentence: "The critical comments by Baudelaire *et al* are of some obvious value, but are not presented in a context that would illuminate the multi-dimensional Poe, as distinguished from the demonic and the esoteric, presumably 'French View.'" (2) The first item, a report on the Tenth Annual Meeting, should have been dated 1982.

Poe's Cottage in the Bronx: The Bronx Country Historical Society reports that the grounds surrounding the Fordham cottage have received considerable attention. Cherry, plum, apple, and pear trees, among a variety of plants, are now growing on the grounds and border plots. Tours are given Wednesday through Friday from 1-5 P.M., Saturday 10 A.M.-4 P.M., and Sunday 1-5 P.M. From April 4-10, 1983, the Society celebrated Poe week by presenting readings of Poe's works, films, musical interpretations, and by conducting special guided tours of the cottage and grounds.

Dameron-Cauthen Bibliography: The University Press of Virginia has reduced the price of *Edgar Allan Poe: A Bibliography of Criticism, 1827-1967* by J. Lasley Dameron and Irby B. Cauthen, Jr. For details write The University Press of Virginia, Box 3608, University Station, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903. Authors and publishers are invited to notify the editors of reductions in the price of books devoted to Poe. Space permitting, editors will announce price reductions in the newsletter.

*Tales of Mystery and Imagination — Edgar Allan Poe:* The new Southern Classics Library edition of *Tales of Mystery and Imagination (Oxmoor House)* is accompanied by a publisher's booklet, also entitled "Tales of Mystery and Imagination - Edgar Allan Poe." This booklet contains a valuable little essay (pp. 6-21) on Poe's illustrators, Felix O. C. Darley and Harry Clarke in particular, by Burton R. Pollin, who for several years has studied and lectured on Poe illustrations originating in this country and abroad. The library journal *Choice* (May 1982) lists Pollin's *The Imaginary Voyages* among the "Outstanding Academic Books for 1981." Professor Pollin has been awarded a grant by the NEH for a continuation of the edition of *Poe's Collected Writings*.

Baltimore Poe Society: On Sunday, October 2, 1983, at 2:30 P.M., Professor G. Richard Thompson of Purdue University will deliver the 61st Commemoration Lecture of the Poe Society of Baltimore in the Wheeler auditorium of the Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, MD. His topic is "Circumscribed Eden of Dreams: Dreamscapes in Poe's Early Poetry." Also, a symposium on "Poe and Baltimore," co-sponsored by the Baltimore Poe Society and the University of Baltimore English Department, is planned for some time in March, 1984.

Jose Luis Borges: Now 83 and blind, Mr. Borges was recently photographed touching a bas-relief of Poe's features, a commemorative plaque at Poe's grave in Baltimore. Borges is reported to be "one of Poe's foremost admirers." The Moses Ezekiel statue of Poe, we are informed, is being moved from its park location to the University of Baltimore.



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